



April 1, 2002

60 Minutes
524 West 57th St
New York, NY 10019

Attn: Lesley Stahl

Re: Your interview with Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon

Dear Lesley,

During your interview, Mr. Sharon said there were two ways to deal with suicide bombers:

1. do nothing and let them in, or
2. try to stop them before they blow up innocent people.

He neglected to mention a third option: **remove the conditions that make people want to be suicide bombers**, specifically, end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. I was expecting you to challenge him about that. I don't believe people volunteer to be suicide bombers unless they see a future utterly without hope.

To give a balanced view, it would be wonderful for *60 Minutes* to do a follow-up report on what life is like for the Palestinians and remind Americans who is the "occupier" in the "occupied territories". I think very few Americans understand the distinction between the internationally-recognized borders of Israel and what they took by force in 1967. Perhaps we also need reminding of the refugees crisis precipitated by the founding of Israel in 1948 and that those people are *still* waiting for some resolution of their situation.

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (and Syria's Golan Heights) is no different to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, or the Nazi occupation of Europe. America, to its great credit, led the world in those conflicts to defeat the invaders and restore peace. After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, we supplied weapons to the resistance.

However, in this case, instead of defending the freedom of those in the occupied territories, we give over \$2 billion of military aid each year to the occupier! America can't even bring itself to demand an end to construction of "settlements" on occupied land, much less demand an unconditional withdrawal. These facts are not lost on the populations of Arab countries and thus we are now a target for their anger, as we saw so tragically on September 11th last year.

I enclose three maps and a photo that encapsulate the Palestinian dispossession. I think your viewers would benefit from seeing them and having them explained.

Yours truly,



"Ms Sobhiya Al-Amour (50) facing an Israeli bulldozer. This bulldozer had destroyed two Palestinian houses. In the picture it is digging up her field of olive trees. Thousands of olive trees were uprooted since the beginning of the Intifada as a collective punishment to the Palestinians."

House demolitions are common in the occupied territories – the Red Cross/Red Crescent said 594 were made homeless in one incident (in Gaza?) just a few weeks ago. The Israelis said they thought the houses were unoccupied. (!)

It is very rare to see pictures like this in the US media that illustrate the brutal nature of the Israeli occupation. Virtually all the media attention goes to the suffering of Jews, both now when there is a bombing, and in the past during the Holocaust. Given the respect that *60 Minutes* commands, I believe you have the authority and resources to tell the Palestinian story without denying the right of Jewish Israelis to peace as well. I'm Australian and have been living here for six years. I notice a significant difference in coverage.