

ASK: INVESTIGATE USE OF U.S. SUPPLIED TEAR GAS

DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER ASKS SECRETARY CLINTON TO INITIATE AN INVESTIGATION INTO WHETHER ISRAEL'S USE OF U.S. SUPPLIED TEAR GAS VIOLATES THE TERMS OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT

Secretary of State
Hillary Rodham Clinton
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

January 2011

Dear Secretary Clinton,

We are writing to express our concern about Israel's injuring and killing of unarmed civilians with U.S.-supplied tear gas, and we request the Department of State to investigate whether Israel's use of tear gas to injure and kill unarmed civilians violates the Arms Export Control Act.

On January 1, 2011, Jawaher Abu Rahmah, a 36 year-old resident of the West Bank village of Bil'in, died from tear gas inhalation one day after the Israeli military fired tear gas canisters at a demonstration in her village. [1]

On May 31, 2010, Emily Henochowicz, a U.S. citizen from Potomac, MD, lost her left eye and fractured her jaw and cheekbone after she was struck in the face with a tear gas canister fired by Israeli security forces during a demonstration at the West Bank checkpoint of Qalandia. [2]

On April 17, 2009, Jawaher Abu Rahmah's 29 year-old brother Bassem Abu Rahmah died after being hit directly in the chest with a high-velocity tear gas canister during a demonstration in Bil'in. [3]

On March 13, 2009, Tristan Anderson, a U.S. citizen from Oakland, CA, was critically injured after being struck in the head by a tear gas canister fired by Israeli Border Police while engaging in peaceful protest activities in the West Bank village of Ni'lin. [4]

On June 29, 2002, Muhammad Ahmad Mabareq Ishteiwi, a 14 year-old resident of al-Far'a refugee camp in Tubas, was killed after he collapsed after being hit in the chest by a rubber bullet. When he fell, a tear gas canister exploded near his face and killed him. [5]

On June 13, 2002, Khader 'Abd al-Fatah al-Gharbi died after inhaling tear gas from more than 20 grenades which were thrown into his Silwan, East Jerusalem home. [6]

Evidence exists that the deaths of Jawaher and Bassem Abu Rahmah, and the injuries of Tristan Anderson and Emily Henochowicz, were caused by tear gas produced by Combined Systems, Inc. of Jamestown, Pennsylvania. [7]

From FY2000-2008, the Department of State authorized the transfer to Israel through Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) of at least 408,266 units of "anti-personnel riot control chemicals," "riot control equipment," and "tear gases and riot control agents" valued at \$19,510,622. [8]

We respectfully ask you to initiate an investigation into whether Israel's use of U.S. supplied tear gas in the incidents detailed above violate the terms of the Arms Export Control Act.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Members of Congress

Citations:

- [1] <http://www.aolnews.com/2011/01/02/palestinian-protester-jawaher-abu-rahmah-dies-from-tear-gas-inha/>
- [2] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/09/AR2010060906126.html>
- [3] [http://www.btselem.org/Download/20090421 Letter to JAG concerning the shooting of Bassem Abu Rahmah English.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/Download/20090421_Letter_to_JAG_concerning_the_shooting_of_Bassem_Abu_Rahmah_English.pdf)
- [4] [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.CON.RES.270:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.CON.RES.270)
- [5] http://www.btselem.org/english/statistics/Casualties_Data.asp?Category=28®ion=TER&sD=29&sM=09&sY=2000&eD=26&eM=12&eY=2008&filterby=event&oferet_stat=before
- [6] *ibid.*
- [7] <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/01/in-the-wake-of-jawaher-abu-rahmahs-death-four-organizations-ask-us-corporation-to-%E2%80%98cease-providing-equipment-to-the-israeli-government%E2%80%99.html>
- [8] http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/asmp/factsandfigures/government_data_index.html#655