



To the Israeli ambassador to The Netherlands
Attn. Mr. Haim Divon
Buitenhof 47
2513 AH Den Haag
The Netherlands

Ref: Letter of concern

Date: 11 July 2014

Your Excellency,

In the once again escalated war already many civilians on Palestinian side are killed and wounded. We urge the Israeli military and Palestinian armed groups to refrain from indiscriminate air strikes in densely populated areas or direct attacks on civilian targets. Indiscriminate and disproportional attacks are prohibited under humanitarian law. We have repeatedly condemned the firing of indiscriminate rockets into Israel which can not be aimed accurately at military targets. All parties in the conflict have the obligation to fully respect the laws of war. Israel has a right to self-defence but as the stronger military party, we urge you to avoid military steps that will lead to more civilian casualties and take the responsibility to find a just and permanent solution to the conflict.

For the violence that is unleashed and that could lead to a third Intifada, the Israeli leadership holds a big responsibility. However we also hold militant groups on Palestinian side responsible for their part in the current situation. We welcome the restraint that the Palestinian leadership has showed during the intimidating and violent search for the suspects of the kidnapping and murder of the Israeli teenagers. States and government leaders must send a clear message that they will not facilitate further violations of international humanitarian law.

The violence that is now going on is a consequence of a series of incidents starting on the 12th of June 2014 with the abduction and murder on three Israeli teenagers. Abducting and killing civilians is always an unjustifiable crime. It goes against every feeling of humanity and against any national and international law.

The murder of the Israeli teenagers however cannot justify the violence and injustices Israel's leading politicians and institutions have unleashed in the West Bank since the kidnapping of the three boys. The way the Israeli army was allowed to perform its search of the kidnapped boys and the kidnapers turned into a collective punishment for Palestinians living in the West Bank. The forced arrests of hundreds of Palestinians, the severe restrictions on freedom of movement, the wide spread use of administrative detention, the fatal shootings of at least ten Palestinians, the raids and the senseless destroying of houses and other goods of the suspect's families and others families, who are not alleged to have played any role in the murders, by the Israeli army are violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

In Israel, in the search for the suspects of kidnapping and murder, the rule of law as far as it concerns Palestinian suspects, seems to be replaced by the rule of revenge. The Israeli mobs in the street shouting 'death to the Arabs' are a shock to all Western people to whom Israel tends to feel affiliated. The killing of a Palestinian teenager, who was burned alive, and other 'price tag' attacks by Israeli settlers on innocent Palestinians is a sad proof of the injustice and the lack of security that Palestinian people face, both in the West Bank and in Gaza. But it is also proof of the negative impact occupation has on the morals of the occupying power. Who ever oppresses people and commits injustice will in the long term lose its own humanity and feels the need to dehumanise its opponents and victims.

We are also deeply concerned by the prompt attempt by prime-minister Netanyahu and the Israeli cabinet to politically use the kidnapping and murder of the three Israeli teenagers to delegitimize the Palestinian unity government that is based on the acceptance of the three Quartet conditions: recognising the state of Israel, renouncing violence and acceptance of previous agreements. Palestinian unity is a basis for any peaceful solution to the conflict.

We will continue our support to our Israeli and Palestinian partners who try to keep up humanity and strive for a negotiated and just settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leading to a two state solution. We believe in the possibilities of a strong, secure and democratic Israeli state living peacefully side by side with the Palestinian state and other neighbour states in the Middle East

We urge Israel, for the sake of the Palestinians but also for the sake of the future of Israel itself, to end the settlement policies and end the occupation, and – in a joint effort with the Palestinian leadership - work towards a just and lasting solution of the conflict that guarantees respect of human rights, human dignity and human security on both sides.

May I ask you to convey our concerns to the Israeli authorities.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Gruiters

General director PAX

