

SENATE

Israel's Automatic Prosecution of Palestinian Children in Military Courts

(Question No. 242)

Senator Janet Rice: asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 1 December 2016:

With reference to Israel's automatic prosecution of Palestinian children in military courts:

- (1) Since January 2014, on how many occasions has an official from the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv or the Australian Representative Office in Ramallah attended a hearing of a Palestinian minor in the military courts.
- (2) Since January 2014, what steps have staff at the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv or the Australian Representative Office in Ramallah taken to independently verify that conditions for minors in military detention have improved.

Senator Brandis - on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the answer to the Senator's question is as follows:

- (1) Since January 2008, Australian officials have not attended a hearing of a Palestinian minor in a military court.
- (2) Australian officials discuss the conditions for Palestinian minors in military detention with foreign counterparts, international organisations, particularly UNICEF, non-governmental organisations and a range of Israeli government agencies. Australian officials also receive regular updates from UNICEF on its assessment of progress made to improve conditions.

Australian officials raise concerns about allegations of mistreatment of Palestinian minors in detention directly with Israeli counterparts. The Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv reiterated Australia's interests in, and concerns over, security and judicial practices towards Palestinian minors, most recently on 29 September 2016. The Department has also raised Australia's concerns about Palestinian minors with the Israeli Embassy in Canberra.