



ראש הממשלה
Prime Minister

August 11, 2015

Dear Senator Feinstein,

Thank you for your letter.

The issue you raised concerns a small number of illegally built Palestinian structures adjacent to an ancient Jewish archeological site in the southern area of Mount Hebron. These structures have been the subject of an ongoing review by Israel's Supreme Court.

Contrary to Palestinian claims that the area has been inhabited for decades, only a handful of families resided there in the 1980s. Over the years, the alleged owners of the structures continued to expand their illegal construction by exploiting a cease and desist order that temporarily prohibited Israel from demolishing these structures.

On May 4, 2015, having found that the petitioners continued to build illegally and in violation of judicial rulings, the Supreme Court declined to issue another temporary injunction preventing the demolitions.

Nevertheless, on July 7, 2015, following a joint request by the petitioners and the State, the Supreme Court decided to give the parties more time to reach a compromise through mutual dialogue. The government is committed to reaching such a compromise in the 60 days granted by the court.

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-0504
USA

Jerusalem, Israel

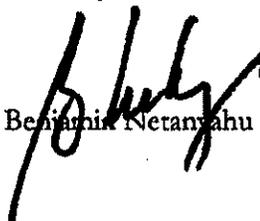


Israel has proposed suitable solutions that address the needs of the petitioners. We have offered them plots of a similar, if not higher, quality in a nearby area that already meets planning and zoning laws and offers access to infrastructure and educational facilities that are not available in their current location. Additionally, they will be allowed to continue cultivating the lands over which they claim ownership.

The future of the settlements is one of the core issues to be addressed in direct negotiations with the Palestinians. Israel has repeatedly called on the Palestinian leadership to return to the negotiating table without preconditions in order to advance our vision of two states for two peoples, based on mutual recognition and robust security arrangements. If the Palestinians return to peace talks, they will find in me a genuine partner who is ready and willing to negotiate all outstanding issues seriously and in good faith.

I thank you for taking the time to express your views and concerns.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Netanyahu