

**TRANSCRIPT AND LINK TO
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING (MAY 1, 2008)
CHAired BY JOSEPH BIDEN
(in his capacity as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee)
Q&A RELATING TO RACHEL CORRIE CASE**

**On March 16, 2003, Rachel Corrie, an American citizen, was killed by
an Israel Defense Forces bulldozer in Rafah, Gaza, while protesting home demolitions.**

Question. Please provide a detailed account of steps taken, if any, by the executive branch and the Department of State, including the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv, to encourage the Government of Israel to undertake a thorough, credible, and transparent investigation into Ms. Corrie's death.

Answer. The United States Government takes its responsibilities involving American citizens abroad very seriously and has repeatedly engaged the Government of Israel at the highest levels about this issue. Immediately following Ms. Corrie's tragic death, President Bush telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to request a thorough and transparent investigation and was given personal assurances by the Prime Minister that there would be one. Additionally, then-Secretary Powell, Ambassador Kurtzer, Deputy Chief of Mission LeBaron, Assistant Secretary William Burns, and Deputy Assistant Secretary David Satterfield, among others, raised this issue with their counterparts and other appropriate authorities in the Israeli Government. More recently, during a visit to Israel, former Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty specifically raised outstanding issues again with her counterpart at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yigal Tzarfati. Assistant Secretary Harty also gave Mr. Tzarfati a letter that reiterated the U.S. Government's request for a full and transparent investigation of the incident.

The Government of Israel has not yet fully responded to Assistant Secretary Harty's letter, and specifically her request for a full and transparent investigation. The United States Embassy in Tel Aviv will continue to follow up with the Israelis for a response to our inquiries. If confirmed, I will ensure that this follow-up takes place and press the Government of Israel for a response. Additionally, in late October, representatives from the Department of State met with the Corrie family and with Congressman Baird and his staff at his offices to discuss concerns that the Corrie family still has with respect to the death of Rachel Corrie. We are continuing to investigate charges of irregularities with the Israeli Government's handling of the case and to respond to the family's concerns to the maximum extent.

Question. In your opinion, has a thorough, credible, and transparent investigation taken place? If not, what specific, concrete steps will you commit to take, if confirmed, to ensure that such an investigation does take place?

Answer. The Department remains committed to providing the highest standards of citizen services to the Corrie family. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Israel for a thorough and transparent investigation of the tragic death of Rachel Corrie.

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_senate_hearings&docid=f:48281.pdf

(The Q&A on Rachel Corrie can be found on pp. 373-374)