

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

August 30, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I write with regard to the U.S. Department of State's decision to sanction one Israeli entity and one Israeli individual for alleged human rights abuses in Judea and Samaria. Although this is not the first time the Biden-Harris Administration has taken steps to undercut our ally, Israel, your recent decision risks exacerbating an already delicate situation in the region.

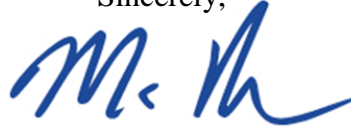
As you are well aware, Israel is in the midst of a campaign to eradicate terrorism in Gaza. On October 7, 2023, Hamas, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO) launched a barbaric and unprovoked assault on Israel that resulted in more than 1,000 casualties. Hamas' campaign of violence involved rape, mutilation, and summary execution. Jerusalem responded with clairvoyance and justice, pledging to destroy the terrorist organization so it may never threaten the people of Israel again.

Although the Biden-Harris Administration has publicly backed Israel's right to defend itself, it has also undercut Israel's maneuverability, leading to a schizophrenic policy towards the region. One such example is this administration's approach to tensions between Israelis and Palestinians living in Judea and Samaria. On August 28, 2024, the State Department announced sanctions against HashomerYosh, an Israeli nongovernmental organization that provides support to Meitarim Farm. The Department also sanctioned Yitzhak Levi Filant, the civilian security coordinator. The Department alleges that he engaged in "malign activities outside the scope of his authority," an incredibly vague charge. Israel has a functioning judicial system that is fully capable of prosecuting crimes committed within its borders. Instead of allowing Israel to carry out their duty to investigate and prosecute any alleged crimes, this administration continues to insert itself, in what many could only surmise as appeasing the progressives in the party.

Israel has consistently sought peace with the Palestinians. It is unfortunate that the Palestinians, whether it be the Palestinian Authority or FTOs such as Hamas, have rejected such overtures. Israelis rightfully living in their historic homeland are not the impediment to peace; the Palestinians are. That the Biden-Harris Administration would sanction Israeli entities as Israel fights a war against terror is not lost on our adversaries, such as Iran. Instead of sanctioning Israeli entities, I encourage you to show strength and clarity against all those who threaten Israel, our other allies and partners in the region, and the United States itself. Anything short of this will be remembered as a failure in the annals of history.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator