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April 26, 2011

Mrs. Chancellor
Dr. Angela Merkel
Willy-Brandt-Str. 1

10557 Berlin

Dear Mrs. Chancellor,

I am a native Israeli, born in Jerusalem to parents who had to leave Germany in 1935, while their parents were deported from Erfurt to Auschwitz, where they were murdered. For the past 40 years, I live in Germany and here enjoy the benefits of the rule of law and democracy. Also in protest against Israeli policy towards the Palestinians, I returned my Israeli passport in the 1980s. The decision has not been easy for me.

After a seven-week journey through Israel and Palestine with numerous meetings on both sides I would like to tell you that all hopes are placed onto the recognition of Palestine as the only option for the two-state solution which has been favored by the German Government. Many Israelis understand that their future depends on an independent Palestinian state. Therefore, well-known Israeli personalities have signed recently the declaration "Independence from the Occupation" for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Enclosed you may find the German translation.

All Palestinian institutions under Prime Minister Salam Fayyad are working towards the proclamation in September 2011. Recently, the Special Commission of the United Nations has recognized the significant progress which was achieved. Those achievements have been confirmed to me by the Head of the Konrad Adenauer-Foundation in Ramallah. No one can expect

constructive negotiations by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu under the conditions of 300,000 settlers in the West Bank alone. Therefore, a clear signal to the Israeli policy is essential. The recognition of the Palestinian state, even under the conditions of occupation, and its membership in the UN would mean that each step of the Israeli policy in the West Bank has to be justified in terms of international law.

The achievement of the economic developments in the West Bank with German assistance stops in front of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip and is politically fragile. No one may imagine what will happen in case of the failure of the international recognition of Palestine. In my conversations I heard announcements and speculations of violent demonstrations by thousands of Palestinians at the checkpoints and Jewish settlements, or even a third intifada. High-ranking Israeli military officials announced that the army will be unable to control violence or civil resistance.

Therefore, I ask you, Madam Chancellor, that your government will follow the path of the UN majority. The commitment to democracy and the rule of law for the Arab people cannot be withheld from the Palestinians. A German correspondent who has been working in Israel for many years has confirmed my deep anxiety that without a state of Palestine, one day, the state of Israel would have to fight for its existence even within the borders of 1949.

Sincerely yours

Judith Bernstein

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