

21 December 2012

Our reference: MIN/42125/2012

Sir Geoffrey Bindman QC
Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Box BM PSA
London
WC1N 3XX



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

See below.

Thank you for your letter of 10 December from yourself, Haya Al Farra, Baroness Tonge, and Betty Hunter to the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, presenting a petition on the issue of Palestinian child prisoners. This has been passed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for response and I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

The British Government is of the view that Israel has legal obligations as an Occupying Power with respect to the Occupied Palestinian Territories under applicable international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. We have a regular dialogue with the Government of Israel on the implementation of those obligations and raise inter alia our serious concerns regarding the issues of Israeli settlements, demolitions of Palestinian property and the severe restrictions on movement and access to and from Gaza.

On the specific issue of child detainees and the independent report we funded by leading British lawyers, we continue to urge the Israeli Government to take forward the report's recommendations, including an end to shackling and night-time arrest of children, and the introduction of audio-visual recording of interrogations. As you know, the report also describes the disturbing disparity between the treatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military law and the treatment of Israeli children under Israeli civilian law. The British Ambassador in Tel Aviv has discussed the report with the Israeli Attorney General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we will continue this dialogue. I have also written to the Israeli Ambassador on the subject and have met Baroness Scotland, as one of the authors, to discuss follow up to the report.

In raised
AL

ALISTAIR BURT