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October 26, 2018

Mr. Jared C. Kushner
Senior Advisor to the President of the United States

Mr. Jason D. Greenblatt
Assistant to the 45th President of the United States of America and
Special Representative for International Negotiations

Dear Mr. Kushner and Mr. Greenblatt,

In recent weeks, the Administration directed USAID to reprogram over \$200 million in bilateral FY2017 funds intended for humanitarian projects in Gaza and the West Bank, and \$25 million intended for the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, as well as to withhold \$300 million in U.S. funding for UNRWA. We urge you respectfully to reconsider these decisions and reinstate U.S. funding for basic human needs to Palestinians.

The programs in question serve as an essential lifeline for the Palestinian people. In Gaza, for instance, where half the population is living in poverty, these decisions will drastically reduce access to basic health care and social services. The cuts will also eliminate employment programs for youth in a territory that has over fifty percent unemployment. These cuts may also cause the East Jerusalem hospital network to turn away people seeking lifesaving kidney dialysis sessions and cancer treatments. Finally there is a very real possibility that UNWRA will have to close up to 700 schools in the near future, despite additional contributions from other countries.

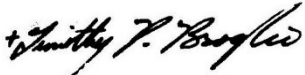
These funding cuts will have a direct impact on Catholic institutions serving vulnerable populations in the Holy Land, further eroding a Christian presence in the region. Those directly or indirectly impacted by these cuts include Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Jerusalem, Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, Bethlehem University, and the Missionaries of Charity in Gaza.

Holy scripture places a moral duty on us to help people in need, regardless of creed or nationality. We are reminded in Psalm 82 that those with great responsibility are called to “Defend the lowly and fatherless; render justice to the afflicted and needy.” The U.S.-funded programs in question are our country’s efforts to aid our “afflicted and needy” Palestinian brothers and sisters.

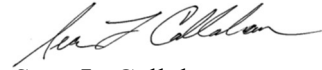
In addition, the long humanitarian tradition of our nation has always served the needy. One need only remember the Marshall Plan or the reconstruction of Japan after World War II. America is great when it cares for the poor, educates the young, shelters the homeless, and defends those abandoned by others.

As a Church, we have consistently encouraged U.S. efforts to support a two-state solution that results in a secure and recognized Israel living in peace with an independent and viable Palestinian state. We are convinced that cutting aid to Palestinian civilians will only lead to greater discord and embolden those who foment radicalization and confrontation. While the Administration continues its work to advance peace, we believe U.S. assistance should continue to help vulnerable Palestinian families to live dignified lives.

Sincerely,



Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace



Sean L. Callahan
President/CEO
Catholic Relief Services