

Act and was inspired to pursue advocacy work. She is now part of an organization in Connecticut called Connecticut Students for a Dream, working to help other Dreamers like her. Through her advocacy, she pushed for the passage of legislation in Connecticut that provided in-state tuition access, institutional financial aid, and a college access program for undocumented students. Finally, after receiving DACA, she obtained her work authorization. She got a job overseeing a leadership program for Connecticut high school students.

These two remarkable stories are just two examples of the extraordinary impact that DACA recipients have on our community.

Last December, President Trump said:

We have to do something about the Dreamers.

He said:

We have to do something about the Dreamers. Republicans are very open to Dreamers.

I call on the administration to resume processing initial DACA applications outside of Texas, in line with the ruling from the Fifth Circuit. I call on this administration to do the right thing, to do what is legally open, what history encourages us to do. The history of this program shows the human potential of DACA recipients.

I encourage my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to come together with more permanent legislation for Dreamers. They give back. They contribute to our communities. They work tirelessly to do better. We owe them better. These Dreamers deserve to build a future in this country with the security and safety of permanent status and a path to citizenship.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from New Mexico.

REMEMBERING RALPH VIGIL

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, in New Mexico, we practice *querencia*. *Querencia* is a deep, even spiritual, connection to the land—a love of place that demands that we care for what has been passed down to us and protect it so we can pass it along to future generations.

Today, I stand on the Senate floor to pay tribute to a man who literally embodied this idea. His name was Ralph Vigil. And Ralph grew up along the Pecos River, at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, in Northern New Mexico.

With family roots extending hundreds of years, Ralph often called himself “a twelfth-generation Hispano in a state of *Nuevomexicanos*.” He took pride in his Hispanic and indigenous heritage, and every aspect of Ralph’s life was really a testament to his commitment and connection to our State and its people.

A *parciante* of his local *acequia*, Ralph often brought people in to share *acequia* traditions, and this included

Mark Allison, the executive director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

One year, Ralph and his family invited Mark for an annual *acequia* spring cleaning. So all day, they shoveled and raked and cleared the way for the water to be able to nourish the fields.

Once they were done, they went up and opened up the headgate. Ralph’s dad moved a few rocks, and Mark and Ralph stood and watched the water come down to water the fields.

As *mayordomo* of the *Acequia del Molino*, Ralph determined the allocation of water for each family like he did everything else, with the resounding belief that in the *acequia*, as in life, everyone is equal, bound together by water, by land, by tradition.

So Ralph carried these principles of equality and justice and interconnectivity to literally everything he did. As chairman of the New Mexico *Acequia* Commission for 19 years, Ralph fought to protect the water and the needs of local communities.

In the words of Juan Sanchez, who worked alongside Ralph at the commission, “Ralph . . . helped communities who didn’t really have a voice, keep a voice.”

And when extensive mining proposals threatened the traditional way of life along the Pecos River, Ralph stepped into action, helping to form the Stop Terrero Mine Coalition.

This is where I really got to know Ralph, as we worked together to craft and introduce legislation, the Pecos Watershed Protection Act—legislation to defend our watersheds and designate over 11,000 acres of national forestland as the Thompson Peak Wilderness Area.

At the Federal and State level, Ralph was a community leader in every sense of the phrase, committed to protecting and nurturing the people and places of New Mexico. He was also a farmer, a father, a skateboarder, a mariachi, and a friend—one who let others know how much they meant to him.

As described by one of his close friends and colleague he worked with, Garrett VeneKlasen, “Ralph was an old soul and a sage” who “radiated goodness and grace.”

His friend Robert Apodaca put it similarly:

Ralph . . . loved with his whole heart and soul. . . . [And his] legacy lives on in every life he touched and every cause he stood for.

Julie and I extend our heartfelt condolences to Ralph’s family, friends, colleagues, and community. And I know that we will all think of Ralph every time we see the Pecos River.

May we all honor Ralph’s memory by carrying on our own *querencia* for the places and waters that have sustained our way of life, traditions, and forged our communities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. I would ask unanimous consent to begin the rollcall vote immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOICE ON HUGHES NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hughes nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 303 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeben	Paul
Capito	Husted	Ricketts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Collins	Johnson	Rounds
Cornyn	Justice	Schmitt
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sheehy
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

NAYS—43

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Baldwin	Hirono	Schiff
Bennet	Kaine	Schumer
Blumenthal	Kelly	Shaheen
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Slotkin
Booker	King	Smith
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Van Hollen
Coons	Lujan	Warner
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warnock
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Welch
Fetterman	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—6

Budd	Ossoff	Sanders
Gallego	Reed	Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The Senator from Oregon.

GAZA

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I have witnessed starvation up close.

Many years ago, I was visiting Mother Teresa’s Home for the Dying in Calcutta. The room had a series of cots,

filled with men. There was a men's side and a women's side, and I was on the men's side.

Many of the men, the priest told me, had come after they had reached a point of malnutrition on the streets to which they had then collapsed.

I was asked to tend to one young man, and his eyes were very bright, and I asked the priest: It appears like he is really focused.

He said: No, no, no. This young man has been starving to death. His body has started to damage its own organs, and there is no recovery. All we can do is minister to his comfort.

That involved taking sections of grapefruit and wiping them across his lips.

I also visited a refugee center in Juba, in South Sudan, where the children's level of malnutrition was measured by an armband. It is one way of getting a quick sense of how little food they have had. It is called a mid-upper arm circumference. It is color coded, green to yellow to red, so aid workers can quickly see the severity of the malnutrition—the extent, if you will, of the impact of starvation.

And I visited refugee camps in Somalia and in Kenya and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where families were fleeing conflict and, quite frankly, fleeing starvation.

Starvation is sometimes the result of the chaos of war, sometimes the result of natural disasters, sometimes agricultural disasters. But what we are seeing now in the Middle East is a different form of disaster. It is a failure of political will to provide food. There is starvation in Gaza today because the Netanyahu government, which controls the amount of food flowing in, has chosen to use access to food as a weapon of war.

I have come to the floor tonight to say that this is immoral, that this use of food as a weapon of war is wrong under any structure of religion or moral code. I have come to the floor to say that it violates human rights and to say that it violates international law, and that all of us should join together and call for our government—the U.S. Government—to use every leverage of influence we have with our close ally Israel to have the Netanyahu government end this strategy.

Over the last few months, public attention has turned away from the on-going war in Gaza because there is so much else going on here in the United States and so much else going on around the world. Our newspapers and news feeds are full of stories about the Trump administration, about new tariffs, new Executive orders, new events across the country, and, also, quite frankly, about heartbreaking events of anti-Semitic violence against our American Jewish community.

Before I turn to deliberate further on the horrific use of food as a weapon of war, I want to really note the importance of never allowing criticism of the practices of another government or,

certainly, criticism of the Government of Israel—the Netanyahu government—to blur into discrimination or persecution of anyone based on their faith identity.

I abhor discrimination, abhor persecution. I abhor anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic acts, including assault and harassment and vandalism, have increased dramatically here in the United States. Across the country, in 2024 and on into 2025, the highest level has been recorded since the Anti-Defamation League started tracking the data in 1979.

On the first night of Passover, an arsonist set fire to the Pennsylvania Governor's mansion, while the Governor, Josh Shapiro, and his family were asleep inside.

Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, who met working at the Israeli Embassy, were murdered here in Washington, DC, outside the Jewish Museum.

And 12 people marching in support of the release of the hostages being held in Gaza were attacked and injured in Boulder, CO, just a week ago Sunday.

I condemn these acts of anti-Semitism and violence. We must root out prejudice and discrimination. We must root it out of our hearts. We must root it out of the public acts. We must stand arm in arm with our Jewish community members whenever they are threatened.

With that emphasis, let me be clear. As we stand arm in arm with our fellow Jewish citizens who are threatened by assault and harassment and vandalism and discrimination, we should also be standing arm in arm together against the use of the denial of food as a weapon of war, including by the Netanyahu government using that strategy in Gaza.

We need an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, and I hope and pray every day that we will have such a cease-fire, and with that cease-fire will come the swift and safe return of all the remaining hostages.

We also need an immediate massive influx of humanitarian aid, including water and medicine and, certainly, food.

But under the relevant rules of international humanitarian law, the provision of food can never be tied to some other act like a cease-fire. Every nation has the responsibility in conflict to make sure they are not denying food in kind of a mass punishment of the other side. And, therefore, food should not be contingent upon the cease-fire. It needs to be provided under moral code, under religious code, under humanitarian law, under international law—cease-fire or no cease-fire.

I have spoken previously about my concerns for the indiscriminate bombing that has killed tens of thousands of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza, including women and children and the elderly. Those individuals are victims, as well, of the Netanyahu government's use of food as a weapon of war.

I oppose and condemn this strategy, and I oppose and condemn the failure of the United States to use our resources and our influence to strive in every way possible to persuade the Netanyahu government to abandon the strategy of starvation.

Following the horrific attacks of October 7, 2023, Israel had every right to go after Hamas. But how you do so does matter, and starving the civilian population of Gaza is morally reprehensible. Yet that is the strategy the Netanyahu government has employed, with only a periodic exemption, since the start of the war.

Two days after the October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas, then-Israeli Defense Minister Gallant laid out this strategy, saying:

I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.

From the start of the war through the first 15 months, until the cease-fire of January 2025, the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations have warned of the growing crisis over food in Gaza.

Before the war began, an average of 500 trucks entered Gaza each day to provide the basic food needed to feed 2.1 million people. That food was supplemented by food that people in Gaza were growing.

When Senator VAN HOLLEN and I visited the Rafah gate crossing, in January of 2024, an average of only 150 trucks per day were getting into Gaza to provide medicine, equipment, and food. While we were at that gate, a doctor came out. He had just left through the Rafah gate crossing, after treating patients for about—I believe he told me—3 weeks at the European hospital. So this was, essentially, 3 months into the Gaza war.

He said: We are already seeing major changes in patients' ability to recover because, he said, they are not getting enough nutrition. If you don't have enough food, your body doesn't have the energy to recover from a wound.

This was just months into that war.

For the following year, the number of trucks entering Gaza fell even lower, to an average of 100 trucks a day, just a fraction of the amount of food needed to provide civilians with sufficient nutrition. And the ability to grow food in Gaza essentially evaporated under the bombardment and the conditions of war.

Then there was a moment of hope that this atrocity was ending, the discussion of the possibility of a lengthy cease-fire. But even as those discussions progressed, the information was flowing about, already, of the devastating effects of malnutrition. The Netanyahu government's strategy of food deprivation had inflicted massive malnutrition and health problems on the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza.

Malnutrition is devastating on the body. Malnutrition prevents the body from recovering from bombing-induced injuries. Malnutrition increases the

risk of miscarriage. Malnutrition prevents mothers from being able to breastfeed their babies because their milk dries up. Malnutrition creates the possibility that babies will die because mothers who do not have breast milk may not be able to get clean water or formula, both being necessary for a baby to survive.

Adults, as well as babies and children, suffer from the collateral effects of bodies weakened from malnutrition. And for those who do survive, the long-term health injuries are vast. Children who endure long-term hunger and malnutrition will have lifelong health damage, including stunted growth and impaired cognitive development.

But then we had that break. Finally, after 15 months—January 2025—the parties agreed to a cease-fire, including the return of 33 hostages and a surge in humanitarian aid, including food. During that cease-fire, 600 trucks a day on average entered Gaza with food and supplies. This delivery showed that it is entirely possible to efficiently get trucks into Gaza.

When Senator VAN HOLLEN and I were at the Rafah gate in January of the previous year, 2024, we witnessed a miles-long backup of trucks parked along the road to Rafah gate. We kept hearing from the Israeli Government: We just can't process these trucks and get them into Gaza.

And they blamed the international organizations for the challenge.

But it is clear: Once the Netanyahu government made a decision to get the trucks in, they could get them in. We saw it during the cease-fire. We knew it was possible all along. We knew it was an issue of political decision making to keep those trucks out, to inflict this hunger, to inflict this starvation on the population of Palestinians.

But that food that came in, those 600 trucks, for that limited time period—a time period of 58 days—wasn't sufficient to make up for the malnutrition of the previous 15 months. It didn't erase the ravages that had been inflicted on the population. It certainly meant that enough food was getting in for kind of a daily consumption at that point, but it certainly wasn't long enough and didn't reverse the impacts of those first 15 months.

And then, the interlude ended. On March 2, the cease-fire ended, and the Netanyahu government resumed using food as a weapon of war, blockading all humanitarian aid, including food and water and medicine, from reaching civilians in Gaza.

The Netanyahu government's claims that not enough aid was delivered during the cease-fire to compensate for the blockade to come simply was false.

Repeated public reports from the United Nations, from credible news sources, and from international humanitarian aid organizations all raised the alarm, month after month, that widespread hunger, malnutrition, and starvation had been growing as aid supplies ran out.

One way to determine if there is a shortage is to look at food prices. When there is no shortage in food, prices are stable.

There is a tool that governments use and nongovernmental organizations use called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System—fancy words for a tool to evaluate prices and how they reflect shortages. That tool provides reports from that, and it reported that a 55-pound sack of flour, which sold for \$17 in Gaza in February 2025, in May 2025, after the blockade was reimposed, sold for \$520—not \$17 but \$520. Here at home in the United States, restaurant all-purpose flour can be found on the internet for \$18.69, a 50-pound sack, with free home delivery.

In other words, the shortage of food resulted in flour being about 27 times more expensive than it had been previously in Gaza a few months before and about 27 times more expensive than what a pound of flour costs here in the United States of America.

Those staggering prices tell you several things: first, that the humanitarian feeding operations, after the blockade was reimposed, were absolutely unable to meet the need for food. People who have their food needs met don't pay that type of price—\$520—for a sack of flour. Second, it means that food was a luxury that only the affluent in Gaza could afford, the few who had the ability to get funds from outside of Gaza; and finally, that folks who did not have that money weren't going to be able to buy flour to cook anything.

Then, on March 25, just 3 weeks into the blockade, the World Food Programme reported that due to the Netanyahu government's blockade, all 25 of their bakeries had run out of flour and fuel.

So realize: March 2, the reimposition of the blockade, and within a couple weeks, by March 25, the bakeries under the World Food Programme had run out of flour and fuel.

According to the New York Times, those bakeries had produced "enough bread to supply about 70 percent of Gaza's population," but those bakeries were shut down weeks after the blockade was reimposed.

The IPC also reports that Gaza's 177 hot-meal kitchens, run by various aid organizations, exhausted their supplies at the beginning of April, 1 month into the reimposition of the blockade. One of these aid organizations was World Central Kitchen. World Central Kitchen is known around the world for stepping into situations and helping out where there are humanitarian disasters of all kinds and in this case, the disaster of the restriction of food by the Netanyahu government.

World Central Kitchen's emergency meal services provide an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 meals per day, but on May 7, World Central Kitchen announced:

After serving more than 130 million total meals and 26 million loaves of bread over the

past 18 months, World Central Kitchen no longer has the supplies to cook meals or bake bread in Gaza.

Within weeks of the blockade being reestablished, the markets were empty, the bakeries were shut down, and hot-meal kitchens were closed. The effect on the people in Gaza, the Palestinians of Gaza, the 2.1 million Palestinians living there: devastating. Palestinian civilians had been suffering from malnutrition from early on—as the doctor told me, 3 months after the war had begun—and it just got worse and worse over time with the deprivation of food.

UNICEF reports that the number of children suffering from acute malnutrition increased 80 percent just from February of this year to March of this year—80 percent increase. That is because children have no food.

Parents have watched helplessly as they see clothes that once fit their toddlers hang off their brittle bodies, their kids' bony ribcages and shockingly thin limbs. Increased malnutrition means it is even harder to recover from bombing-induced injuries, a higher risk of miscarriages, a higher risk of mothers not being able to breastfeed their babies. It means babies are weaker. It means adults are weaker, children are weaker.

Often, it is not malnutrition—that is, starvation—that kills someone; it is the weakened body dying from other diseases. And as noted before, the impacts on the development of the brain and the development of the body of the children can last a lifetime.

World Health Organization representative Rik Peeperkorn warned that "without enough nutritious food, clean water and access to healthcare, an entire generation will be permanently affected."

I might add, the effects are not just those of malnutrition but also the trauma of being under constant bombardment over the course of this war, often without a home, often without electricity, often without clean water, often without access to medicine, often watching your family members die.

So these children—at a minimum, we should make sure they have food, at a minimum—at a very minimum. We probably can't reverse many of the traumatic effects that will affect their lives. Just like we know trauma affects those who go to war, these are children and civilians living through the effects of war.

The World Health Organization reports as of May 13 that almost 5 dozen children had starved to death in Gaza. If dozens of children have died from starvation, how many thousands of children more are on the verge of a devastating level of malnutrition and potential death from starvation?

The headlines tell the escalating and devastating story to the world. On March 2, the day the blockade began, the Washington Post headline read:

Israel halts all aid to Gaza as ceasefire falters.

On April 1, 1 month into the blockade, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation said:

Fear of famine looms after all Gaza bakeries run out of flour amid month-long Israeli blockade.

May 4, 2 months into the blockade, NBC News:

Starvation looms as Israel's total blockade on Gaza enters its third month.

You start seeing the word "starvation" appear in story after story, headline after headline.

If you or I could travel to Gaza right now, we would be absolutely shocked to see the bodies of the adults and the bodies of the children, but we can't travel there because it is closed to all of us. But reports from credible news organizations have been alerting us to this horrific disaster coming from using food as a weapon.

Starvation looms as . . . blockade enters its third month.

In mid-May, the New York Times had a headline:

In Private, Some Israeli Officers Admit That Gaza Is on the Brink of Starvation.

So we have heard time and again from the Netanyahu government: Don't believe international organizations—even though they are experts. Don't believe because we are telling you there is no problem.

But even the Israelis are telling the world there is a problem, that Gaza is on the brink of starvation.

Then, on May 16, President Trump, our President, "acknowledges starvation in Gaza as Israeli airstrikes kill more than 100." The President said the United States will take care of the situation in Gaza on the final day of the Gulf tour in Abu Dhabi.

Why don't we join together, Democrats and Republicans, and support President Trump in having the United States take care of the situation, address the starvation in Gaza? That is the moral thing to do. That is the right thing to do under any religious code.

We have this incredibly close relationship with the Israeli Government. We are their primary source of economic support. We have close technological support. We have a close security relationship. We share intelligence. We have many connections between members of our government and our military and our intelligence community and theirs. Why not support President Trump in using these connections to end the starvation in Gaza?

You know, starvation happens many places in the world where we don't have a close relationship with the government and it may seem very distant, but here, we are complicit because we are so closely tied and so supportive of the Israeli Government. So we have a special responsibility to address this and use every leverage at our power to end it.

Facing week after week of these horrifying headlines, world leaders pressed Prime Minister Netanyahu to end this strategy and implement a new plan.

Only after, it was reported, "Israel's closest friends," meaning U.S. leaders, warned the Israeli Government that it would lose international support because allies could not handle pictures of mass starvation did Prime Minister Netanyahu consider changing course.

On May 19—so now we are talking just about 3 weeks ago—after more than 11 weeks of an all-out blockade, Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that—and he used the word "minimal"—a "minimal" amount of food would be allowed into Gaza.

But that plan is hardly satisfactory. The new U.S.- and Israeli-backed organization, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which has taken over aid distribution, working in partnership with the Israeli military and private U.S. security contractors—they are distributing aid from just four sites—one in central Gaza near the Netzarim Corridor and three in southern Gaza in the Rafah area. Civilians have to get to one of those four sites to obtain a box of food.

If you have visited Israel, you know that Gaza is about 40 miles long from north to south. It is a thin wafer along the Mediterranean coast. How do four sites, with three of them at the very southern end of that 40 miles, possibly get food to 2.1 million people? It needed hundreds of kitchens before to get food distributed throughout the country.

So what you have is a formula that says millions of people are going to descend on these four sites to acquire a box of food. The logistics of that are impossible, and they are meant to be impossible. It is deliberately designed not to work because there is no way that four sites can handle handing out food to 2.1 million people. So it has produced chaotic scenes, with desperate crowds—crowds of men, women, and children—rushing toward boxes of aid to try to get one of those boxes and then warning shots being fired—and not just warning shots, shots that killed Palestinians. Warning shots don't kill people.

On Sunday, June 1, ABC News reported that 31 people were killed and 200 injured when the Israeli troops opened fire.

On Tuesday June 3, the BBC reported 27 civilians were killed by military gunfire for "deviating from the designated access routes" while desperately trying to collect food.

On Wednesday, June 4, less than a week ago, the BBC called Gaza "worse than hell on Earth," as the Israeli military closed its aid distribution sites for the day, warning that roads leading to the sites are "combat zones."

How do 2.1 million people get to the aid sites if the roads leading to the sites are combat zones and if each time the food distributions are open, people end up dying because they are shot?

On Sunday, June 8, the New York Times reports that about a half mile from a distribution site, shots were fired and "five people were killed and 123 were wounded."

Yesterday, morning—here we are on Tuesday—Monday, yesterday, June 9, the Associated Press reports "14 people were killed" on their way to a food distribution center.

This is not a plan designed to address the hunger, to end the malnutrition, to end the starvation. This is a plan to make it virtually impossible for the Palestinians to get food while telling the world: Don't worry, we have a distribution plan.

Everyone understands this is not a plan designed to provide food. It is a plan designed to make sure that very little food gets just to a small number of people so that the starvation continues and gets worse, the malnutrition continues and gets worse, the impact on the ravaged bodies of children and babies and women and seniors and all kinds of folks who had nothing ever to do with Hamas continue to decline.

The New York Times interviewed many Gazans who said they go to the distribution sites when they are closed despite the warnings of the Israeli military because they "are desperate for food . . . and seeking to get ahead of large crowds."

If there is only a few boxes and the site is only open for a few minutes, you are willing to wait all night because your family is starving. You want your kids to survive. You want your spouse to survive. You want to survive yourself. Of course, you are going to try to beat the crowd there, but you know it is impossible the food will be sufficient for everyone to walk away with a box of food.

Yesterday, June 9, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation announced the opening of an aid distribution center in a post on its Facebook page, only to post again the center had completed distributions less than 20 minutes later and closed.

It was open for 20 minutes. Of course, you are going to try to beat the crowds. It is only going to be open for a few minutes. There is only going to be a modest number of boxes—nothing that could possibly serve thousands of people, let alone hundreds of thousands, let alone 2.1 million people. Of course, you are going to try to go early.

And the foundation closed a second center "because of the chaos of the surrounding crowds."

Whenever you have starvation, you are going to have chaos around food distribution centers.

Early in this conflict, when I went to Rafah gate in January of 2024, the International Aid Organization said we are pushing to make the point that if there isn't sufficient food, eventually, the trucks carrying food will be raided because people will be desperate. That always happens when people are desperate—not as a particular condition of the situation in Gaza, but wherever people are starving, they are going to raid the trucks to get food.

They won't wait for a warehouse that has very little food in it to open up in

an orderly fashion because there isn't enough food for everyone, so they are going to make that effort to get that food for their families.

So this chaos—this was understood that this would be this way. It is not something that is, if you will, incidental to the plan. It is the plan—not enough food, not enough distribution centers, not open long enough—deliberate effort to make hundreds of thousands of people compete with each other for a few boxes. That is chaos.

Aid groups say the Netanyahu government system will be ineffective in reversing the widespread hunger because not nearly enough food is being allowed in. The United Nations has called the food that is being let in “a drop in the ocean.”

Food is being distributed far from where it is needed most, especially for the elderly and people with disabilities.

How are they going to travel? It is a 40-mile-long strip of land. How are they going to travel if they are disabled, if you are elderly, to compete with hundreds of thousands of people trying to get to just four distribution centers? It is impossible.

Dangerous and deadly chaos at food distribution sites is being fueled not through some clever plan by Hamas, but by the deprivation of starving civilians who hope to keep their families and their children alive. And that desperation is the direct and inevitable result of Netanyahu government's strategy of deliberately imposed starvation.

Even if civilians could make that dangerous journey safely, the amount of aid in this new system is wholly insufficient. During the cease-fire in the winter, 600 trucks a day entered Gaza. Only a few hundred trucks have been allowed into Gaza over the last week, and the World Food Programme reports only one-third of their trucks reached their destination.

A handful of World Food Programme bakeries actually did resume bread production on May 22, but the supplies were so limited that World Food Programme Country Director Antoine Renard warned:

This is just a drop in the bucket of what is needed to reverse the catastrophic levels of hunger.

We are in a race against time to prevent widespread starvation.

The World Food Programme reports that:

Over 140,000 metric tons of food—enough to feed the entire population for two months—is pre-positioned at aid corridors and ready to be brought into Gaza at scale.

Just as I saw in January of 2024—trucks piled up for miles waiting to try to get in. Here we have a World Food Programme reporting that now, again, food is ready to move in, but the Netanyahu government is blocking them.

On June 8, 2 days ago, Janti Soeripto, the CEO of Save the Children told Face the Nation:

When we had the pause in fighting from January 'til March, as you will recall, we got

trucks and trucks of supplies in at scale, [and] we were able to deliver, [and] we treated children with malnutrition, [and] we did vaccinations, [and] we did medical care, [and] hospitals were operating . . .

So this current new mechanism doesn't seem to work. The failings seem to play out exactly the way that we warned against. It is also the militarization of aid—

I am continuing this long quote—

It is the militarization of aid—if you put men with guns near a distribution point and you ask a desperate, desperate, starving population to come and walk for miles to get boxes of food . . . you're going to create crowd control issues and increased risk of harm to an already incredibly desperate population.

That is the end of the quote. And that is exactly what we are seeing happen.

As CNN reported yesterday, June 9:

Aid to Gaza hangs by a thread amid looting and starvation.

Let's be clear: That trickle of aid is not about Prime Minister Netanyahu ending food deprivation as a weapon of war. It is continuing food deprivation as a weapon of war while deflecting just enough international pressure to keep himself in power.

Jonathan Whittall, lead of the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Palestinian Territories, said May 28:

The newly developed distribution scheme is more than just the control of aid. It is engineered scarcity. The new distribution model cannot possibly meet Gaza's needs.

The same day, Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian Authority's representative to United Nations, told the Security Council:

Children are dying of starvation. The images of mothers embracing their motionless bodies, caressing their hair, talking to them, apologizing to them—it's unbearable.

And on May 30, the New York Times reporting led with the headline:

In Emaciated Children, Gaza's Hunger Is Laid Bare.

Every moral and religious code says this is wrong—wrong to withhold food, wrong to induce starvation. And under international law, it is a crime.

Rule 53 of Customary Humanitarian Law states:

The use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare is prohibited.

It isn't prohibited because it was some bureaucratic decision. It is prohibited because it is completely wrong under every religious and moral code—people who had no role—no role—being punished collectively; being punished the way that kills children, kills babies, kills adults.

Other countries are speaking out in opposition to Netanyahu's government's use of food as a weapon.

On May 19, the Governments of the United Kingdom and France and Canada issued a joint statement saying that the amount of food the Netanyahu government is allowing into Gaza is “wholly inadequate.”

Even Israel's leaders from across the political spectrum are speaking out that this is wrong.

Amit Halevi, from Prime Minister Netanyahu's Likud party, said:

This war is a deception [and it] is not succeeding in destroying Hamas.

Yair Golan, the leader of Israel's Democrats party, said in a radio interview:

Israel is on the way to becoming a pariah state, like South Africa was, if we don't return to acting like a sane country. A sane country [that] does not fight against civilians.

Even former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert wrote in the newspaper on May 27:

What we are doing in Gaza now is . . . indiscriminate, limitless, cruel and criminal killing of civilians.

He continued.

. . . Yes, Israel is committing war crimes.

Mr. President and colleagues, this use of food as a weapon of war should never have happened, and it has to end. We know that the United States has such a close relationship with Israel that we can apply multiple levels to push the Netanyahu government to end it.

We have a moral responsibility that is heightened by our close relationship between our two nations. We should have acted long ago to end this strategy—the strategy of malnutrition and starvation. But that provides no excuse for not acting now.

I pressed the Biden administration to act, and I will press the Trump administration to act.

There was that moment of hope in December when Trump said we will address this situation. Colleagues, I have witnessed the horror of starvation in multiple countries around the world.

I believe that if the Netanyahu government would let us as Senators go and witness firsthand, a bipartisan delegation going to Gaza, we would come back and speak from the depths of our hearts, the ferocity of our understanding of right and wrong, that we have to press for this strategy of starvation to end. But we are not allowed in, so we have to depend on the press reports that have come from international organizations who have people on the ground in Gaza, from news reporting, from competent international sources.

We have a profound responsibility to pressure the Netanyahu government to end its strategy of starvation through food deprivation and deliver a massive influx of aid immediately.

It is tempting to look away. There is a lot more going on in the world. But it is wrong to look away. We must carry that responsibility on our consciousness. We must speak and act forcefully to end the Netanyahu government's strategy of deliberately starving 2 million men, women, and children in Gaza.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 25-0P. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 23-72 of September 15, 2023.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 25-0P

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(C) AECA)

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Canada.

(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 23-72; Date: September 15, 2023; Implementing Agency: Air Force.

(iii) Description: On September 15, 2023, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 23-72 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of munitions and other systems to be integrated into MQ-9Bs purchased through Direct Commercial Sales, to include: twelve (12) AN/APY-8 Lynx Synthetic Aperture radars; two hundred nineteen (219) AGM-114R2 Hellfire II missiles; eighteen (18) KMU-572 tail kits for the GBU-38 Joint Direct-Attack Munition (JDAM) and GBU-54 Laser JDAM (LJDAM); twelve (12)

Mk82 500-lb General Purpose (GP) bombs; and six (6) Mk82 Filled Inert bombs. Also included were Due Regard Radars; SAGE 750 and SNC 4500 Electronic Surveillance Measures Systems; AN/ARC-210 radios; Compact Multi-Band Data Link (CMDL); KY-100M Narrowband/Wideband Terminals; KOR-24A Small Tactical Terminals; High-Bandwidth Compact Telemetry Modules (HCTM); KIV-77 cryptographic appliques and other Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) equipment; AN/PYQ-10C Simple Key Loaders (SKL); Common Munitions Built-In-Test/Reprogramming Equipment (CMBRE); FMU-139 Joint Programmable Fuses (JPF); M299 Hellfire launchers and training missiles; DSU-38 Precision Laser Guidance Sets; classified publications and technical documentation; munitions support and support equipment; secure communications, precision navigation, and cryptographic equipment; spare and repair parts, consumables, accessories, and repair and return support; unclassified software delivery and support; testing and integration support and equipment; maps and charts; personnel training and training equipment; transportation support; warranties; studies and surveys; Contractor Logistics Support (CLS); U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost was \$313.4 million. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted \$75.2 million of this total.

This transmittal notifies the inclusion of the following additional MDE items: sixteen (16) Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) KMU-572 tail kits for GBU-38 or Laser JDAM GBU-54; eighteen (18) inert filled Mk-82 bombs; four (4) AN/APY-8 Lynx synthetic aperture radars; and eight (8) Hellfire Captive Air Training Missiles. The following non-MDE items will also be included: M34 Hellfire training missiles; Hellfire support equipment; AN/ALQ-230 Radar Warning Receiver/Electronic Support Measures (RWR/ESM) system; Computer Program Identification Numbers (CPIN); minor and major modifications and kits; aircraft and engine support equipment; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total value of the new items is \$149 million. The estimated MDE value will increase by \$27 million. The estimated non-MDE value will increase by \$122 million to a revised \$360.2 million. The estimated total case value will increase by \$149 million to a revised \$462.4 million. MDE constitutes \$101.2 million of this total.

(iv) Significance: This notification is being provided because the additional MDE items were not enumerated in the original notification. The inclusion of this MDE represents an increase in capability over what was previously notified.

(v) Justification: This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the military capability of Canada, a NATO Ally that is an important force for ensuring political stability and economic progress, and a contributor to military, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations around the world.

(vi) Sensitivity of Technology: The Sensitivity of Technology statement contained in the original notification applies to items reported here.

The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

(vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: June 10, 2025.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act

requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 25-0T. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 15-62 of November 19, 2015.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 25-0T

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(C), AECA)

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 15-62. Date: November 19, 2015, Military Department: Air Force.

(iii) Description: On November 19, 2015, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 15-62 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of three (3) RQ-4 Block 30 (I) Global Hawk Remotely Piloted Aircraft with Integrated Sensor Suite (EISS); eight (8) Kearfott Inertial Navigation System/Global Positioning System (INS/GPS) units (2 per aircraft with 2 spares); and eight (8) LN-251 INS/GPS units (2 per aircraft with 2 spares). Also included were operational-level sensor and aircraft test equipment, ground support equipment, operational flight test support, communications equipment, spare and repair parts, personnel training, publications and technical data, U.S. Government and contractor technical and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support. The total estimated case value was \$1.2 billion. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted \$689 million of this total.

On April 4, 2016, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 0J-16 of the inclusion of two Ground Control Elements (GCE). The GCEs were not enumerated as MDE in the original notification of the Global Hawk RPA system. The total cost of the new MDE items was \$31 million, increasing the total estimated MDE value to \$720 million. The total estimated case value remained \$1.2 billion.