



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Foreign Secretary  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

16 April 2020

Dear Dominic,

I write to you regarding the unjust detention by Hamas of seven peace activists from the Gaza Youth Committee.

The campaigners were arrested for “treason” after holding a Zoom virtual conference with Israeli peace activists last week. A Hamas Interior Ministry spokesperson justified their detention on the grounds that they were allegedly “establishing normalisation activities with the Israeli occupation via the internet”.

The video-chat was organised to allow both Israelis and Palestinians to hear about each other’s life experiences and particularly for those from Israel to listen directly to Gaza residents about life in the coastal enclave, especially the threat posed by coronavirus.

I’m sure you will agree that such people-to-people activity is vital in supporting reconciliation and coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians and a crucial prerequisite to any lasting peace. Surely initiatives such as these should be encouraged, not punished.

I therefore urge the government to condemn the detention of these activists and call for their immediate release. I ask you to ensure that British diplomats in the region do everything possible to work with our international partners to secure the release of these innocent young Gazans.

May I also use this opportunity to wish you well in your role as first secretary of state as you lead our country’s response to the present crisis whilst the prime minister continues his recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Steve McCabe MP  
Chair, Labour Friends of Israel