

MP's Briefing on child prisoners

Every year between 500-700 Palestinian children, some as young as 12, are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system

After analysing over 400 sworn testimonies, UNICEF concluded, that:

- Many children are aggressively detained in the middle of the night;
- Children are painfully tied, blindfolded and frequently endure physical and verbal abuse;
- Children are interrogated without legal advice and without a parent being present;
- Most children plead guilty to reduce the time they will spend in detention; and
- Most children are held in prisons in Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The UNICEF report further concluded that:

“The ill-treatment of children who come in contact with the military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized throughout the process, from the moment of arrest until the child’s prosecution and eventual conviction and sentencing.”

In June 2012, a team of UK lawyers published a FCO-funded, independent report, (“Children in Military Custody”) on the plight of Palestinian children arrested and detained by Israel. It found that Israel’s treatment of Palestinian child prisoners was in breach of:

Article 76 of The 4th Geneva Convention
The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The report made 40 recommendations.

The FCO accepted the report’s findings and promised to take them up with the government of Israel. Over a year later very little progress has been made.

Action4Palestinian Children is asking MPs to sign the following pledge to support the campaign for Palestinian children’s’ rights:

“We, the undersigned, support the campaign by Action for Palestinian Children to ensure the rights of Palestinian children are upheld in accordance with international human rights treaties and international law.

We call on Israel to act immediately to implement these recommendations as a matter of urgency:

1. An end to Israel’s nighttime raids and shackling of Palestinian children;
2. Audio-visual recordings of all interrogations;
3. Parents given the right to be present during questioning and the child’s right to access to a lawyer before their interrogation

respected;

4. An end to the transfer of children to prisons inside Israel in breach of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention;

5. An end to the use of solitary confinement.

We further call upon Israel to implement, in full, all 40 recommendations made in the independent legal report, Children in Military Custody.”

As your constituent, I would welcome your support by:

- Signing the Action4Palestinian Children pledge to support child prisoners
- Asking the Foreign Secretary
 - What progress he has made in persuading the Israeli government to implement recommendations in the Children in Military Custody report
 - And consequences for Israel if further progress is not made
- Writing to the Foreign Secretary to ask what action the UK Government has taken to ensure that the Israeli Government meets these objectives