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Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

From: **Tareq Shrourou - LPHR** (lphr@live.co.uk)
Sent: 22 May 2016 21:24:14
To: contact@lphr.org.uk (contact@lphr.org.uk)

From: AINAGCorrespondence@fco.gov.uk
To: lphr@live.co.uk
Subject: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories
Date: Wed, 11 May 2016 10:46:04 +0000

Our reference: EMOP/295/2016

11 May 2016

Dear Mr Shrourou,

Thank you for your email of 12 April to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), enclosing a letter for the Foreign Secretary, about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The Near East Department in the FCO has been asked to reply.

The UK is deeply concerned by the terrible human cost, to both sides, of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the start of the current violence we have spoken regularly to both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government, urging them to use their influence to de-escalate the tensions. We note that the Israeli Defence Forces have investigated as they deem necessary. Israel, like all countries, has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are in line with International Humanitarian Law.

We are aware of the incident you have referred to, which the Israeli Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces condemned immediately after it occurred. The soldier in question has been arrested and charged with manslaughter. We understand that trial proceedings started on Monday 9 May.

We are concerned by the use of force by Israeli security personnel in response to protests and security incidents and we regularly raise these concerns with the Israeli government, stressing the need for proportionality and proper accountability. We make clear that every effort should be made to exclude the use of live fire, especially against children.

I can assure you that the UK is firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and compliance with international law in the OPTs. We have a regular dialogue with the Government of Israel with regard to the implementation of their obligations under international law, and regularly and robustly raise our serious concerns on issues relating to Israeli actions in the OPTs and in particular we have also repeatedly raised with the Israeli authorities our concerns about incidents of settler violence.

Of course the context of all this is the enduring tragedy of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The UK will continue to press for a two state solution. Only a negotiated two-state solution will resolve the conflict and end the occupation. We believe there is no better alternative that can deliver peace and a Palestinian state. We continue to press Israel and the Palestinians on the need to refrain from actions which make peace more difficult.

On behalf of the

Near East Department

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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