



## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

June 11, 2020

H.E. David Friedman  
U.S. Ambassador to Israel

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

We are supporters of the security and safety of Israelis and Palestinians writing to express concern with reports of acts of violence perpetrated against Palestinians living in the West Bank by residents of Israeli settlements. We ask you to join us in strongly condemning all acts of violence, whether perpetrated against Israelis or Palestinians.

According to Israeli media, Israeli human rights experts and the United Nations, there has been a sharp increase in these violent acts as both Israeli and Palestinian authorities have necessarily refocused their efforts on combating the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing containment measures like shut downs and curfews. Incidents of violence against Palestinians committed by settlers increased 78% in the last two weeks of March. These acts include physical assault, uprooting of Palestinian-owned olive trees, and stoning of vehicles driven by Palestinians. The rise in attacks is being attributed by UN officials and Israeli security services partially to school closures at settlements in the West Bank. As both Israelis and Palestinians are methodically combating the spread of COVID-19, any increase in violence between Israelis and Palestinians only makes it more difficult to address the growing public health crisis.

This spike amid the Coronavirus pandemic follows on already significant increases in settler violence against Palestinians over the last two years. As reported by the [New York Times](#), “attacks by settlers on Palestinians and their property... increased by 50 percent” in 2018. In [2019](#), documented incidents of violence against Palestinians rose another 40%. During this same time period, the UN recorded a steady decrease in the number of incidents committed by Palestinians against settlement residents - attacks which Congress has rightly and repeatedly condemned.

As supporters of the safety and security of Israelis and Palestinians, we grieve for each family that has suffered harm or lost a loved one to this conflict. There is no doubt that such incidents, in addition to causing tragic suffering, harm the prospects for a negotiated two-state solution to the conflict that is in each of Israel’s, the Palestinians’ and US interests. We believe the United States must condemn all acts of violence that pull us further away from peace and should make its condemnation clear whether the victim is Israeli or Palestinian. We therefore urge you to urgently and publicly speak out against settler violence and work with relevant Israeli authorities to address both the spike in attacks during the Coronavirus crisis and the overall surge in such violence in the past two years.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alama S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

/s/  
André Carson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

/s/  
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

/s/  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Donald M. Payne Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

/s/  
David E. Price  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Michael F. Q. San Nicolas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

/s/  
José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress