

1 March 2012

Our reference: MIN/27139/2012

Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

New Jersey,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February to the Foreign Secretary about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

I share you and your constituents' concerns about the threatened or actual demolition of Palestinian homes in the al-Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan, East Jerusalem. We are urging Israel to desist from the threatened demolitions and evictions which we consider to be contrary to Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law, harmful to the peace process, as well as causing unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians.

I raised the matter with the Israeli Ambassador on 23 February and the British Ambassador in Tel Aviv with the Israeli Minister of Interior on 20 February. Embassy officials also lobbied the Jerusalem municipality on 21 February and were told that the Municipality had no plans to conduct wide-scale demolitions in the immediate future.

The EU heads of mission in Jerusalem and Ramallah issued a statement condemning the demolition on 13 February of the several structures of the Maada Community Centre, which plays a vital role in the community of Silwan. I had previously condemned the decision of the Jerusalem authorities to build additional Israeli structures in Silwan on 30 December 2011.

We continue to have broader concerns about Israel actions in East Jerusalem, which we consider to be occupied territory. Beyond the evictions of Palestinians and demolition of Palestinian property, our concerns include the construction of illegal Israeli settlements, the removal of residency rights from Palestinians, possible unilateral changes to the municipal borders and severe difficulties of access to Jerusalem for Palestinians from the West Bank or even for those residents of Jerusalem who live beyond the Separation Barrier. I saw the practical effects of the Barrier, the settlements and the controls on Palestinians' access to Jerusalem during my visit to the region in January. We will continue to make clear our concerns to the Israel authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem, both bilaterally and in co-operation with our EU partners.

I can reassure you and your constituents that the EU has been very clear that no progress should be made on upgrading the wider EU-Israel relationship until there is substantial progress towards the two-state solution. This is a position that we will continue to support.

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ALISTAIR BURT



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon William Hague MP
First Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles St. London SW1A 2AA

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10 February 2012
22/2

Dear William

I write to you about the imminent eviction of Palestinians in Silwan, a suburb of occupied East Jerusalem. I have visited Silwan and met many of the residents whose houses have been marked for demolition, and I have shared their stress at the uncertainty of their own futures. Currently Silwan is the target, but I am aware that there are 30,000 herders in the area who are also to be relocated, and to where? The political implications should not be overlooked in the humanitarian urgency. In a sentence, these actions brings Israel one step closer to disrupting the territorial contiguity of the West Bank and sealing East Jerusalem off from it; thus doing irreversible damage to any peace process which remains to be salvaged.

Please can you advise me, and my constituents (writing to me because they care about human rights issues) what urgent representations are being made to the Israeli authorities about the flagrant flouting of international law here.

Both yourself, and Alistair Burt have made the government's position against Israel's illegal settlements quite clear but I feel that for all of the diplomacy and condemnation in this, the tragic impact and sense of urgency many of us feel on behalf of these poor people who are finding themselves with no roof over their heads and no viable direction in which to live out their future, is falling on deaf ears.

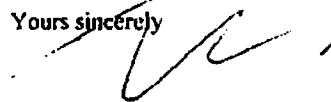
Aside from the Silwan population, in particular, the West Bank Bedouin population are on the receiving end of inconsistent Israeli provisions of international law protecting indigenous peoples. Indeed one of the relocation areas chosen for them by the Israelis was an area immediately bordering the Jerusalem Municipal rubbish dump which apart from anything else, is indicative of the disdain with which the Israelis treat Palestinians.

Israel's current actions and victimisation of the people of East Jerusalem is an abomination that is totally illegal. Surely the only logical way forward here is to take concrete action to penalise Israel via the most obvious method. You'll have seen a parliamentary motion that I tabled on the eve of the House rising (attached), and there is clearly no time to lose to take actions via the EU-Israel Association Trade Agreement. Let the suffering of Palestinian people no longer be so familiar to us that all we do is "make representations" when there are tools at our disposal that our government and other governments are choosing to ignore.

I am copying this letter to Alistair Burt, as well as Mathew Gould, the UK Ambassador to Israel.

I appreciate that the House is in recess but I eagerly await your reply and some reassurance that the immediate matter of the occupants of East Jerusalem is being addressed by the UK.

Yours sincerely


Jeremy Corbyn MP
Islington North; T 020 7219 3545; e corbynj@parliament.uk

Copy to: Alistair Burt MP
Mathew Gould



8 November 2010

The Rt Hon William Hague MP
First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles St
London SW1A 2AH

Dear William

Mustafa Barghouthi / prominent Palestinian leader

Myself and Andy Slaughter have just (this past weekend when we were in Jerusalem) met with Mustafa Barghouthi who tells us that he is visiting London from this Thursday through to Monday. Mustafa is normally based in Ramallah and is very keen to meet with you. I appreciate that this is rather short notice for your busy schedule but it would, undoubtedly, be time well spent.

By way of background, Mustafa was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize by Mairead Maguire earlier this year for the invaluable role he plays in organising and encouraging Palestinian civil society in the fundamental principles of non-violence. These activities are carried out largely via his role as Secretary of the Palestinian National Initiative, or Mubadara - a recently established democratic opposition movement in the realm of Palestinian domestic politics, co-founded along with Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi, Mr. Ibrahim Dakak and Dr. Edward Said.

Mustafa was also one of the delegates involved in the Madrid peace negotiations initiated in 1991. In his medical role (as a doctor) he does invaluable work in the field of health care in Palestine, travelling abroad when he is able to in order to give lectures on the dire medical situation and needs there, and how they can be improved.

I have met Mustafa on most of his UK visits, and on my visits to the region, and I believe him to be one of the most active and dedicated spokespersons on the subject that I have come across in the many years I have followed the Middle Eastern situation. Additionally, he is most eloquent, and efficient. Andy and I are in no doubt that a meeting with him, however brief, would be excellent use of your very valuable time. His contact details are:

██████████ and ██████████ but I suspect he may also take the liberty of phoning your office shortly.

Regards

Jeremy Corbyn MP
tel 020 7219 3545; fax 020 7219 2328; e corbynj@parliament.uk

MINISTERIAL SECRETARIAT UNIT
11 NOV 2010
DE: NEG
REF: MIN/24477/2010
DUE: 23/11



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

(1 May 2011

Our reference: MIN/11362/2011

Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Jeremy

Thank you for your letter of 27 March to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign about the situation in Gaza, and requesting a meeting with the Foreign Secretary. I am replying as the Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

I regret that a meeting with the Foreign Secretary will not be possible at present, due to current pressures on his diary.

On the question of violence in Gaza, the Foreign Secretary issued the following statement on 25 March:

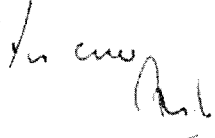
"I am extremely concerned at the escalating violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories over the past week. We have seen a surge in rockets and mortars launched at Israeli civilians from the Gaza strip. This is abhorrent. Three people have been injured, many more are living in fear. Six Palestinian civilians, including four children, have been killed as a result of Israeli actions in the Gaza strip. We have urged the Israeli Government to ensure everything is done to avoid further civilian casualties while calling for a complete end to attacks on Israel.

And we have seen the terrible sight, which we hoped belonged to the past, of a bomb at a bus station in Jerusalem. A British woman was killed and more than 30 injured. I condemn this attack in the strongest terms and call for those responsible to be held to account. Elsewhere, we have seen Israeli settlers opening fire on a Palestinian funeral procession wounding two mourners and another Palestinian was stabbed in an unprovoked attack.

We condemn the extremists who are instigating this violence and who are deliberately attempting to wreck the chances of peace. We call on all sides to do all that they can to prevent further loss of innocent life, to bring the perpetrators to justice and to reduce current tensions."

We have been clear that the status quo in Gaza is both a tragedy and unsustainable. We have also been clear that actions by both Israel and Hamas have contributed to this situation.

What is needed is concerted action to continue the limited progress we have seen in recent months. We condemn violence when we see it on either side, and the continual misery occasioned by such attacks, continues to drive the government to do all it can with partners to seek a negotiated conclusion to the peace process, the only ultimate guarantee of security.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alistair Burt', written in a cursive style.

ALISTAIR BURT

18 March 2013

Our reference: MIN/45652/2013

Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February to the Foreign Secretary about the Occupied Palestinian Territories and for attaching the letter from the Palestinian Minister of Detainees Affairs. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

Firstly, I understand your frustration and anger at the situation you witnessed in the West Bank, and particularly Gaza. I have seen myself the tremendous damage that the continued Israeli restrictions are doing to the economy and living standards of ordinary people in Gaza.

In close co-ordination with our EU partners and the Office of the Quartet Representation, we continue to press the Israeli Government at ministerial and official level to ease access restrictions and have raised concerns about the way that the fishing zone is enforced. We are also encouraging all sides to take advantage of the Egyptian-brokered talks in Cairo to tackle the fundamental issues facing Gaza, including the Israeli restrictions and the smuggling of weapons. You will also be aware of the Department for International Development's continued practical assistance to the people of Gaza.

Secondly, I share your concerns at the death of Arafat Jaradat whilst in Israeli detention and over Israel's extensive use of administrative detention, which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We have raised the issue of administrative detention with the Israelis on many occasions, including during the recent visits to Israel by the Attorney General and the National Security Adviser. We have also called on the Israeli authorities to conduct a full investigation into the circumstances of Mr Jaradat's death, including into the allegations of mistreatment.

Officials at the British Consulate General in Jerusalem continue to monitor the cases of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike and are in regular contact with the Ministry of Detainees' Affairs and relevant human rights organisations. We have lobbied the

Israeli authorities that those on hunger strike receive appropriate medical care and have encouraged all sides to reach a solution that prevents loss of life.

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Alistair

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Foreign &
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King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

18 March 2013

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Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
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Yur en
Alistair

ALISTAIR BURT

21 January 2013

Our reference: MIN/42847/2013

Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Dear Jeremy,

I am writing to you in your role as a member of the Britain-Palestine APPG, following receipt at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on 21 December of a number of letters from members of the public associated with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign regarding the detention of Palestinian children in Israeli prisons.

I share the concerns about the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. As you are aware, the FCO 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 the members of the public.

Yours sincerely,
Alistair

ALISTAIR BURT



The Rt Hon William Hague MP **HOUSE OF COMMONS**
First Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office LONDON SW1A 2AA
King Charles St
London SW1A 2AH

27 February 2013

Dear William

Palestine / Prisoners / Action required

You'll appreciate the very dire situation that the Palestinian people face, and particularly those in Gaza who suffer indiscriminately as a result of the siege.

I have just returned from an (Interpal) visit to Gaza, accompanied by Sarah Teather and Philip Hollobone and in my opinion, it resembles, quite simply, one huge and suffering refugee camp, though given that it comprises 8 camps, with UNWRA feeding 800,000 refugees all told, this is not surprising. Without UNWRA, as well as the illegal tunnel trade that has evolved out of desperation, no one would survive. Even the fishermen, doing their best to stay within the so called acceptable limit of 3km by Israel, are shot at on a regular basis. The shooting was heard very clearly by many of us from our hotel.

I cannot help wondering how long successive governments are going to stand by pretending that an occupying power of so many years should be treated in the same way as the people whose land is not only occupied, but continually being confiscated.

At one of the meetings I attended I was asked if we would, at the very least, a) stop allowing Israel's criminal politicians to come to our country freely, b) if we would ensure the BBC portray Palestine fairly and c) if we would work to end the siege on Gaza. Had I not been working toward all of these 3 aims I'd have hung my head in shame. There was no possible explanation I could give as to why our governments had made no progress in support of such crucial aims. Indeed the BBC have barely mentioned the Palestinian prisoner hunger strike!

You'll see that I attach a letter from the Palestinian National Authority following a meeting the Prisons Minister requested with me. The unjustness of the Administrative Detention that the Israeli government continue to use against Palestinians is explained in the letter and I'd be very grateful if you would give the matter your immediate attention. Apart from the urgency inspired by these 4 emaciated hunger strikers, the medical negligence, and the death in custody after the alleged interrogation of Arafat Jarafat over the weekend only adds to the sense of urgency.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Corbyn MP
T 020 7219 3545; e corbynj@parliament.uk

MINISTERIAL SECRET UNIT
31 MAR 2013
DEPT NEG (PALESTINE)
REF: MEN/45652
DUED: 12/3/13



The RT Hon William Hague MP
Secretary of State for foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

We would like to request your immediate assistance in regards to a critical situation involving Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike. Prisoners Samer Issawai, Ayman Sharawneh, Tareq Qaa'dan and Jafar Izzideen have been on hunger strike to reject the oppressive policy of the Administrative Detention which directly breaches the civil rights of Palestinian people and is enforced by the Israeli courts without a just legal basis.

The rights of the Palestinian prisoners are protected by the International Conventions and it is these rights which are being breached by the Israeli Prison Administration- a crime which has so far been neglected by the international community. These breaches have now lead to an extremely critical situation for the above mentioned prisoners which could lead to their loss of life. I draw your attention specifically to the condition of prisoner Samer Issawi who commenced his hunger strike on 1 July 2012 and now weighs a dangerous 46kg and has lost all ability to move; a condition which now affects all mentioned prisoners. Without immediate assistance, their deaths are immanent and expected.

We again point out that the practices implemented by the Israeli Prison Administration against the Palestinian Prisoners violate all relevant international agreements and conventions specifically the Forth Geneva Conventions of 1949. To which your government is a signatory. Israel is also contravening the European convention for the prevention of torture or punishment of prisoners. The rights of prisoners are guaranteed in International law.

Given the criticality of this situation we request your immediate assistance to pressure the Israeli government to follow the signed international agreements and release these prisoners and cease all actions leading to crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people. If Israel refuses then we urge the British Government to impose trade sanctions against Israel and to petition the European Parliament to do the same.

Please feel free to contact me anytime on the details below to discuss the situation and agree how your involvement can assist us in our cause to fight for the humanitarian rights of these prisoners and all Palestinian people under Israeli oppression.

With all our respect

Dr Atallah Abu Sebah
Minister of Detainees' Affairs



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

27 March 2011

The Rt Hon William Hague MP
First Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles St
London SW1A 2AH

MINISTERIAL
SUPPORT UNIT

31 MAR 2011

DEPT: NEG
REF: 11362
DUE: 1104

Dear Mr Hague

I am writing to request a meeting with you and a delegation from **Palestine Solidarity Campaign**. We would like to discuss the UK's response to the escalation of violence towards civilians particularly with the rising death toll in recent weeks; what the UK can do to help end the siege on Gaza; encouraging further normalisation between Gaza and its neighbour Egypt and relations with Israel. We hope it will also be an opportunity to explore the wider issue of Palestinian human, civic and political rights in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

We must share with you our deep concern about the lack of balance in the recent statement from Middle East Minister, Alistair Burt, in regards to this escalation. As no doubt, Mr Burt is aware in recent days Israeli military action has resulted in significant loss of life and injuries. He may also be aware that this recent escalation began when Israel launched a mortar shell attack on Gaza on February 23rd which the BBC has reported resulted in 11 people injured, including three children.

So far there have been no statements published on the Israel Embassy's website about this loss of life including: **23rd March** the death of four Palestinian civilians, including two children with at least 17 people injured; **19th March** two 16 year olds were killed almost 300 metres away from border; **25th, 26th and 27th February** Israel targeted civilian property causing widespread panic; **11th February** a mortar attack left 11 injured, including three children.


The statement made by Mr Burt on the escalation of violence between Israel and Gaza is reprinted below:

"I condemn the barrage of mortars on southern Israel from Gaza in recent days. The indiscriminate targeting of Israeli citizens, as they celebrated the Jewish festival of Purim, is unacceptable. The firing of over 50 mortars in the space of a few hours, as well as a Grad rocket on Ashkelon that caused injury and damage, signals a further, worrying escalation in the situation at a time when international efforts are focused on getting Israel and the Palestinians back to the negotiating table. Hamas must halt these strikes immediately, and rein in other militant factions in Gaza.

"These attacks come against the backdrop of last week's footage of Hamas security forces assaulting students and other peaceful demonstrators in Gaza. Over the weekend Hamas also targeted local and foreign media organisations. The people of Gaza, like the people across the region, have an absolute right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Hamas should not think that while the attention of the world is elsewhere we will turn a blind eye to their actions."

I look forward to hearing from you about a suitable date and time to meet with this delegation to discuss events in Palestine.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Corbyn
Islington North
T 020 7219 3545; e corbynj@parliament.uk