

December 15, 2014

H.E. Martin Dahinden
Ambassador
Embassy of Switzerland
2900 Cathedral Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Dahinden:

We write on behalf of B'nai B'rith International – the world's oldest Jewish communal and humanitarian organization, headquartered in Washington but present in over 50 countries, including Switzerland – to convey our dismay over the decision by the Swiss government to convene the signatory states of the Geneva Conventions for the purpose of singling out one state, Israel, for negative scrutiny.

As depositor of the Conventions, Switzerland is obliged to execute this function responsibly and impartially. However, over the course of over half a century, the state parties to the Conventions have exclusively been convened to focus on Israel, a small democracy struggling against violent extremists sworn to its very destruction and to the indiscriminate targeting of its citizens.

Indeed, the leadership of the Palestinian Authority – currently partnering with the terrorist movement Hamas – has openly pursued a strategy of “internationalizing” the conflict with Israel, exploiting world forums as a political tool rather than engaging meaningfully in bilateral negotiations and compromise. Your government's acquiescence to demands to leverage the weight of the Geneva Conventions against Israel serves not to advance peace and reconciliation but only to further exacerbate tensions and incentivize a Palestinian posture of provocation, confrontation and obstinacy.

Switzerland's complicity in this patent mistreatment of Israel – in stark contrast with the treatment of those engaged in the most grave and systematic human rights violations globally – represents injury to our world's fundamental human rights architecture. Much more is to be expected of the depositor of the Geneva Conventions.

Sincerely,

Allan J. Jacobs
President

Daniel S. Mariaschin
Executive Vice President