

20 November 2014

Our reference: MIN/75720/2014

Tareq Shrourou
Director
Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights
C/O Mansfield Chambers
5 Chancery Lane
London
WC2A 1LG

Dear Mr Shrourou,

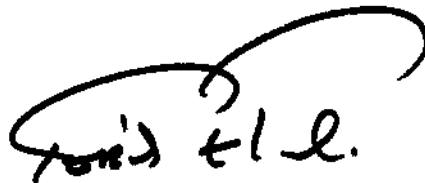
Thank you for your letter of 22 October to the Foreign Secretary, about Gaza. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

The Gaza conflict has taken a terrible toll. We have all been deeply saddened by the violence there and the dreadful civilian suffering it has caused, particularly to innocent children. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has not raised the specific case of Ahmad Abu Raidi with the Israeli authorities.

We understand that the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) confirmed that troops had suspected Ahmed of being a militant and detained him during their ground operation in Gaza. An IDF spokesperson said the case had been referred to the appropriate authorities for examination. A IDF statement was released that addressed Ahmad's allegations of being used as a human shield which said, "*D.C.I.-Palestine's report represents a perverse inversion of a truth in which Hamas persistently engages in the use of human shields, while the I.D.F.'s code of conduct rejects, in absolute terms, such behaviour.*"

However, we are pressing Israel to demonstrate accountability for its actions during the conflict. The IDF have launched a number of internal processes to investigate specific cases of engagement, and the Israeli State Comptroller has launched an investigation into the Government's conduct. We will watch these closely. We have also urged Israeli officials to cooperate with the UN's Commission of Inquiry and consider creating its own civilian commission of inquiry (such as the Turkel Commission) which may lead to independent investigations of allegations such as in this case.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tobias Ellwood', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

