



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 22, 2016

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I write to you as a Christian leader committed to seeking a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians. Our Church's relationship with our Christian companions in the region affords me with a keen awareness of the immense, daily suffering that persists because of the failure to resolve the conflict.

I request that the U.S. further demonstrate its support for self-determination and freedom by allowing the State of Palestine's application for full membership in the United Nations to proceed before you conclude your term of office. The ELCA's highest legislative assembly last August adopted overwhelmingly a resolution in support of such action.

The objective of the initiative at the United Nations is to achieve a two-state solution, an objective we share with your administration. We agree with your statement to the UN in 2010 that those who seek such a solution "... should reach for what's best within ourselves. If we do, when we come back here next year, we can have an agreement that will lead to a new member of the United Nations – an independent, sovereign state of Palestine, living in peace with Israel." While Palestine was accorded observer state status in 2012, unfortunately their application for full membership remains lodged in the Security Council's Committee on the Admission of New Members.

In the regrettable absence of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine, it is reasonable that the Palestinians and others are turning to the international forum of the UN to realize the goal of an independent Palestinian state.

It is my hope the U.S. will act in the interest of all people in the region as well as its own best interest by allowing the initiative to admit Palestine as a Member State of the United Nations to move forward. For the sake of all who suffer daily, we request your urgent consideration.

My prayers are with you and all who work for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

Your sister in Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

cc: The Honorable John F. Kerry, Secretary of State
The Honorable Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Dr. Susan Rice, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs