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Letter from ACDN to the Israeli Ambassador in Paris, 10.11.2002

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Translation of Letter sent by ACDN France (Action of Citizens for Nuclear Disarmament) to the Israeli Ambassador in Paris.

11 October 2002

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Although we do not wish to involve ourselves in the internal business of the State of Israel, we consider that Israel's government and justice system would do itself credit if it decided to grant early release to Mordechai Vanunu, who has already served 16 of the 18 years imprisonment to which he was condemned in 1986 for his refusal to keep silent about Israel's nuclear weapons policies. When he spoke, he was merely following his conscience. This is a right, and also a duty; and does not the Israeli Army recognise that its citizens possess it?

If German citizens had followed their consciences in good time, rather than following the orders and policies of the Nazi government, would the Shoah have taken place?

Allow us to point out, as we have already observed to the French President and Government, that nuclear weapons, which strike civilians and soldiers indiscriminately, could cause a great slaughter that would amount to a crime against humanity. May we suggest that Mordecai Vanunu, far from being a traitor to his country, ought to be considered a moral witness, a pioneer of that secure and lasting peace which Israel and Israel's neighbours deserve to enjoy? Besides, can one really reproach him for divulging facts that were already known by all well-informed governments and observers, facts that have since been officially admitted by your cabinet minister Shimon Peres?

Besides the above considerations, we are concerned that the extremely harsh prison conditions which Mordecai Vanunu has endured (over 11 years in isolation) have affected his physical and mental health - on our view, his condition seems to justify an early release on humanitarian grounds.

We beg you to pass on to the Israeli Government our hopes for this outcome.

We would also like to know the Israeli Government's response to the following question: "If the five nuclear weapons states that signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty were to fulfil their undertaking, made on 19 May 2000, to eliminate their nuclear arsenals totally, would Israel agree to become part of an integral, universal, and strictly controlled disarmament process to eliminate all nuclear, biological and chemical weapons?"

Yours respectfully,
Jean-Marie Matagne, Martine Gentilleau, on behalf of ACDN

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