



Right Hon William Hague MP
Foreign Secretary
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For the attention of: Right Hon William Hague MP

8 July 2014

Dear Mr. Hague,

Re: Urgent need for investigations and accountability for alleged excessive use of force and unlawful killings since the start of Operation Brother's Keeper

We write to express the urgent need for investigations and accountability for all alleged incidents of excessive use of force and unlawful killings since the start of Operation Brother's Keeper by Israel's military on 12 June 2014.

Assault of 15 year old Tariq Abu-Khdeir

We express our deep concern at the apparent assault of 15 year old Tariq Abu-Khdeir whilst in Israeli border police custody on 3 July 2014 in occupied East Jerusalem. The beating rendered Abu-Khdeir unconscious and with severe bruising injuries to his face.

We note the United States State Department has strongly condemned any excessive use of force in this incident and has called for “a speedy, transparent and credible investigation and full accountability for any excessive use of force”. We request that the UK government reinforces this message to the Israeli government.

This incident took place soon after the dreadful abduction and killing of three Israeli teenagers - Eyal Yifrah, Naftali and Gil-Ad Shaar – and the subsequent appalling abduction and killing of the Palestinian teenager, Muhammed Abu Khdeir. We welcome your statement on 2 July 2014 calling for those responsible for these crimes to be held accountable.

Seven Palestinian civilian fatalities during Operation Brother's Keeper

In our previous letter dated 24 June 2014, we requested the British government's intervention to ensure the Israeli military commence thorough, credible and transparent criminal investigations into the deaths and serious injuries caused to Palestinian civilians during the course of Operation Brother's Keeper, including: 15 year old Mohammed Dudin from Dura on



20 June 2014; 20 year old Ahmad Samada from Jalazoun on 17 June 2014; and 27 year old Ahmad Said Khalid from al-'Ein Refugee Camp on 22 June 2014. Since then, reports have emerged of a further four Palestinian civilians who appear to have similarly lost their lives due to the alleged firing of live ammunition by Israeli forces: 17 year old Sakher Abu al Hassan from Hamamat al-Maleh on 21 June 2014; 21 year old Mustafa Aslan from Qaladia refugee camp on 20 June 2014; 31 year old Mahmoud Tarifi from Ramallah on 22 June 2014; and 18 year old Yusef Abu Zahger from Jenin on 30 June 2014.

We welcome your statement on 23 June 2014 expressing your deep concern over five of these Palestinian civilian deaths, and your call that 'it is vital that all security operations are conducted with due care and proportionate use of force'.

We would however kindly request that you further call upon the Israeli government to carry out credible investigations into these alleged unlawful killings, as a first step towards achieving full accountability and justice for these victims and their families.

Israel's military investigation and accountability deficit

The cases immediately above engage the most fundamental of human rights: the right to life. This right imposes strong obligations on states to refrain from taking life except where absolutely necessary in very limited circumstances.

Israel's military open-fire regulations strictly prohibit opening live fire except in cases of immediate mortal danger. However, LPHR has serious concerns that Israel's military accountability system is proving unable to secure credible investigations and full accountability for alleged violations by Israeli forces' of their own regulations against Palestinians in circumstances where they do not pose an imminent lethal threat.

B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organisations, has documented at least 46 cases from 2005 to early 2013 in which Israeli forces killed Palestinians in the West Bank "by firing live ammunition at stone throwers." Since September 2000, Israeli forces have killed more than 3,000 Palestinians who were not participating in hostilities, according to B'Tselem's data. For the same time period, Defence for Children International Palestine has documented 1,407 Palestinian children fatalities.

Despite these vast numbers, Israel's military justice system has convicted only six Israeli soldiers for unlawfully killing Palestinians, with the longest jail sentence being seven-and-a-half months, according to the Israeli human rights organisation, Yesh Din. LPHR takes the position that this prevailing accountability deficit is contrary to justice and the rule of law.

It is against this backdrop of an apparent systematic inability by Israel's military justice system to deliver accountability that we request your critically important urgent intervention to demand the Israeli government ensures fully credible investigation and accountability processes for all incidents of alleged excessive use of force and unlawful killings during Operation Brother's Keeper.

lawyers for palestinian
human rights



We shall be grateful for your urgent intervention and written response.

Yours sincerely,

Tareq Shrourou
Director, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights