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May 23, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street, NW
Room 7226
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write out of deep concern over the welfare of Evan Gershkovich, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter wrongfully detained and accused of espionage by the Russian authorities on March 29, 2023. We appreciate everything you have done to date and urge you to continue to take every step in your power to bring Evan home.

While this case presents the broad policy implications of a foreign government detaining a United States journalist, on what we understand from your statements are groundless charges, for us, this is personal. Evan and his family are members of our American Jewish community. We are very concerned about Evan's well-being, particularly given the record of Russian detention of Americans in various cases for months and years.

As you know, Evan's parents fled the Soviet Union and the antisemitism Jews faced there in 1979, seeking freedom and opportunity in the United States. Like many in our community, Evan was raised with a deep appreciation for the promise of the American dream. His story is one that all American Jews can relate to and has galvanized our community to act to ensure his safe return.

Thank you for designating Evan as wrongfully detained, pursuant to the Robert Levinson Act. With this designation, you have sent a strong signal that we do not consent to Russia's actions and will do all that we can to bring Evan home. Importantly, we appreciate that this designation creates the impetus for Special Presidential

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Envoy for Hostage Affairs Roger Carstens to convene our government's broad expertise and efforts on Evan's behalf. We have seen Envoy Carstens' statements in the media as evidence of his attention to this case.

We are also grateful for all that you and Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield have done in leading a coalition of UN Member States in support of Evan's release. This multi-lateral statement is very important to send the Russian government a clear message.

With the President's vocal support, including at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, and bipartisan Congressional interest, there has been a clear message from Washington that Evan Gershkovich must be released.

Our community stands ready to fully support you and your colleagues in our government and again urges you to use all available tools to bring Evan home as soon as possible.

Thank you,

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Buffalo Jewish Federation

Center for Jewish
Philanthropy of Greater
Phoenix

Charleston Jewish
Federation

Community Relations Council
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the Lehigh Valley

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