

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 15, 2024

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Yellen:

We welcome the Administration's implementation of Executive Order (E.O.) 14115, which targets acts of extremist violence in the West Bank. We write to urge strong enforcement of those sanctions and follow-up actions against individuals and private entities undermining peace, security, and stability in the West Bank.

On February 1, 2024, President Biden issued E.O. 14115, which authorized property blocking and visa sanctions against individuals and entities undermining peace, security, and stability in the West Bank. The Administration has so far imposed three rounds of sanctions under this executive order. The first round in February targeted four individuals directing or participating in violence, intimidation, and property destruction against Palestinians in the West Bank. The second round in March targeted three individuals involved in violent acts against, and the forcible displacement of, Palestinian civilians, as well as two settlements illegal under Israeli law which were used as bases to launch violent attacks. The third round in April targeted the leader of Lehava, whose members have been involved in acts or threats of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, as well two entities involved in fundraising for sanctioned individuals.

We strongly support the actions the Administration has taken under E.O. 14115. Since October 7, there has been a worrying uptick of violence and intimidation against Palestinians in the West Bank, including the destruction of property, arson, assault, cutting off essential services like water access, forced displacement, home demolitions, and shootings of civilians. There is no excuse for extremist settler violence, which ultimately erodes efforts to preserve a political horizon and promote a negotiated, two state solution. Your actions against those who are undermining security in the West Bank make clear that the U.S. position remains support for two states for two people living side by side in equal measures of security, prosperity, dignity, and mutual recognition.

We urge the Administration to pursue full enforcement by the U.S. and Israeli banking sectors of all sanctions issued under E.O. 14115. The measures already announced are having a significant impact, as Israeli private banks are proactively working to comply and avoid losing access to the U.S. financial system. The Administration should not hesitate to take swift action against entities that try to circumvent these sanctions and avoid taking any steps that would weaken their efficacy.

Lastly, we urge the Administration to continue to increase efforts to target all actors complicit in this violence, including private entities involved in materially supporting violent acts or the forcible displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, such as private construction companies and charitable organizations. E.O. 14115 authorizes sanctions against individuals or entities who have “materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person blocked pursuant to this order.” There is a wider ecosystem of entities which facilitate the enterprise of forcible displacement of Palestinians and the perpetration of violence by extremist settlers. We urge the Administration to “follow the money” and take further actions against any private entities that finance or sponsor violence against Palestinian civilians or facilitate property destruction, illegal seizure or dispossession of land from Palestinians in the West Bank.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
Chairman
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations



Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services



Mark R. Warner
Chairman
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence