



October 17, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 2052

The Honorable Secretaries Austin and Blinken,

I write today to thank you for the level of coordination and assistance you have graciously given the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in Israel. We want to praise both of your leadership in recognizing the efforts of the NGO community, of which we are proud to be a part, for willingly deploying to Israel to answer the call to assist in the evacuation of American citizens.

After the lessons learned from the Afghanistan withdrawal and the ongoing needs in Ukraine, I applaud both Departments' two-way communication and coordination with the NGOs on the ground. I want to also acknowledge and applaud the public-private-partnerships that have led to securing the safety of American citizens and allies. We must leverage a whole-of-society approach to secure the safety of Americans abroad and eradicate terrorist threats faced by our closest allies around the world. We stand ready and vigilant to assist, as always.

I reiterate my gratitude for your willingness to coordinate with all NGOs on the ground in Israel and look forward to our continued collaboration in the face of such uncertain times.

Sincerely,

David Cook
Executive Director
Special Operations Association of America