

Dear family, friend or acquaintance,

I am part of a group that is organizing a vigil calling on Rep. Jimmy Panetta to boycott Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech to a joint session of Congress on July 24th. The event will take place on Sunday, July 21st, 2-4pm at San Lorenzo Park in Santa Cruz, by the stage, adjacent to Rep. Panetta's district office in the County Building. Please see the petition we are circulating in conjunction with the vigil (below). On behalf of the organizing team, I am inviting you to attend the vigil, which will include music and speakers.

Our goal is to bring attention to the gap between Rep. Panetta's unwavering support for the Israeli government's policies towards the population of Gaza and the West Bank and the public's cry for a permanent ceasefire and a just peace. We envision this event as a way to build our pro-peace community in the spirit of nonviolent expression.

The organizers of this event include people from all four counties in Rep. Panetta's district who have been active in peace groups; religious congregations; Palestine solidarity groups; Jewish pro-peace groups; nonviolence organizations; and trade unions. We plan a 5-day vigil for Hiroshima Week, August 5-9th, at Panetta's offices in the district.

If you are available for the July 21 event and/or during Aug 5-9th, I look forward to talking with you to discuss your participation.

Thank you,

(Below is a letter sent to Rep. Panetta:

*** Join the Boycott of Netanyahu's Address to Congress
A Needed Step Towards Peace**

Dear Rep. Panetta,

You have an important opportunity to demonstrate compassion for the population of Gaza by joining other Members of Congress in boycotting Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to Congress. The list of leaders intending to boycott the speech includes Senators Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, Chris Van Hollen, and Representatives Nancy Pelosi, Jim Clyburn, and Ro Khanna.

Senator Sanders put it clearly, "What we are seeing now is starvation and famine impacting thousands and thousands of children. The architect of that policy is not somebody you honor by bringing to the United States Congress." What Sanders is seeing is confirmed by UN and human rights organizations:

- In a [joint statement](#), Oxfam and Human Rights Watch "have observed or documented that the Israeli authorities have carried out indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks in violation of international humanitarian law following the Hamas-led October 7 attacks in Israel, imposed collective punishments on the civilian population, deprived the civilian population of objects indispensable to its survival, and used starvation of civilians as a weapon of war."
- In May 2024, the [International Criminal Court's prosecutor requested arrest warrants](#) for Netanyahu and Hamas leaders, presenting evidence of intentional attacks on civilians and "starvation as a method of warfare."
- In June 2024, the [UN Commission of Inquiry report labeled Israeli and Hamas actions as "crimes against humanity"](#).

Inviting Netanyahu to the Congress undermines the current ceasefire plan that President Biden and you have supported. Netanyahu's response to the ceasefire plan is that Israel will not end the war until Hamas is destroyed.

Members of Congress who attend Netanyahu's speech will be sending a message that they support or tolerate his actions. We expect our elected representatives to support international humanitarian law, not honor a violator of international law with an invitation to Congress. Please announce that you won't be attending the Netanyahu speech.

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