



23rd April 2021

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Jew Confidence,

RE: ISRAEL – PALESTINIAN CHILDREN

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Israel's treatment of Palestinian children, with specific reference to Early Day Motion (EDM) 1724; your comments upon which I have read with interest.

Notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs.

I appreciate your concern on this issue, and will ensure that Ministers at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) are aware of the points you have raised.

I know that the UK repeatedly calls on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and has a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. The UK continues to stress to the Israeli security forces the importance of providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population - children in particular - and of restraint in the use of live fire.

I too am concerned about Palestinian children detained in Israeli prisons and I know that the UK Government shares these concerns. Reports of the heavy use of painful restraints and the high number of Palestinian children who are not informed of their legal rights, in contravention of Israel's own regulations, are particularly concerning, as is, in violation of the *Fourth Geneva Convention*, the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel.

I am assured that the UK remains committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention and that our Embassy in Tel Aviv is in regular dialogue with Israel on this issue. I welcome that the UK also funds projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers.

It is for reasons such as the above that Israel and the OPTs remain a human rights priority for the FCDO, as documented in the most recent *Human Rights & Democracy Report* last year. I am confident that the UK will continue to monitor these issues closely and raise them with the relevant authorities where effective.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE