

United States Senate

October 29, 2024

The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield
United States Ambassador to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield:

In the coming months, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) will formally move to suspend Israel from full participation in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, according to statements made by Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas at the opening of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in September. We write to describe what the consequences of such an action are likely to be, especially for America's relationships with the UN and the Palestinians, and to urge you to use all available resources to deter the PLO from taking that action.

Regarding the U.S.-UN relationship, America's participation in international organizations is predicated on that participation advancing American national security interests. America's global security architecture is at the core of those interests and Israel is America's closest ally in the Middle East, a geopolitically critical region. The effort to diplomatically isolate Israel is aimed at ultimately destroying the Jewish state, which is both obscene and antithetical to American national security interests. If Israel is suspended from the UN General Assembly, we will move to limit American participation and funding across the UN, including UN Programmes, Funds, and Other Entities and Bodies, as well as its Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations, both those in which the PLO participates and generally.

Regarding the U.S.-Palestinian relationship, it is grounded in and structured by agreements going back to the Oslo Accords. Those agreements committed the Palestinians not to internationalize their conflict with Israel outside the contours of bilateral negotiations, which the United States has traditionally mediated. The proposal by President Abbas to suspend Israel from the UN General Assembly would straightforwardly violate and fundamentally abrogate those commitments, in turn requiring a comprehensive reevaluation of the U.S.-Palestinian relationship. We would pursue such a reevaluation, which will minimally include downgrading cooperation with the PA, ending assistance to the West Bank and Gaza, terminating all Palestinian-related offices across the U.S. government including the Palestinian-facing consulate and the Office of Palestinian Affairs, and broadly curtailing diplomatic, economic, and security engagements between American and Palestinian officials.

Additionally, the PLO and PA are both already subject to American antiterrorism sanctions, though those sanctions are vitiated by licenses and waivers, and are primarily limited to Americans' ability to assist those groups. Should the PLO move to suspend Israel from the UN

General Assembly, we will seek to ensure that those licenses and waivers are ended, and to expand American antiterrorism sanctions to include third parties. More specifically, in 1987 Congress determined “that the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization and a threat to the interests of the United States, its allies, and to international law” (P.L. 100-204, 101 Stat. 1406), and Americans are in general prohibited from conducting transactions on their behalf or issuing diplomatic visas to PLO officials. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury has determined “pursuant to OFAC’s terrorism sanctions programs, U.S. persons are prohibited from engaging in transactions with the Palestinian Authority unless authorized” as a result of elections held in 2006, in which Hamas was empowered to form the majority party within the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and hold high-level offices within PA. OFAC has issued a series of general licenses authorizing a wide range of such transactions, and special licenses are routinely granted for provisioning visas to PLO officials. Beyond the termination of those licenses, we would seek to impose binding restrictions on the movement of Palestinian officials operating under diplomatic visas related to UN activities, to freeze transactions related to funds controlled by the PA and PLO when they come within U.S. jurisdiction including those related to the Palestine Investment Fund, to designate the PA as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and to implement and enforce primary and secondary antiterrorism sanctions against individual PLO and PA officials.

As always, we stand ready to provide you and the Department with any resources you need to advance the national security interests of the United States.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Tim Scott
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator

CC: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken