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CMEP to Secretary Clinton on Sheikh Jarrah Evictions (August 7, 2009)

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

We are writing to express our grave concern about the eviction of 50 Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah section of East Jerusalem in the early morning hours of August 2, 2009. Witnesses reported that almost immediately Israeli settlers moved into the houses to replace the Palestinians.

The houses in question were built in the 1950s during the period of Jordanian administration of East Jerusalem. While the legal issues in the case are disputed, it is clear that carrying out this eviction order at this time is provocative. We thank you and deeply appreciate your statement of August 3 that "eviction of families...in East Jerusalem is not in keeping with Israeli obligations."

This population substitution is clearly designed to continue efforts to expand Israeli presence and control over Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem. This action took place in the sensitive Sheikh Jarrah section of East Jerusalem close to the 1949 Armistice Line or Green Line. A home eviction order at this time and in this place is not a mere matter of local law enforcement, but raises significant international political issues. It contradicts terms of the Road Map brokered by the United States and agreed to by both Israeli and Palestinian representatives to refrain from activities that could undermine progress towards a peace agreement. It also undercuts U.S. efforts to create an environment for starting talks for a comprehensive peace agreement and is therefore harmful to both the Palestinians and Israelis hopes for peace.

For these reasons a U.S. response that is limited to official protests is not sufficient. We urge the Department of State to insist on the immediate reversal of this ill-considered eviction and on the restoration of these houses to their former residents.

Yours most sincerely,

Very Rev. Thomas Cassidy, SCJ.
President
Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Institutes

Paula Clayton Dempsey
Minister for Partnership Relations
Alliance of Baptists

Marie Dennis
Director
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Reformed Church in America

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Howard J. Hubbard
Chairman
Committee on International Justice and Peace
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church

Margaret Mary Kimmins, OSF
President
Franciscan Action Network

Antonios Kireopoulos
Senior Program Director for Faith and Order
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National Council of Churches

Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach
Director
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office

Rev. John L. McCullough
Executive Director and CEO
Church World Service

Mary Ellen McNish
General Secretary
American Friends Service Committee

Gregory V. Palmer
President
United Methodist Council of Bishops

Rev. Grady Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church, (USA)

John H. Thomas
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Joe Volk
Executive Secretary
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Sharon E. Watkins
General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

Church of the Brethren, Global Mission Partners

[Click here to see the response from the U.S. State Department.](#)
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