

KEITH TAYLOR
Green Party
for the South East of England



Ambassador Ran Curiel
Head of Israeli Mission to the EU
Avenue de l'Observatoire 40
1180 Brussels
Belgium

7 February 2011

Dear Ambassador Ran Curiel,

I am writing to you in regards to recent incidents whereby the Israeli military have shot at children collecting building gravel near the border fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. The Defence for Children International/Palestine Section (DCI-Palestine) documented 16 cases of this happening between 26 March and 28 November 2010 and these cases have also been reported in, inter alia, [the Guardian](#) and [the Independent](#). In 11 out of these 16 cases, the children estimate that, when they were shot, they were on or outside the 300 metre exclusion zone unilaterally imposed by the Israeli Army.

On 18 January 2011, another boy was injured whilst collecting building gravel in Gaza, approximately 600 metres from the border with Israel, bringing the total number of the cases documented by DCI-Palestine since March 2010 to 24. Reports indicate that the boy was injured by shrapnel from a tank shell. His 18 year old cousin was killed in the same incident.

According to information I have received, hundreds of men and boys are forced into scavenging for building gravel amongst the destroyed building close to the border fence due to a severe lack of job opportunities and a shortage of construction material entering Gaza (due to the blockade imposed by Israel). The children can use the small amount of money they earn to support their families. However, Israeli military personnel observing the border sometimes shoot at the workers, usually, but not always aiming at their legs.

I find it totally abhorrent and inexcusable that children and adult civilians, who are doing nothing more than trying to survive and to support their families, are being targeted and injured by Israeli soldiers. You will be aware that the targeting of civilians is absolutely prohibited under international law, regardless of circumstances.

I urge you to do all in your power to:

- ensure that the Israeli army immediately ceases the practice of targeting unarmed children in the buffer zone on the Gaza side of the border with Israel; and
- demand an immediate review of the orders and procedures relating to firing on persons in the buffer zone on the Gaza side of the border for compliance with international law, and to also demand that all findings of the review are made public.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

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