

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

January X, 2009

Dear Secretary of State Rice,

I am deeply troubled by Israel's attacks on the occupied Gaza Strip and request you to use the full power and influence of the United States to: 1) establish an unconditional and immediate cease-fire; 2) ensure complete access of humanitarian goods to the Gaza Strip and lift Israel's siege; and 3) hold Israel accountable for its misuse of U.S. weapons as required by the Arms Export Control Act and Foreign Assistance Act and international law.

Israel has killed at least 375 Palestinians, including at least 60 civilians according to the UN, through the first four days of brutal attacks on the occupied Gaza Strip. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has threatened that this is merely "the first stage."

Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip are being carried out with F16 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, naval gunboats, and missiles all provided to Israel by the United States with U.S. tax dollars.

From 2001-2006, the United States transferred to Israel more than \$200 million worth of spare parts to fly its fleet of F16's and more than \$100 million worth of helicopter spare parts for its fleet of Apaches. In July 2008, the United States gave Israel 186 million gallons of JP-8 aviation jet fuel and signed a contract to transfer an addition \$1.9 billion worth of littoral combat ships to the Israeli navy. Last year, the United States signed a \$1.3 billion contract with Raytheon to transfer to Israel thousands of TOW, Hellfire, and "bunker buster" missiles.

Israel's war on the Gaza Strip would not be possible without the jets, helicopters, ships, missiles, and fuel provided by the United States. In view of the central role that the United States has played in arming and enabling Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip, I am asking you to:

1) **Demand an immediate and unconditional cease-fire.**

2) **Ensure complete access of humanitarian goods to the Gaza Strip and lift Israel's siege.** Israel's attacks come on top of a brutal siege of the Gaza Strip, which has created a humanitarian catastrophe of dire proportions for Gaza's 1.5 million Palestinian residents by restricting the provision of food, fuel, medicine, electricity, and other necessities of life.

This siege is a form of collective punishment and a war crime outlawed by the Fourth Geneva Convention. Article 33 reads "No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited...Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited." As the occupying power of the Gaza Strip, under Articles 55 and 56, Israel "has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population" and "ensuring and maintaining...the medical and hospital establishments and services, public health and hygiene". Article 59 states that "If the whole or part of the population of an occupied territory is inadequately supplied, the Occupying Power shall agree to relief schemes on behalf of the said population, and shall facilitate them by all the means at its

disposal...All Contracting Parties shall permit the free passage of these consignments and shall guarantee their protection.”

As High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, according to Article 1, both the United States and Israel have a solemn obligation to “respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances.”

3. Hold Israel accountable for its misuse of U.S. weapons. The United States cannot continue to transfer arms to Israel while U.S. weapons are being misused by Israel to commit grave breaches of international law and human rights standards. The Arms Export Control Act (Public Law 90-829) limits the use of U.S. weapons given or sold to a foreign country to “internal security” and “legitimate self-defense” and prevents their use against civilians. The Foreign Assistance Act (Public Law 87-195), Section 116, states that "No assistance may be provided under this part to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights".

The United States must initiate a complete investigation into Israel's misuse of U.S. weapons and hold Israel accountable for violations of U.S. law including applying the required sanctions specified in the laws cited above.