



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

David Grosso
Councilmember At-Large
Chairperson, Committee on Education

Committee Member
Health
Human Services
Judiciary and Public Safety

September 7, 2017

Peter Newsham, Chief of Police
Metropolitan Police Department
300 Indiana Ave., NW, 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

Chief Newsham,

As you know from my recent letter, I am concerned that we are not doing enough to prevent the militarization of law enforcement in the District of Columbia. As a result, I am troubled by the planned participation this week of a Metropolitan Police Department leader in a training with military forces and intelligence services in Israel, known as the National Counter-Terrorism Seminars. While I believe strongly in cross-cultural exchanges and the importance of training for our law enforcement officers, learning from military advisors is not what local law enforcement needs. Indeed, numerous watchdog organizations, including the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, have documented human rights violations by Israeli police and security forces.

Although MPD participation in this program is longstanding, I encourage you to reconsider it and instead focus officers' time and other departmental resources on trainings that emphasize non-violent conflict resolution, and community relationship building. If there are similar exchanges with other jurisdictions, outside or inside the United States, I ask that you re-evaluate them as well, to ensure that they are in keeping with D.C. values. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

David Grosso
Council of the District of Columbia
Chairperson, Committee on Education