

E: [ethics-and-human-rights@bma.org.uk](mailto:ethics-and-human-rights@bma.org.uk)

**Professor Zion Hagay**

President  
Israeli Medical Association  
2 Twin Towers  
35 Jabotinsky  
POB 3566  
Ramat Gan 5213604 Israel

Sent via email to: [zionhagay@ima.org.il](mailto:zionhagay@ima.org.il)  
Included in CC: [leah@ima.org.il](mailto:leah@ima.org.il) and [tami@karni.org.il](mailto:tami@karni.org.il)

30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Dear Professor Zion Hagay,**

**Inhumane treatment of children and youths in Israeli prisons, amounting to torture**

We have been approached by Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) with regard to an issue of grave ethical concern. PHRI has drawn to our attention several reports concerning the continuous ill-treatment of children and youths within Israeli prisons, particularly the use of solitary confinement and the lack of medical resources offered to these children and youths after interrogation and detention. As you know, the use of solitary confinement for children and young people is contra-indicated, and explicitly prohibited by the [World Medical Association](#).

Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP) found that between 2016 and 2021, 75% of detained children experienced physical violence, 58% of them experienced verbal abuse and intimidation, and 36% of them experiences threats and/or coercion<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, according to the 'Defenseless<sup>2</sup>' report by Save the Children, around 50% of children shared that they were held in isolation or solitary confinement, 81% of children were beaten at least once, and 88% of children did not receive adequate nor timely healthcare, even when this was requested explicitly. The torture of children within prisons causes severe mental health consequences, which can be seen in many. For example, Ahmad Manasra<sup>3</sup> was arrested seven years ago at 13 years old, threatened and interrogated, and has been in solitary confinement since November 2021. He has become so ill that he has been transferred to a prison hospital<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli\\_forces\\_burn\\_palestinian\\_child\\_detainee\\_with\\_cigarette\\_threaten\\_to\\_shoot\\_another](https://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli_forces_burn_palestinian_child_detainee_with_cigarette_threaten_to_shoot_another)

<sup>2</sup> [https://resource-centre-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/defenseless\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_israeli\\_military\\_detention\\_on\\_palestinian\\_children\\_0.pdf](https://resource-centre-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/defenseless_the_impact_of_israeli_military_detention_on_palestinian_children_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/israel-opt-palestinian-prisoner-arrested-as-a-child-ahmad-manasra-still-in-prison-despite-worsening-mental-health/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/israel-opt-palestinian-prisoner-arrested-as-a-child-ahmad-manasra-still-in-prison-despite-worsening-mental-health/>

**Co-Chief executive officers:** Neeta Major and Rachel Podolak

Registered as a Company limited by Guarantee. Registered No. 8848 England.  
Registered office: BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP.

Listed as a Trade Union under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974.

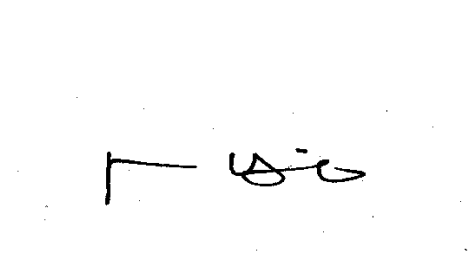


As you know, the WMA Declaration of Tokyo expects that ‘the physician shall not countenance, *condone* or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhumane or degrading procedures... and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife<sup>5</sup>. The WMA also makes it clear that it is the responsibility of national medical associations to ensure the condemnation of any abuse or torture in detention, especially of minors.

Given the seriousness of these issues, we would very much welcome an opportunity, in the first instance, to discuss these issues with you, and to seek your views on how best to respond.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Jan Wise**  
Chair, BMA medical ethics committee



**Dr Kitty Mohan**  
Chair, BMA international committee

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-tokyo-guidelines-for-physicians-concerning-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment-in-relation-to-detention-and-imprisonment/>