



Palestinian National Authority
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Deputy Office

His Excellency President Barack Obama,
President of the United States of America.

June 3rd 2009

Dear Mr. President,

We welcome your visit to the Arab world and your administration's initiative to bridge differences with the Arab-Muslim world.

One long-standing source of tension between the United States and this part of the world has been the failure to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict.

It is therefore unfortunate that you will not visit Gaza during your trip to the Middle East and that neither your Secretary of State nor George Mitchell have come to hear our point of view.

We have received numerous visits recently from people of widely varied backgrounds: U.S. Congressional representatives, European parliamentarians, the U.N.-appointed Goldstone commission, and grassroots delegations such as those organized by the U.S. peace group CODEPINK.

It is essential for you to visit Gaza. We have recently passed through a brutal 22-day Israeli attack. Amnesty International observed that the death and destruction Gaza suffered during the invasion could not have happened without U.S.-supplied weapons and U.S.-taxpayers' money.

Human Rights Watch has documented that the white phosphorus Israel dropped on a school, hospital, United Nations warehouse and civilian neighborhoods in Gaza was manufactured in the United States. Human Rights Watch concluded that Israel's use of this white phosphorus was a war crime.

Shouldn't you see first-hand how Israel used your arms and spent your money?

Before becoming president you were a distinguished professor of law. The U.S. government has also said that it wants to foster the rule of law in the Arab-Muslim world.

The International Court of Justice stated in July 2004 that the whole of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem are occupied Palestinian territories designated for Palestinian self-determination, and that the Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal.



Palestinian National Authority
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Deputy Office

Not one of the 15 judges sitting on the highest judicial body in the world dissented from these principles.

The main human rights organizations in the world, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have issued position papers supporting the right of the Palestinian refugees to return and compensation.

Each year in the United Nations General Assembly nearly every country in the world has supported these principles for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict. Every year the Arab League puts forth a peace proposal based on these principles for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Leading human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch have also stated that Israel's siege of Gaza is a form of collective punishment and therefore illegal under international law.

We in the Hamas Government are committed to pursuing a just resolution to the conflict not in contradiction with the international community and enlightened opinion as expressed in the International Court of Justice, the United Nations General Assembly, and leading human rights organizations. We are prepared to engage all parties on the basis of mutual respect and without preconditions.

However, our constituency needs to see a comprehensive paradigm shift that not only commences with lifting the siege on Gaza and halts all settlement building and expansion but develops into a policy of evenhandedness based on the very international law and norms we are prodded into adhering to.

Again, we welcome you to Gaza which would allow you to see firsthand our ground zero. Furthermore, it would enhance the US position; enabling you to speak with new credibility and authority in dealing with all the parties.

Very Truly Yours,

Dr. Ahmed Yousef
Deputy of the Foreign Affairs Ministry
Former Senior Political Advisor
to Prime Minister Ismael Hanniya