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11 April 2013

Your reference: Fult001/ts  
Our reference: MIN/47463/2013

Lynne Featherstone MP  
House of Commons  
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*Lynne Featherstone*

Thank you for your letter of 25 March to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of a number of your constituents, about Palestinians in Israeli detention. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

We are concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We have raised this and our broader concerns over treatment of Palestinian detainees with the Israeli authorities on many occasions, including at Foreign Minister and National Security Adviser levels. The Attorney General raised this during his visit to Israel last November, when he was assured by his Israeli counterpart that the numbers in administrative detention had decreased 90% in the last five years and that administrative detention was only being used in exceptional cases.

We believe 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 with regard to the implementation of those obligations.

*A. Burt*

ALISTAIR BURT