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Lord Dubs raises concerns for Palestinian child detainees in UK Parliament

<http://www.dci-pal.org/english/display.cfm?DocId=1836&CategoryId=1>

[11.05.2011] Following a visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory in April 2011, Lord Dubs raised the issue of Palestinian child detainees in the UK Parliament on 4 May.

Lord Dubs: ‘My Lords, I recently visited the West Bank; it was my first time there. Of course any solution must acquire security for Israel, but also dignity, self-respect and justice for the Palestinians.

As part of the visit I went to see the Israeli military courts in Ofer. I believe that the way in which these courts operate is an obstacle to achieving a just peace in the region. We went to see how children are treated by this system of military justice. Approximately 700 Palestinian children are prosecuted every year in these courts, and at the end of January this year some 222 were in jail. In the court we visited we saw a 14 year-old and a 15-year-old, one of them in tears, both looking absolutely bewildered. What shocked me as much as anything was to see that these young persons-children-had chains or shackles around their ankles while sitting in court. They were also handcuffed as they went into court. Although the handcuffs were taken off while they were in court, they were put on again as they left the court.

When being interrogated these young people do not have the security of video recordings, lawyers or parents present. In fact, if parents want to visit, their permission might take 60 days to come through, by which time the young person might have served his or her sentence.

The court proceedings are in Hebrew, with translations of a doubtful quality. The verdicts are mostly based on uncorroborated confession evidence. The evidence against one young person that we saw was of throwing stones at an Israeli armoured vehicle, for which he is likely to get 60 days in custody.

I do not believe that this process of humiliation represents justice. I believe that the way in which these young people are treated is in itself an obstacle to the achievement by Israel of a peaceful relationship with the Palestinian people. I think that the Israelis should apply proper standards of human rights to the way in which they treat them.’