

May 16, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC, 20500

Re: U.S. Response to the Killing of U.S. Citizen Furkan Doğan by Israeli Defense Forces

Dear President Obama,

In recent months, you have commendably offered condolences to families who have lost their children to gun violence. However, one family has been excluded from your offers of sympathy for the past three years: that of Furkan Doğan, an 18 year old American citizen, killed in May 2010, when he was shot five times at close range during the Israeli attack on the Gaza-bound flotilla in international waters. **On the occasion of the visit of Prime Minister Erdoğan to the United States, and his mention today at your joint press conference of the flotilla attack and killings, we call upon you to finally publically acknowledge the killing of Furkan Doğan by Israel and support a U.S. investigation into his death.**

Like many other young Americans, Furkan had high ambitions for his future and was deeply concerned for the suffering of others, especially children. In 2010, the summer before he planned to start medical school, Furkan asked his parents for permission to participate in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza in an effort to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians due to the Israeli blockade of Gaza. His parents, proud of their son's conviction, reluctantly allowed him to make the journey, never imagining the violence that he would encounter and believing that the U.S. would protect him if anything were to happen. On May 31, 2010, however, Israeli commandos attacked the flotilla and shot Furkan four times from behind and once in his face. According to forensic analysis, the wound to Furkan's face was from a bullet shot at point blank range and was compatible with the shot being received while he was lying on his back on the ground.

Despite this disturbing evidence, the U.S. has yet to launch an investigation into Furkan's death. Indeed, records released as a result of CCR's litigation of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests reveal the U.S. government's position that it would not investigate Furkan's death. Disturbingly, the government's own internal documents show that it engaged in diplomatic efforts with particular attention to preventing a fully independent, credible investigation into the attack that cost the life of a U.S. citizen, and eight other civilians. Instead, the U.S. effectively deferred to Israel's investigation, which exonerated all of the Israeli soldiers involved in the

attack and failed to provide any details regarding Furkan's killing. Moreover, despite the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC)'s report concluding that Furkan's death amounted to extra-legal summary execution, the U.S. has never acknowledged these specific findings, let alone pursued accountability for Furkan's death; instead the U.S. opposed the HRC resolution welcoming the report.

Recently, the Israeli government apologized to Turkey, acknowledging "a number of operational mistakes" that might have led to the loss of life or injury. **Despite these admissions, the U.S. still has not publically called upon Israel to provide any detailed information on Furkan's death or made any public call for accountability regarding his killing. The silence from the U.S. in relation to the killing of its citizen and eight other civilians effectively results in impunity.** Furthermore, it sends a message that the government will tolerate the killing of U.S. human rights defenders by Israel.

CCR calls upon you to publically acknowledge the killing of Furkan Doğan by Israel and support genuine accountability for the attack on the Free Gaza Flotilla that took Furkan's life and the lives of eight others. Specifically, we call for a U.S. investigation into Furkan's killing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "VW", is written over a faint rectangular stamp.

Vince Warren
Executive Director
Center for Constitutional Rights