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Our reference:

minbuza-2017.827582

Date 30 June 2017
Re Letter

Dear Prof. Steinberg and Mrs. Deutsch,

Thank you for your letter regarding the matter of the *Women's Affairs Technical Committee* (WATC) and the tweets of Mrs. Tamimi. Minister Koenders has requested me to answer your letter on his behalf.

We have taken note of the issue of the naming of the Burqa community center with great concern. The Netherlands rejects and condemns any form of glorification of violence and terrorism. In cooperation with the other donors of the Secretariat, the Netherlands has decided to suspend the cooperation with WATC until further notice.

Finally, we have also taken note of the personal statements of one of the field workers of the *Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling* (WCLAC), who no longer works for the organisation. We reject these reprehensible statements. We welcome the fact that The *Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling* (WCLAC) has informed us that it does not endorse these personal statements of the person concerned.

Human rights are a cornerstone of Dutch foreign policy. The Netherlands remains strongly committed to work with both Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations to promote human rights. I would like to point out that we offer this kind of support to human rights organisations in many countries around the world, in the conviction that their work – and indeed their existence – is essential for free and pluralist societies.

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The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland, have pooled their efforts to support Israeli and Palestinian organisations that help ensure respect for human rights and adherence to international humanitarian law in the Palestinian territories.

I trust this clarifies your questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BT', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Birgitta Tazelaar
Director of the Middle East and Northern Africa Department