

KEITH TAYLOR
Green Party
for the South East of England



Commissioner Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

15 May 2014

Dear Commissioner Ashton,

One year ago, UNICEF published the report "Children in Israeli Military Detention". After reviewing over 400 affidavits the UN agency concluded that the ill-treatment of children in the system appears to be "widespread, systematic and institutionalised".

One year on Military Court Watch (MCW) has released a report (<http://www.militarycourtwatch.org/files/server/UNICEF%20REPORT%20-%202012%20MONTHS%20ON%20-.pdf>) reviewing progress made in implementing UNICEF's 38 recommendations. Whilst noting that there have been some important developments in the system during the intervening period, based on a review of 60 affidavits, MCW concludes that ill-treatment still appears to be "widespread, systematic and institutionalised". Further, out of the 38 recommendations made by UNICEF, 87 per cent remain unimplemented.

MCW has also recently reported that there is a practice in the West Bank whereby children are being interrogated twice in an attempt to circumvent providing them with basic legal rights. During the first interrogation, children are not informed of their rights in order to facilitate the obtaining of a confession. Subsequently, children are interrogated a second time when they are informed of their legal rights and which is frequently recorded.

In order to overcome these serious deficiencies a number of simple measures need to be effectively implemented as a matter of urgency.

1. All children, and their legal guardian, should be provided on arrest with a written statement in Arabic informing them of their full legal rights in custody;
2. All children must be permitted to consult with a lawyer of choice prior to interrogation;
3. All children must be accompanied by a parent throughout their interrogation;

4. All interrogations must be audio-visually recorded and a copy of the tape must be provided to the defence prior to the first hearing; and

5. Any breach of these recommendations, including any unexplained gaps in the recording, should result in the discontinuation of the prosecution and the child's immediate release.

I'm sure that, like me, you find this practice by the Israeli authorities very disturbing and upsetting. The fact that children are held in military detention at all is unacceptable.

In order to bring an immediate end to the unlawful and dreadful practice of double interrogation of children, I request that you relay the need for the measures above to be urgently implemented with your contacts in the Israeli government at the highest level. Please do this straight away.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Keith Taylor - Green Party MEP, South East England.