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Hon. Stéphane Dion
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada

March 31, 2016

Dear Minister Dion,

I am writing to you with regard to the appointment of Professor Michael Lynk as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, and your hasty and inappropriate comments, in the form of a tweet, about this appointment.

I am sure you agree it is important for the UN to investigate breaches of international law wherever they happen and that the UN must choose its Special Rapporteurs independently, without political interference. All states, including our own, are expected to work constructively with Special Rapporteurs and take their recommendations into account.

Under the Conservatives we saw UN Special Rapporteurs, such as Olivier De Schutter on food issues or James Anaya on indigenous rights, attacked by the federal government. I think it's time Canada's government abandons the Conservatives' approach of unhelpful rhetoric and finally begins working constructively with United Nations Special Rapporteurs.

I believe it is important that – before you jump to conclusions – you agree to meet with Professor Lynk, as he has requested, to discuss his appointment and any concerns you might have.

If Canada is to play a constructive role in the Middle East your government must actively engage in fostering peace. If political grandstanding and rhetoric can be put aside, Canada's government could be a positive force, working diplomatically with other countries, including through the United Nations, to help negotiate a durable, secure and just peace.

I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. Laverdière".

Hélène Laverdière

MP, Laurier - Sainte-Marie

NDP Critic for Foreign Affairs