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NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE nlginternational.org
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Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Urgent intervention needed by the US Government regarding the electricity crisis in Gaza

2 November 2017

Dear Secretary Tillerson,

The National Lawyers Guild, whose membership includes lawyers, legal workers, jailhouse lawyers, and law students, was formed in 1937 as the United States' first racially-integrated bar association to advocate for the protection of constitutional, human and civil rights. The NLG's International Committee is committed to the promotion of human rights and justice around the world and the NLG's Palestine Subcommittee is particularly committed to human rights and justice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We are writing to request that the US Government immediately exert pressure on the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority in regard to their respective breaches of international law obligations through their actions causing the ongoing crippling electricity crisis in Gaza.

The electricity reduction of 40 per cent implemented by Israel following its security cabinet decision of June 11, 2017 has serious human rights and humanitarian consequences for the entire population of Gaza. This reduction is particularly alarming considering before June 2017, the Gaza Strip was already without sufficient electricity, receiving less than half of its electricity needs. The new cuts leaves Gaza with only four hours of electricity per day. Without adequate electricity supply, it is impossible to provide adequate minimum standards of health, education and welfare services. The electricity crisis is exacerbating a desperate situation for the people of Gaza who have lived under an illegal closure imposed and sustained by successive Israeli governments since June 2007.

The Government of Israel is in violation of its legal obligations, as an occupying power, under international humanitarian and human rights law in regard to its ongoing action causing the

electricity crisis by implementing its June 11th security cabinet decision to reduce electricity supply to Gaza by 40 per cent.

The Palestinian Authority is in serious breach of its international human rights law obligations in relation to its role causing the crisis through the appalling request it made to the Government of Israel to cut the amount of electricity supplied to Gaza by 40 per cent.

In light of the ongoing grave electricity crisis in Gaza, we ask that you take the following steps, if they have not already been taken:

1. Urge Israel to act in accordance with its international humanitarian and human rights law obligations as an occupying power, by immediately rescinding its security cabinet decision of June 11, 2017 to cut its electricity supply to Gaza by 40 per cent.
2. Urge the Palestinian Authority to act in accordance with its international human rights law obligations, by immediately rescinding its request to Israel to reduce its electricity supply to Gaza by 40 per cent.
3. Criticize the decisions made by Israel and the Palestinian Authority directly causing the ongoing electricity crisis as being in breach of international law obligations owed to the people of Gaza with serious human rights and humanitarian consequences.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this urgent request and for your reply.

Sincerely yours,

Jeanne Mirer, Suzanne Adely, Jackelyn Mariano
Co-Chairs, National Lawyers Guild International Committee

Audrey Bomse, Huwaida Arraf, Eileen Weitzman
Co-Chairs, National Lawyers Guild Palestine Subcommittee

cc:

Nikki Haley, US Ambassador to the UN
Michael Ratney, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Israel Palestine Affairs
Andrew Lederman, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Chris Russell, DRL