



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

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Rt Hon. George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
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Geo George

Thank you for your email of 9 January to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of a number of your constituents, about the detention of Ahd Tamimi and Palestinian children in detention.

Thank you for your letter of 9 January to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of a number of your constituents, about Ahd Tamimi and Palestinian children in detention. I am replying as the Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

We are closely following developments on this case, and have raised this issue with the Israeli authorities. We remain concerned about the treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention.

The Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians killed by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces police non-violent protests and the border areas, including use of live ammunition. We encourage the Israeli authorities to carry out transparent investigations as to whether use of live fire had been appropriate.

We are also extremely concerned about the treatment of Palestinian children detained in Israeli prisons. Reports of the heavy use of painful restraints and the high number of Palestinian children who are not informed of their legal rights, in contravention of Israel's own regulations, are particularly concerning, as is the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on this issue, and to encourage Israel to introduce mandatory audio-visual recording of interrogations of minors.

In 2012 we funded and facilitated the independent report 'Children in Military Custody' by leading British lawyers and have urged Israel to implement the recommendations made in the report. British Ministers and our Ambassador in Tel Aviv have spoken and written to both the Israeli Justice Minister and the Israeli Attorney General to urge Israel to take action on the report.

We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to its practices surrounding children in detention. We welcomed progress made in recent Israeli policy amendments. These included: a reduction in the number of detainees aged 12 to 14 years old; the increase in the age of maturity from 16 to 18 years old; the establishment of separate juvenile courts; and the enactment of a special statute of limitations for minors. Initial detention periods have also been shortened.

I most recently raised our concerns on this issue with the Israeli Government during my visit to Israel in August 2017. We will continue to push for the full implementation of changes in practices, and to encourage further such changes.

I assure you that the issues around Palestinian children in Israeli military detention continues to be a human rights priority for the UK.

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THE RT HON. ALISTAIR BURT MP
Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa