



BUREAU DU PRÉSIDENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

29 July 2022

Dear Ms. Pillay,

I thank you for your letter in response to the serious concerns I had raised to you in relation to some of the comments conveyed by Commissioner Miloon Kothari in a media interview on 25 July, and the clarifications provided therein.

As you will recall, since taking office, I have publicly expressed my support of the Commission and my strong rejection of all personal attacks against its members.

Nevertheless, I feel compelled to emphasize that it is expected that the members of all of the mechanisms created by the Human Rights Council, when discharging their mandates, show restraint and moderation in a way that does not undermine their independent nature. They should be guided by principles such as discretion and impartiality and adhere strictly to the terms of reference established by the Council. The views and opinions that they publicly express must always be based on objective, reliable and credible sources, be relevant to their mandate and not exceed their mandate or the mandate of the Council itself. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that they use language that is commensurate with the respect, dignity and level that should permeate the Council's work.

In addition, I am certain that the fight against antisemitism and any other form of discrimination is a common one that the Commission of Inquiry and all members of the Human Rights Council share. In that context, some of the comments made by Commissioner Miloon Kothari could reasonably be interpreted as stigmatization of the Jewish people, which, as you are all aware, is at the heart of any expression of antisemitism. Therefore, I would respectfully suggest that Commissioner Kothari consider the possibility of publicly clarifying his unfortunate comments and his intentions behind them.

Please accept, Madame Chair, the assurances of my highest consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Federico Villegas', written in a cursive style.

Federico VILLEGAS
President of the Human Rights Council

Ms. Navanethem Pillay
Chair
UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry
on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel