



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

June 28, 2016

His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu:

I write today concerning the recent demolitions of private Palestinian property in Susiya, a village in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank. I strongly urge your government to halt these demolitions while negotiations between the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) and the villagers continue.

As you may recall, I have long been concerned with the plight of Susiya. We have exchanged multiple letters on the matter, most recently on November 25, 2015. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet some of the families that currently live in the village, many with small children. I have also discussed the issue with multiple visiting delegations, including with Chairman Tzachi Hanegbi, as well as with representatives of the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority.

On June 19, 2016, Israeli authorities demolished two residential buildings, an animal pen and an external kitchen in Susiya. The demolitions appear to have taken place notwithstanding your previous correspondence with me that your government would seek a negotiated resolution.

Israeli authorities first rejected Susiya's proposed master plan in 2013. Astonishingly, Israeli authorities suggested that the villagers relocate to the nearby village of Yatta—away from their agricultural lands—because of the high cost of providing basic services to present-day Susiya. The authorities' suggestion that it would be too expensive to provide these services to Palestinian villagers stands in marked contrast to the provision of electricity and water services to the nearby Israeli settlement of Susiya, which is estimated to have 1,000 residents, four times as many Palestinians that live in Susiya year-round.

Since the ICA first rejected Susiya's proposed master plan, the Palestinian villagers have sought to have the Israeli High Court of Justice review the ICA's

decision. While demolition orders against nearly all of Susiya's structures remain enforceable, your government pledged not to enforce them while negotiations were ongoing. I understand that negotiations are indeed continuing, and that the High Court has requested that the State and the petitioners appear before it in August for an update on the matter.

As the State and the villagers continue to negotiate, I renew my request that your government not enforce demolition orders against private Palestinian property built on private Palestinian land. With respect to the underlying issue of the village's proposed master plan, I strongly encourage the ICA to reconsider its decision to reject the plan. For a two-state solution to ever come to fruition, it is paramount that Palestinians be permitted to build and farm on their own lands.

I strongly support Israel as a Jewish, democratic state and firmly believe that the United States has a special obligation to assist Israel's security. That is why I have—year after year—supported hundreds of millions of dollars in additional assistance for Israel's missile defenses and why I intend to support the largest ever bilateral aid package currently being negotiated between our two governments.

However, demolishing civilian structures and displacing innocent families from their own land in the West Bank undermines Israel's security and isolates it from the community of nations. I encourage your government to do what it can to allow Susiya to live in peace so that it can become a visible demonstration of your commitment to a two-state solution.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF:cg

*Thank you for your consideration
of this matter which is of
importance to me.
And best regards,
Dianne*