

United States Department of State

Assistant Secretary of State for
Near Eastern Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20520-6258

December 5, 2014

Ms. Shan Cretin
General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Cretin:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Kerry regarding reported Israeli plans to relocate Bedouin communities in the West Bank. I have been asked to respond on the Secretary's behalf.

The United States is deeply concerned by the tensions prevailing in Jerusalem and the West Bank. We continue to urge Israeli and Palestinian leaders to exercise decisive leadership in working cooperatively together to lower tensions and discourage violence. We have long opposed provocative unilateral actions by either side that could increase tensions and seek to predetermine outcomes that can only be reached through negotiations. In this light, we have expressed our concerns about Israeli demolitions, evictions, and relocations of Palestinian communities in Area C of the West Bank. These actions have an impact beyond the Palestinian individuals and families that are directly affected. They undermine the trust and confidence that is necessary to move toward peace.

The Administration shares your deep concern regarding the negative impact that any movement toward settlement construction in the E-1 area would have on the viability of the two-state solution. We have made our position on E-1 clear to Israel's senior leaders, and we will continue to oppose any efforts to expand settlements as we engage the government.

We recognize that Palestinians living in Area C will make vital contributions to the economic viability of a future Palestinian state. The United States will continue to work with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to support development projects in Area C, including agricultural, educational, health, and infrastructure projects, to help these communities build a better future.

Thank you again for your attention to these critical issues, and for the contributions of your organizations to the pursuit of peace.

Sincerely,



Anne W. Patterson