



THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP

Minister for Foreign Affairs



Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair

Thank you for your letter of 26 March 2014 concerning a petition the Standing Committee on Petitions is considering regarding UNICEF's 'Children in Israeli Military Detention' report.

The Australian Government has publicly expressed its concern about the allegations of mistreatment of Palestinian minors in detention. In February, the Australian Embassy in Israel made formal representations to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice expressing Australia's concerns about Israel's security and judicial practices toward Palestinian minors. This followed the Embassy's last round of formal representations on this issue in March 2013. My Department also raised Australia's concerns about this issue with the Israeli Embassy in Canberra in February. Australian officials have previously visited the Ofer security complex and juvenile military court.

Our Embassy in Israel has sought, and received, information from Israeli officials on reforms that Israel has undertaken to address the issue of Palestinian minors in detention. These include establishing a Juvenile Military Court, reducing the length of time a minor is held before being brought before a judge and approving a pilot summons procedure program to replace the practice of night-arrests of West Bank minors suspected of security offences. Australia continues to monitor this issue, including through consideration of UNICEF's 'Children in Israeli Military Detention' report and subsequent annual bulletins.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Julie Bishop
14 APR 2014