



Right Hon Philip Hammond MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
City of Westminster
London
SW1A 2AH

Email: fcocorrespondence@fco.gov.uk

For the urgent attention of: Right Hon Philip Hammond MP

05 May 2016

Dear Mr. Hammond,

Re: UK's abstention on an accountability resolution at the Human Rights Council relating to the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict

We write further to the UK government's abstention on 22 March 2016 at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on the resolution: *Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*. This resolution relates to the significant report on the 2014 Gaza Conflict by the UN independent Commission of Inquiry ('COI').

As you are aware, this resolution follows an almost identical Human Rights Council resolution on the same issue which was adopted on 3 July 2015. The UK government significantly voted in the affirmative for last year's resolution, which was tabled shortly after publication of the COI's considered findings concerning serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, including the apparent commission of war crimes. The report itself carefully states:

“[T]he commission was able to gather substantial information pointing to serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by Israel and by Palestinian armed groups. In some cases, these violations may amount to war crimes.” (paragraph 668)

We therefore should be grateful if you could provide an explanation for the apparent diminution of the UK government's position on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory, as reflected by its abstention on 22 March 2016. Any regression in the UK government's resolute commitment to ensuring that full accountability is secured for alleged serious international law violations



would be a matter of very grave concern. Accordingly, we also respectfully request confirmation that it is an objective of the UK government to firmly support the robust implementation of the rule of law, justice and human rights protection in the context of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

We should be grateful for your careful consideration of this matter and for your written reply.

Yours sincerely,

Tareq Shrourou
Director, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights

CC:
Mr Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.