

Secretary of State Blinken and State department staff,

Thank you for the invitation to the Roundtable scheduled for today on the Gaza genocide. While I initially submitted an RSVP to attend later today, after a lot of soul-searching I have decided that I cannot in good conscience meet with you today knowing this administration's policies have been responsible for the death of over 80 of my family members including dozens of children, the suffering of hundreds of my remaining family, the famine my family is currently subjected to and the destruction of all my family's homes. The more I thought about this meeting, the more I could not emotionally bring myself to look you in the eyes, Secretary Blinken, knowing you and President Biden have knowingly contributed to the suffering and murder of so many of my family, the homelessness and dispossession of 2 million Gazans, and the famine that has befallen my remaining family members. I would like you to put yourself in my shoes, Secretary Blinken, as I am aware you have a young child from comments you've made to friends of mine: how does one meet for what I was told would be 3 minutes, with a person you hold responsible for not just the killing of your child, but rather the murder of over 80 of your family members? How do I say in three minutes to someone who will forever in history be known for actively aiding and abetting one of the worst genocides in a century, what that person's actions have done my family's suffering and that of my people? How do I look a person in the eyes for three minutes who not only could have prevented the death of my 85 family members and the nearly 15,000 children in Gaza who have been killed, but actively contributed to their suffering and death by providing military munitions from our US military supply to kill my family and destroy their homes? How do I look you in the eyes knowing you couldn't even do the basic minimum like calling for a ceasefire to end the suffering and carnage, and even worse, are cutting off humanitarian assistance to 2 million people going through a famine of historic proportions. My family are subsisting on animal feed, Secretary Blinken, because of your policies. My cousin bled Hani to death from a leg injury, because your policies wouldn't allow for a ceasefire that would have allowed him to get medical assistance. My cousin's newborn twins have been malnourished from their birth a few months ago, because of your policies. My cousin Wael had to find his own mother dead with her entire upper body buried in rubble and his sister Wafa shredded into pieces all from United States F-16 missiles fired at their civilian home, because of your policies. I ask you to put yourself in my shoes, Secretary Blinken, and ask yourself as a human being: would you be able to meet and speak to the person primarily responsible for the most suffering and death your family has ever gone through for centuries, and convey that in three minutes? I am a forgiving person, Secretary Blinken. I am aware we are human beings and human beings are inherently flawed. But what I can't forgive is making mistakes that cost people their lives, knowing what your actions are doing, and yet choosing to continue your unethical/criminal actions. You have had nearly 4 months to correct your actions. You could have called for a ceasefire at any time, and chose not to. You could have stopped the transfer of US military equipment to continue this genocide, yet you chose not to. And now, faced with that knowledge, explain to me how I can forgive you, knowing the daily messages from my family letting me know who has died, who needs a tent because they have no shelter from the rain and cold winter, and who hasn't been able to eat

flour, meat, vegetables, or fruit for 24 hours at a time as most of my family in Gaza is doing, is because of your actions?

I'd like to back up and give you a bit about my background and that of my family, as my story in many ways is symbolic of what so many Palestinians have endured over the past 75 years. I grew up as a child in Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip, living there from the age of 2 months through my youth. As a child, I experienced the brutal nature of the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories first-hand. My grandmother was the headmaster of the United Nations schools, getting assaulted and beaten in the late 60's by Israeli soldiers for teaching her students about the cities and lands their parents were driven from as refugees in Haifa, Yaffa, and and what is now northern Israel.

I remember while playing chess in the street as a 13 year old, getting shot at with rubber bullets by Israeli soldiers, and watching my cousins either get arrested or have arms broken while I hid in a chicken coop to escape military detention for the crime of being a Palestinian child playing in the street.

I remember the 18 hours of Israeli checkpoints my family endured as though we were cattle, to simply go from Amman to Gaza waking up at 3am and not getting to Khan Younis until 9pm at night getting our clothes thrown in a basket with 10 other families clothes, onto the floor, and strip searched repeatedly.

I remember the Israeli soldiers breaking into our grandmother's house in the middle of the night in the 80's, as is common practice under occupation even to this day the West Bank, using it as a "scouting area" to snipe at children in our neighborhood, and eating out of her refrigerator while she slept

I remember that we had so little water that my grandmother couldn't wash the dishes and do laundry if I took a normal american-style shower the day I got back from that 18 hour journey.

I remember our beautiful orchard between Khan Younis and Gaza, filled with olive trees, prickly pear fruit, and endless fruit trees that we played in all summer, destroyed by the Israeli military in the mid 90's tree by tree.

I remember my uncle Mahmood El Farra financing and proudly building the first airport in Gaza in 1998, only for our family to watch it be bombed by the Israeli military in December 2001 then have Israeli bulldozers cut the runway on 1/10/2002.

I remember my parents and extended family going 20 hours of every day with no electricity for over 15 years since the Israeli blockade of Gaza began.

Then in the summer of 2014, my youngest son Ramzi was born, a day that we will never forget for the wrong reasons, because it was the day of the Shujaiya massacre in Gaza when 67 people from one neighborhood were killed from Israeli military strikes, mostly children. We never celebrated his birth. I ask you, Secretary Blinken, how could you celebrate the birth of your daughter when 67 other people from your neighborhood, mostly children, died on the same day?

Then on 8/1/2014, during that year's Israeli attacks on Gaza, 10 of my relatives in Khan Younis were killed by multiple Israeli missile strikes on their home, including Abdul Malik El-Farra, and his grandkids Lujaine (4), Nadine (15), Muhammad (11), (top of his class in school), Yara and Abdulrahman (8). The last deadly missile was fired as the children were running out of their homes.

I mention all this, Secretary Blinken, because one cannot understand the deep despair and situation the Palestinians are currently in without understanding the context of the brutal Israeli occupation they have endured for decades.

As far as the current genocide in Gaza, I have had approximately 90 members of my family killed by Israeli military strikes. I say approximately because there are multiple people we cannot reach and whose bodies we cannot find, as is the case with so many Gazan families. I would like for you to read their narratives. I hope you can understand, for the reasons I stated earlier in my letter, why I cannot emotionally bring myself to say their narratives to you in person knowing you and President Biden are personally responsible for their death and suffering, but I would respectfully ask that you read them because they are important, and my family deserves to have their torturers and killers know what they have endured.

On 11/2/23, my cousin Hani, Huda, and Wafaa El-Haddad, along with my cousin Hani's Croatian wife Vera were all killed along with my aunt. Huda and Wafaa were beloved teachers and Hani was an interior designer. My surviving cousin from that family Nael El-Haddad who I played with as a child sent us this message about that fateful day and its aftermath:

"There were six of my family inside the house together. My mother, my brother Hani, his wife, my brother Wael, and my sisters Wafaa and Huda. Suddenly they were targeted with an F16 missile directly without any prior warning through the corridor. They were deliberately targeted, based on where they were at the time when the attack was done. They were killed instantly except for my brothers Wael and Hani, who initially had minor injuries. My brother Hani then died from those injuries the next day because the Israeli military siege around him, the Israeli military's destruction of all the nearby hospitals, and the lack of medicine or electricity led him to bleed to death. My other brother Wael suffered a serious wound along his foot, but miraculously survived with God's kindness and generosity. However, he had to witness the war crimes in front of him as if it were a horror movie. He had to witness our own mother with half of her body buried under the rubble, and his sister Wafa shredded into pieces. My brother Hani's wife and my sister Huda's bodies are still missing, I still don't know where they are. The destroyed house became nothing but an unstable structure only kept up by four pillars. I buried my mother, Hani and Wafa in a makeshift mass grave myself with the help of my cousins Wissam & Mohammed because of the difficulty of the roads due to the intensity of the bombing made it impossible to do a proper burial. My brother Wael initially managed to go to Shifa Hospital to get treated and to shelter, then I took him with me to a school shelter under my care while his children were sheltering in the south. He joined his children a week later after his recovery. I stayed in Gaza with my children in a shelter at Shifa Hospital until now, suffering a daily journey of torment, displacement and siege amid clashes, battles, and interruptions of

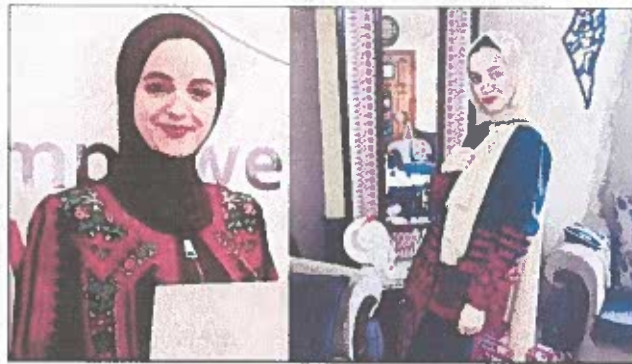
electricity, water and medicine. We have been sleeping without food for 24 hours at a time, and we have not seen flour, meat, vegetables, or fruits for three months now. We are just putting our trust in God to protect us.”

On another day in October 2023, my cousin Jamal El-Farra, his son Dr. Tawfiq El-Farra (a physician), Dr. Tawfiq’s pregnant wife Dana, their two beautiful daughters Reem and Hala, Jamal’s brother Esam, with his wife Semad, and their daughters Rusul, Tuqa, and Nadian...multiple generations of a branch of my family were all killed in one strike. Tuqa’s wedding day was the day she was killed. Esam and Jamal played competitive basketball and ping pong, representing their town in regional sports tournaments as teenagers. They came from modest means, such that the three brothers built their family homes with their own hands, the same houses that were flattened/destroyed when this multigenerational family was completely erased off the civil registry.

On another day in late October 2023, my cousins Hatem and Aziz El-Farra from Khan Younis, who live literally 20-30 feet from my grandparents’ home where I grew up, were killed along with 14 other members of their family, including 7 of their children Aziz was a pharmacist, and Hatem a jovial community figure who always had a smile on his face and would do anything to help anyone in the neighborhood. Just one day before he was killed, Hatem had just approached my uncle asking if we could house 5 families who were made homeless by the Israeli missile strikes, in my grandparents’ basement, as that was the kind of person he was, always helping others. One child from this entire multigenerational family initially survived, with an amputation, awoke to find out his father, uncle, and all his siblings had died, then died himself at the hospital from his trauma injuries partly due to the humanitarian crisis affecting the hospitals’ ability to care for sick patients.

I have included pictures of some of my family members who were killed below, to honor them:







In many ways, the suffering my family has endured has been even worse than the deaths of those family members. On October 13th after the Israeli order telling 1.1 million Palestinians in northern Gaza to evacuate, I received the following message from a cousin:

"We tried to flee to the southern part of Gaza, as the Israeli military was forcing us to do so. But we couldn't even do that. The situation is very difficult with thousands of people attempting to flee, overcrowding roads and intersections. Women, children, and elderly are carrying the little they could carry and walking up to 20 miles before reaching the southern parts of Gaza. It's reminding us of what our parents and grandparents experienced during the Nakba of 1948 when 750,000 Palestinians were expelled and 500 villages were ethnically cleansed. Meanwhile, we know the towns in the southern part of Gaza are overcrowded and people are sleeping in the streets. We have decided to stay in our homes in Gaza city and die in dignity rather than live through the humiliation and pain of being forced to leave our home."

On another day, I received this message from a cousin who has 4 children and gave birth to twins two months ago. "The Israeli military told us to evacuate, but I am stuck here. I'm not able to evacuate with my children to leave, and I don't know where to go. We need all the world to save us, to see what's happening to us. I'm so scared for my children. The Israeli bombing is indiscriminate, they've destroyed homes on top of people's heads. Please, please, someone see us. Do something. Save us from what we're facing."

She asked me to send this message to you, Secretary Blinken, so please listen to what she's saying and do something.

On October 14th I received this message from a cousin: "We still have life but for how long I don't know, basic goods in stores are running out and bakeries can't function, the water situation is not any better, most freshwater plants have stopped working."

On another day, in response to a question we asked my relatives about how the first day of the ground invasion was, the response was this: "Horror, horror, we were bombed in all forms, and even with all our experience with years of being bombed, this was new...new varieties of shells, their sounds were strange, imagine shells from tanks to your east reaching us in the west of Gaza, while at the same time shells from naval battleships to our west, and jets

bombing us from up above. All we could do was just pray continuously until morning, and for all our attempts to shelter the kids, they were crying and afraid, all night."

October 21st my family in Gaza received a flyer dropped on my cousin's home in northern Gaza by the Israeli military along with 1.1 million other civilians overnight, that stated "your presence in northern Gaza puts your life in danger. Whoever chooses to not leave northern Gaza to southern Gaza, he may be identified as a partner of a terrorist organization."

Secretary Blinken, if this isn't the very definition of collective punishment/genocide, assuming that if innocent civilians don't leave their homes with nowhere safe to go anyway, they will be treated as military targets, I don't know what is.

Currently, every surviving family member I have in Gaza is homeless due to destruction or damage of their homes. They are living either in a tent in Rafah when one is available, a UN school, friends' homes that have somehow managed to stay up, or another shelter. Food is scarce, mostly just bread, and with the rain and cold weather, conditions are beyond critical. Most of my family don't eat for 24 hours at a time. As my cousin Nael said in his text to us recently, "We have been sleeping without food for 24 hours at a time, and we have not seen flour, meat, vegetables, or fruits for three months now." Some are sustaining themselves with animal feed to sustain themselves and recycling used water. My 80 year old uncle has suffered terrible gastrointestinal illnesses from the contaminated water he has been forced to drink due to lack of availability of clean water.

None of these narratives should come as a surprise to you, Secretary Blinken, knowing the updated statistics on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The latest UN office for coordination of Humanitarian affairs report from 1/30 indicates that 26, 751 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed including 70% women and children, approximately 15,000 children. 1.7 million people are internally displaced from their homes, most multiple times. 2.2 million people at imminent risk of famine, including 378,000 at phase 5 (considered extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities), and 60% of all of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged. There is no current access to clean water in the northern part of Gaza. 122 Ambulances have been damaged, 11 bakeries destroyed, 386 schools damaged, 161 mosques and 3 churches damaged. Hospitals, densely populated refugee camps, factories, shopping malls, theaters, hotels all have been targeted. Most of the water, electrical, communications infrastructure is beyond repair. A 12/12 World Bank analysis which now sadly underestimates the statistics indicates that 77% of health care facilities are damaged or destroyed, 68% of the communication infrastructure, 72% of municipal services, and more than half of all roads, 342 schools. An assessment by US Office of the Director of National Intelligence from a month ago indicates that 29,000 weapons have been dropped on Gaza in just over 2 months (by comparison, 3678 were dropped on Iraq between 2004-2010. An analysis by aid groups led by Norwegian Refugee Council estimated that it will take at least a year to clear the rubble, rebuilding the housing will take 7-10 years if financing is available, and will cost \$3.5 billion. A UNICEF survey 12/26 showed that 90% of children under two are consuming 2 or fewer food groups, mostly grains/bread or milk, meeting the international definition of severe food

poverty, while 25% of pregnant or breastfeeding women consumed only one food group the day before, 65% only two food groups. Cases of diarrhea in children under 5 rose from 48,000 to 71,000 in one week, 3200 cases a day (before October there were 2000 a month). Only 25% of babies in shelters have diapers due to inadequate supplies. 1.9 million people (85% of the total population) are displaced from their homes (many multiple times like my family). 14/36 hospitals are partially functional, 7 in the south and 7 in the north, with severe shortages in specialized surgeons, ICU staff, anesthesia, antibiotics, and external fixators for trauma.

In the words of a pediatric ICU physician colleague of mine who has worked in Gaza in the past few months, this is "the worst humanitarian crisis of my lifetime" There is a medical acronym unique to the Gaza Strip that I have never heard any physician in the western world use, WCNSF, which stands for "wounded child, no surviving family", used frequently. WCNSF should NOT EXIST AS AN ACRONYM. This is a collective stain on our humanity that this acronym exists, Secretary Blinken.

These statistics and narratives from my family are directly the responsibility of your administration and your policies, Secretary Blinken. You could have called for a cease fire at any point in the past four months and ended all this suffering and death, and you have not. You could have used your diplomatic pressure to end the suffering, and you chose not to. You could have recognized that shutting off aid to an area that is experiencing the worst famine and human rights disaster in modern history is unethical, yet you chose not to. This is why it is very difficult emotionally for me to meet you today, to somehow normalize a meeting with an administration that continues day after day to cause so much suffering and death with their policies. When the history books are written and I speak to my grandchildren as an old man, you will be remembered for one thing and one thing only, Secretary Blinken: you could have prevented the death of over 85 of my family members, yet you chose not to. You could have ended the suffering of my family, and you chose politics over ethics.

There is very little at this point that you can do to reverse the damage and destruction you have caused the Palestinian people, but there are at least some things you can do to prevent further destruction and suffering:

1. Call for an immediate cease-fire
2. End the continued transfer of US military reserve equipment to the Israeli military to stop further murder
3. Call for an immediate withdrawal out of Gaza and equality for the Palestinian people
4. Call for an end to the Israeli occupation, for equal rights, freedoms, and laws in this land regardless of one's religion, ethnicity, or background.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,



Dr. Tariq M. Haddad



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#BREAKING: 12 days after being missing following an Israeli shelling on her family car, the body of the six-year-old girl Hind Rajab, along with the bodies of five of her family members, have been found in the Tal Al-Hawa neighborhood of Gaza City.

Medical sources reported that the family of Hind found her body this morning and the bodies of those who were in the vehicle, which was surrounded by occupation tanks in the vicinity of the Finance Roundabout in the Tal Al-Hawa neighborhood.

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