



Matt Western MP
Warwick & Leamington

Hamish Falconer MP
Minister for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Sent via email.

20th February 2026

Dear Minister,

Re: Treatment of Palestinian Prisoners and Bodies

As the US-backed Peace Plan moves into the next phase, I must raise with you Israel's ongoing mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners and bodies.

Firstly, since 7th October 2023, evidence has increasingly revealed that conditions inside Israeli prisons have deteriorated dramatically. Detainees describe extreme overcrowding, deliberate starvation, denial of medical care, as well as widespread use of psychological and sexual violence. These accounts show that Israel's detention facilities are functioning as a coordinated system of abuse.

The case of Dr Hussam Abu Safiya is particularly alarming and one I wish to bring to your attention. Detained without charge for over a year, Dr Abu Safiya is reported to be suffering severe physical decline from continuous mistreatment, including exposure to cold, inadequate food provisions, and conditions described as torture. Claims circulating about alleged militant affiliation appear to be baseless.

Given the evidence of systemic mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners, I must ask what actions the UK Government will take to facilitate the release of Palestinian prisoners who are arbitrarily detained by Israeli forces? Additionally, what support is the Government giving to independent medical and legal observers to investigate documented cases of abuse and torture against Palestinian prisoners?

Secondly, many constituents have raised with me their concern for the ongoing practice of withholding Palestinian bodies. On their return to the Palestinian authorities, the remains of prisoners have been found with signs consistent with torture, including fractures and gunshot wounds indicative of execution-style killings. It also appears that many bodies have been returned in states of severe decomposition or with signs of post-mortem abuse.

As I am sure you are aware, the practice of withholding bodies takes place under a legal framework derived from the Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, instituted during the British Mandate. These regulations were incorporated into Israeli law at the moment of statehood and still underpin the country's powers today, including administrative detention and the authority invoked to justify holding bodies indefinitely. I understand that these laws have been used extensively in the OPT.

Subsequent Israeli legislation has expanded these authorities. Most notably, a 2018 amendment to the Israeli Counterterrorism Law permitted bodies to be withheld until families accept restrictive burial conditions, despite judicial findings that the original regulations did not authorise the practice and that it infringes basic rights to dignity and proper burial.

Given the UK's historical role in founding the legal infrastructure that is still used to justify these measures, would the Government consider reviewing how this legacy is being applied today? And, has the Government considered raising with Israeli authorities the need to end the withholding of bodies and comply fully with international humanitarian law?

As ever, I look forward to your detailed response.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Western'.

Matt Western
MP for Warwick and Leamington