

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

July 5, 2023

**Re: Request for Meeting with Concerned Leaders, Organizations and Urgent Action
Regarding Israeli Settler & Military Attacks**

Dear President Biden and Secretary Blinken:

We, the undersigned 72 local and national organizations, write this letter to urgently request your immediate action in response to the escalating Israeli settler attacks that have occurred under the watch of the Israeli army. We also request a rapid crisis-response meeting with concerned local and national American organizations and organizers to discuss these pressing issues.

During the past two weeks, dozens of Israeli settlers, some of whom may also be American citizens, recently carried out violent attacks on the Palestinian villages of Al-Lubban ash-Sharqiya and Turmusayya in the occupied West Bank. These attacks involved the destruction of property, including arson and stone-throwing, resulting in damage to cars, homes, and businesses. Disturbingly, numerous Palestinians sustained injuries from live fire, either from settlers or soldiers. This situation is deeply troubling as it indicates a gross failure on the part of Israeli authorities to protect Palestinian lives and property.

On Monday evening, June 19th, these settlers not only targeted Palestinians but also blocked major roads throughout the West Bank, obstructing the movement of innocent civilians. Eyewitnesses reported a horrifying incident in which a settler deliberately drove his car into a 12-year-old Palestinian boy riding a bicycle, subsequently attacking him with a rifle butt.

Furthermore, around 10:30 P.M., over a hundred settlers gathered near Route 60 at the entrance to Al-Lubban ash-Sharqiya, initiating a rampage that resulted in the damage of many vehicles, the destruction of many homes, and the vandalism of shops and gas stations.

Additionally, Israeli settlers caused harm to a wheat warehouse, agricultural fields, and electricity poles. Settlers [vandalized a mosque](#) and tore up copies of the Quran and [set fire](#) to a school in Urif. They also cut off electricity to the entire village.

It is important to note that many of the Palestinian civilians targeted in the town of Turmus Ayya are American citizens, heightening the urgency of this matter. These incidents bear an uncanny resemblance to wanton violent riots carried out by Israeli settlers targeting local Palestinians in the town of Huwara earlier this year.

Despite the presence of the army and the police throughout these wanton attacks, they did not intervene to prevent the violence. Instead, they protected the settlers, allowing them to act with impunity. Yesh Din, an Israeli anti-occupation NGO, released the following statement documenting settler violence in various locations, including Al-Lubban ash Sharqiya, Za'atara Junction, Yitzhar Junction, Huwara, Qabalan, and Bitin:

"Although there were warnings in advance, as well as experience from the pogrom in Huwara, once again the army did not intervene and let the rioters do as they pleased. Israel's message to the settlers is clear: the monopoly over power is in your hands."

This failure to address settler violence effectively sends a clear message that the monopoly over power lies in the hands of the settlers, thus perpetuating a cycle of violence and injustice.

On Wednesday, June 21, settler attacks spread to the village of Turmus Ayya near Ramallah. They attacked Palestinian residents, destroyed their property, which resulted in Omar Quttain, a 27-year-old Palestinian, being shot dead. Quttain's wife and children are reportedly U.S. citizens. Palestinians in the West Bank town were left to deal with burned-out buildings and cars after hundreds of Israeli settlers continued to riot while Israeli soldiers protected them.

Illinois State Representative Abdelnasser Rashid was also visiting his family with his wife and three children in the West Bank when he stated that his hometown had been targeted by a violent mob. Rashid, who grew up in the Palestinian village of Turmus Ayya, located approximately 25 miles north of Jerusalem, expressed his profound disappointment, stating, "What was intended to be a vacation turned into an absolute nightmare."

Additionally, it has come to our attention that the Israeli Cabinet on Sunday, June 25th, granted far-right finance minister Bezalel Smotrich the unprecedented authority to approve and expedite 4,500 new units of illegal settlement expansion. Smotrich, who handles civil administration in the West Bank, has previously said, "I think the village of Huwara needs to be wiped out. I think the state of Israel should do it."

This decision, which was met with deep concern by your administration, has further exacerbated the already dire situation. While Smotrich oversees the process of illegal settlement expansion, the Israeli government and settlers continue to commit horrific attacks against Palestinians.

Israel has been launching large-scale military campaigns in the Occupied West Bank cities of Jenin, Nablus and other cities, conducting air strikes on several buildings as armored vehicles advanced through civilian neighborhoods, many innocent people including children and women have been killed. In the city of Jenin, the Israeli army has targeted apartment buildings, medics, ambulances, journalists, and media centers. Israeli forces and settlers have killed more than 163 Palestinians this year, including 27 children.

According to widespread reports, it has been documented that more than 129 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by the Israeli military and settlers. Additionally, 34 more Palestinians have been reported killed in the Gaza Strip.

We strongly urge your administration to take decisive action by holding Israel accountable and enforcing the Leahy Law, ensuring that not a single dollar of U.S. military aid to Israel is used for purposes such as the military detention of Palestinian children, the demolition of Palestinian homes, or the annexation of Palestinian territories.

In light of these alarming developments, we urge your administration to prioritize the protection of Palestinians, including American Palestinians, in the West Bank and Gaza and address the injustices they face. Furthermore, we kindly request a meeting with us and other concerned organizations to discuss these urgent matters and explore possible avenues for collaboration.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. You may contact the organizers of this letter—Texas Arab American Democrats, American Federation of Ramallah Palestine, and Palestinian American Organizations Network—by contacting Mr. Morgan Abu Mahmoud at palestinesolidarity@gmail.com or aademtexas@gmail.com or Ms. Alia El-Assar at 1- 407-808-3601 or alia.lassar@afrip.Org . We look forward to your swift response.

Sincerely,

Al-Hedayah Islamic Center

Al-Awda: The Palestinian Right to Return Coalition

Alsekeh News Media

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

American Federation of Ramallah Palestine

American Friends of Combatants for Peace (AFCFP)

American Muslims For Palestine (AMP-Chicago)

Beit Sahour USA

Churches for Middle East Peace

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Dallas Palestine Coalition

Dallas Peace and Justice Center

East Montgomery Islamic Society

Emgage Foundation Inc.

Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation

IfNotNow Movement

Indivisible Austin

Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Islamic Center of Euless, TX

Islamic Center of Irving (ICI)

Islamic Community Center of Atlanta (ICCA)

Jerusalem Center

The Jerusalem Conference and Shido Alrihal

Jewish Voice For Peace (JVP)

Jews For Palestinian Right of Return

Joining Hands for Justice In Palestine And Israel Inc.

Muslim Delegates and Allies Coalition

Muslim Democratic Caucus of Texas

National Arab American Women's Association (NAAWA)

Nahda Center

New Dominion PAC

North Texas Islamic Council (NTIC)

North Texas Peace Advocates

Palestine Aid Society—Detroit

Palestinian American Council

Palestinian American Council – Chicago

Palestinian American Council – Dallas

Palestinian American Council – Houston

Palestinian American Council – Tennessee

Palestinian American Community Center

Palestine American League

Palestinian American Organizations Network (PAON)

Palestinian American Woman Association

Palestinian Assembly for Liberation

The Palestinian Democratic Coalition

Palestinian House of New England

Plowshare Peace and Justice Center, Roanoke, Virginia

Rebuilding Alliance

SWCP

Somos Tejas

Texas Arab American Democrats

Texas Coalition of Black Democrats

Texas Progressive Caucus

United Against Oppression

US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO)

US Palestinian Council (USPC)

Veterans For Peace, North Texas

US Citizens of Turmusayya

Voices for Justice in Palestine

WeRHuman