

Wednesday, 21 February 2018

The Honourable Charles Michel  
Prime Minister of Belgium  
Secretariat of the Prime Minister  
16, rue de la Loi  
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Dear Prime Minister Michel,

We noted with interest your nation's recent vote in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution (ES-10/L.22 – 21 December 2017) which demanded that the United States withdraw its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

This resolution explicitly called upon all nations “to refrain from the establishment of diplomatic missions in the Holy City of Jerusalem.” Yet your nation was instantly in violation of this very resolution, which you fully supported, in that Belgium has an embassy/consulate in Jerusalem which openly serves as your chief diplomatic mission to the Palestinian Authority. I believe it is important to bring this diplomatic misstep to your attention.

Many world leaders have been critical of the recent decision by U.S. President Donald Trump regarding Jerusalem, contending that it prejudices a sensitive issue which should be left to final-status talks. Instead, they have urged an even-handed approach to Jerusalem. Yet Belgium has been violating this very principle for some time now due to your chief diplomatic mission to the Palestinians being located at 5 Baibars Street, Sheikh Jarrah, in Jerusalem. If you truly wanted to be fair, you would either have both your diplomatic missions to Israel and the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem, or neither.

There are other clear instances where the international community has repeatedly departed from any even-handed approach on Jerusalem and already prejudged its future status in favour of the Palestinians. For instance, in its passage of UNSC resolution 2334 in December 2016, the members of the UN Security Council breached their supposed neutrality by declaring that eastern Jerusalem is “occupied Palestinian territory.”



The time has come for a sober reassessment of the way the nations have always treated Israel unfairly by denying the Jewish people their rightful place in Jerusalem. It is a great injustice that Israel is the only country in the world not allowed the basic right of every sovereign nation to designate the city of its choice to serve as its capital and seat of government.

No one should ever doubt the deep Jewish attachment to Jerusalem, which dates back four thousand years to the Hebrew Patriarch Abraham. Over these many centuries, Jerusalem has been the capital of only one nation – Israel. Yet for seventy years now, the international community has come up with hollow pretexts for denying this historic reality, including the legal fiction that the city constitutes a *corpus separatum*.

At the same time, world leaders have remained silent while the Palestinian leadership has incessantly denied that the Jews have any historic or religious connection to Jerusalem, instead painting Israel as a temporary 'colonialist' implant. A resolution to the conflict would be a lot closer if the international community disabused the Palestinians of this odious narrative, which so undermines any chances for lasting peace. The best way to do so is simply by a common sense recognition of the reality of Israel's permanence and of Jerusalem's status as its capital.

Thus, we call upon you to join the United States by announcing your official recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, along with your intention to move your nation's embassy to Jerusalem as soon as feasible. Such a decision will not preclude the parties from finding a way to share the city of Jerusalem in any future peace negotiations. But until then, there is no valid reason to deny Jerusalem its rightful place as Israel's capital.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler  
President

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

*The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded in 1980 as a permanent expression of Christian solidarity with Israel and particularly its capital of Jerusalem, in recognition of the ancient Jewish attachment to this city. From its headquarters in Jerusalem, the ICEJ oversees a worldwide movement with established branch offices in over 90 nations and a reach into more than 170 countries worldwide.*