



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

JUL 27 2016

The Honorable
Betty McCollum
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. McCollum:

Thank you for your letter of June 20 to President Obama concerning Palestinian children. We share both your concern over the conditions under which some of these children are living, and your commitment to protect their right to grow up with dignity and opportunity. We have been asked to respond on the President's behalf.

We remain deeply troubled by the ongoing violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories. As you mention, Palestinian minors are among those who have conducted attacks in recent months, and we join you in condemning these acts in the strongest possible terms. Acts of terrorism such as these can never be condoned, and we continue to urge both Israelis and Palestinians to do more to calm tensions and bring an immediate end to the violence.

We share your concerns about reports of alleged mistreatment of Palestinian children held in Israeli detention centers. We closely monitor these issues and you can find additional details in our annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. We will continue to engage with the Government of Israel on the implementation of policies to make the military detention system more humane, especially as it relates to minors.

One important reason for continuing to work toward a two-state solution is so that all the region's children can live safe, healthy lives. We continue to call on both sides to demonstrate with policies and actions their commitment to the two-state solution, and we stand ready to support them as they take meaningful steps toward this goal.

Because our Embassy in Tel Aviv, our Consulate General in Jerusalem, and our Special Envoy for Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations have been deeply involved in all of these issues that so significantly affect the lives of Palestinian children, we believe that they are best placed at this time to carry out the important work that

you suggest. Their ongoing work with Palestinian youth, human rights and legal experts, NGOs, and government officials is an essential element in our work to ensure respect for the human rights of all Palestinian children, and we fully expect their work to continue to establish a framework for the next U.S. administration.

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julia Frifield
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs