

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are hopeful that your upcoming visit to Israel and Saudi Arabia will be fruitful and help pave the way toward direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and, with that, hopefully usher in an era of broad acceptance of Israel in the region.

As you and your representatives explore ways to help lay the foundation for a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, it is important to remember that the only path to a meaningful peace resulting in two states for two peoples, a democratic Jewish state of Israel and a demilitarized Palestinian state, is through direct bilateral negotiations without preconditions. History shows that Israel has been willing to enter into talks and make painful sacrifices for peace if and when it believes there is a sincere and capable partner with whom it can negotiate. Unfortunately, at times when Israel has taken significant steps toward peace, Palestinian leaders have refused to even respond to meaningful proposals.

We hope you will urge the Palestinian Authority leadership to take a number of important steps toward lasting peace. First, the Palestinian Authority must cease its glorification of terror and its incitement to violence against Israel. The Palestinian Authority must cease payments to the families of terrorists who are, or were, in Israeli jail or to the families of those who were killed in their efforts to perpetrate terror. These kinds of payments only incentivize terrorism. It must cease to name buildings, schools and town squares after terrorists who have murdered innocent civilians. Ultimately, for a true and lasting peace, the Palestinian leadership must educate the next generation for peace and coexistence, not support for terrorism.

And finally, the Palestinian Authority must cease efforts to isolate and delegitimize Israel at the United Nations and other international bodies, including its efforts to circumvent direct negotiations by seeking unilateral statehood through these bodies.

As Members of Congress deeply committed to the U.S. – Israel relationship, we look forward to continuing our cooperation with Israel on a broad array of issues. We value our shared commitment to human rights and democracy, and we remain hopeful that meaningful peace will result in lasting security and prosperity for both Israel and the Palestinians.

Mr. President, your trip presents an important opportunity to lay the foundation for a return to direct negotiations, with the goal of a lasting peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. We stand ready to assist you in this important effort.

Sincerely,



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

Chairman

Subcommittee on the Middle East
and North Africa



TED DEUTCH

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on the Middle East
and North Africa