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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
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May 11, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing to express my deep concern at the disturbing reports coming out of Jerusalem. The horrific violence on display in Sheikh Jarrah and at the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex is completely unacceptable and runs counter to any efforts towards peace.

Mr. Secretary, you have an obligation to use the diplomatic tools at our disposal to help deescalate the situation and prevent any further acts of violence from taking place. I ask the Department of State and the Biden administration to swiftly address the issue of accountability and our goals in pursuit of peace in Jerusalem. We must also hold responsible those who violate the rights of peaceful protestors and worshippers.

The attempts by Israeli settlers to evict Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah follows an ongoing effort to forcibly displace Palestinians from the city. The escalating conflict leading to violent encounters between the Israeli military forces and Palestinian protestors and worshippers has resulted in the devastation of injuries, hospitalizations and even death. Israel should immediately cease its actions against Palestinians and end the evictions of Palestinians from their homes.

As a long supporter of both Israel's right to defend itself against violence as well as a 2-state solution, the current situation directly contradicts our path towards a peaceful resolution. A peaceful resolution must ensure the religious rights and security of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Jerusalem. This includes the right to worship peacefully.

The violence reported in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound over the last few days go against the very nature of the Biden administration's commitment to international human rights. A proactive approach is needed before further violence erupts. However, while occupation and de facto annexation continue in violation of international law, tensions will continue to escalate. You have a responsibility to promote international peace and security and I ask you to uphold the dignity and human rights of all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, or religion.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress