



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

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Tareq Shourou
c/o Bates Well Braithwaite
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Dear Mr Shourou,

Thank you for your letter of 20 December, about Ahed Tamimi and Nariman Tamimi.

As you will know, I responded to a Westminster Hall debate on the topic of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention on 7 February. I specifically mentioned the case of the Tamimi family.

I have twice visited the village of Nabi Saleh, in the occupied West Bank, where the Tamimi family lives. I met the family in 2013 and listened to their concerns. I have also spent time with young Israeli soldiers. This is a sad case that is a direct consequence of the failure to reach an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. We have raised our concerns with the relevant authorities. I assure you that we are following developments on Ahed and Nariman Tamimi closely.

As I said in the Westminster Hall debate on 7 February, Israel's treatment of Palestinian minors, and particularly the practice of holding them in military detention, remains a human rights priority for this Government.

We regularly raise this issue with the Government of Israel and will continue to do so as a matter of long-standing concern. I raised the UK's concerns with the Israeli authorities during my most recent visit to Israel in August 2017, and our Ambassador to Tel Aviv raised the issue of children in detention with the Israeli Justice Minister as recently as December 2017.

We also raised the issue at the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review last month. While welcoming the positive steps that Israel had taken since the last review in 2012, we urged the Government of Israel to take further action to meet its human rights obligations.

Equally, we remain concerned about other actions which make peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more difficult, such as terrorism, incitement to violence, and the refusal by some to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. It is in everyone's interest to encourage change to the situation on the ground, and work towards a more peaceful future.

The UK funds a number of human rights projects that are engaged on this issue, including a pilot providing lawyers in Hebron, a "Know Your Rights" scheme, and capacity building for Palestinian lawyers. We have also offered to arrange expert-to-expert discussions on this issue with the Government of Israel. This offer remains in place and we hope Israel will take it up.

Yours sincerely

Alistair Burt

THE RT HON. ALISTAIR BURT MP
Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa