

Dear Mr. President:

We are appreciative of your Administration's dedication to achieving a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately, the recent formation of a Palestinian Authority unity government supported by Hamas, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization that has never publicly accepted the Quartet principles, represents a serious setback to efforts to achieve peace. We are gravely concerned that the formation of this government and President Abbas' renewed effort to upgrade the status of the Palestinians within international organizations will jeopardize direct negotiations with Israel to achieve a two-state solution.

By its actions and inaction, Hamas has demonstrated it is not a partner for peace. Hamas has openly called for Israel's destruction and last month Hamas leaders again repeated their refusal to meet recognized international demands: recognition of Israel, renunciation of terror, and acceptance of previous Israel-PLO agreements.

Recent events have consequences as to U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority as provided for in the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 and restrictions contained in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2014, including prohibiting foreign assistance to Hamas or any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member or over which Hamas has undue influence. These troubling developments, including the role played by Hamas in the formation of the government, have undermined Congressional support for U.S. assistance to the Palestinians. Any assistance should only be provided when we have confidence that this new government is in full compliance with the restrictions contained in current law. We urge you to continue to impress on President Abbas the need for him to cease any alliance with terrorist organizations such as Hamas and to return to the negotiating table with Israel.

Sincerely,

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator

SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator