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Foreign &
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Re Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Thank you to the many of your members who wrote to me in December regarding the detention of Palestinian children in Israeli prisons.

I share their concerns about the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. As you are aware, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office funded and facilitated the independent report by leading British lawyers, including Baroness Scotland, which is cited in the letters. I have written to the Israeli Ambassador to urge Israel to take action on the report and have discussed follow-up to the report with Baroness Scotland. During his visit to Israel in November the Attorney General discussed the report with his Israeli counterpart who agreed to further detailed talks between Israeli and British officials on the recommendations.

In the meantime I welcome some small steps taken by the Israeli authorities. These include a recent Israeli military order which reduces the length of time children can be held in pre-trial detention and an announcement in December by the Israeli State Attorney reducing, from April, the period a Palestinian minor falling under the jurisdiction of the West Bank military court system can be held before being brought before a judge. We will continue to press the Israeli authorities for further action on the recommendations in the report, including those highlighted by your members.

See records

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ALISTAIR BURT

Minister, FCO