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Hon. Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada

January 22, 2018

Re: Ahed Tamimi and the No Way To Treat A Child campaign

Dear Minister Freeland,

I write to you regarding the detention of Palestinian children by the Israeli military.

No doubt you are already aware of the case of Ahed Tamimi, a 16-year-old Palestinian child detained in December, who could face up to 10 years in prison over an altercation with Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank. On the same day as the incident in question, Ahed's 15-year-old cousin was shot in the head with a rubber bullet fired by an Israeli soldier. Human rights organizations including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called for Ahed's release from detention, and her case has earned international attention, including from many Canadians who have written to me to request action from the Canadian government.

Ahed Tamimi's case is but one of many troubling cases of military detention of children under the Israeli occupation. Many Canadians have written to me regarding the No Way to Treat a Child campaign, which is a joint project of Defense for Children International-Palestine and the American Friends Service Committee. This campaign and UNICEF's reports on "Children in Israeli Military Detention" have revealed widespread and systematic ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system.

Close to 700 Palestinian children from the occupied West Bank are prosecuted every year through Israeli juvenile military courts under Israeli military orders. Military courts in the West Bank deny bail in 70 percent of cases involving Palestinian children. Palestinian children detained by Israeli authorities often face long periods of solitary confinement.

Minister, the Israeli government must uphold its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I am also deeply concerned by the reaction of Israeli government officials to many of these cases. I urge you to speak on behalf of thousands of concerned Canadians by pressing the Israeli government to fully comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and ensure that Palestinian children are treated fairly, and in full respect of their internationally-recognized rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'H. Laverdière'.

Hélène Laverdière
NDP Foreign Affairs Critic