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Tareq Shrourou and Angelina Nicolaou
Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights
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Our ref: MC2022/14478

22 June 2022

Dear Tareq Shrourou and Angelina Nicolaou,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May to the Foreign Secretary about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as the Minister for the Middle East.

I was saddened to hear of the death of respected and renowned Palestinian Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh. The Foreign Secretary and I have made clear publicly the UK's concern and called for a thorough investigation into the events. The UK was also deeply disturbed by the scenes at her funeral and the disproportionate use of force by Israeli police. Her death was a tragedy and those mourning must be treated with respect and dignity. We need to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the entire Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

In company with other members of the UN Security Council, we strongly condemned the killing and stressed the importance of an immediate, thorough, transparent, and fair and impartial investigation and stressed the need to ensure accountability. I also raised this important issue during a call with the Israeli Ambassador on 19 May. I urged a thorough and transparent investigation and pushed for action to safeguard the work of journalists.

The work of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work. The UK is a strong proponent of media freedom and continues to raise media freedom on the global stage. The Foreign Secretary issued a statement with her counterparts on World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, calling attention to the pressing need for enhanced safety of women journalists and media workers.

The situation on the ground in Israel and the OPTs demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK remains committed to the two-state solution as the best way to bring peace and stability to the region.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon. Amanda Milling MP

Minister of State for Asia and the Middle East