

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2026

The Honorable Marco A. Rubio
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Thank you for Mr. Paul D. Guaglianone's December 19, 2025, reply to our October 21, 2025, letter to you regarding then-15-year-old American citizen and Florida resident Mohammed Ibrahim, who was detained in Israel until his release on November 27, 2025. Your reply noted that he was released; however, it did not address any of our concerns about the way he was treated.

Following his arrest and during his time in custody, we received periodic reports from Mohammed's family and U.S. Consular officers regarding Mohammed's treatment by Israeli soldiers. According to Mohammed, he and the Palestinian minors detained in the same cell were beaten, threatened, pepper sprayed in the face, and denied adequate food and medical care for, in Mohammed's case, more than nine months. Mohammed lost a third of his body weight and was covered in scabies, as were the others. One of his cellmates, 17-year-old Walid Ahmad, who was never charged with a crime, died. Walid's autopsy findings reportedly showed signs of prolonged malnutrition, untreated colitis, injuries likely caused by blunt trauma, and scabies. After his release, Mohammed described in detail the brutality and humiliation he and his cellmates were subjected to—mistreatment that no one should be forced to endure, least of all a 15-year-old.

This type of abuse, which has become commonplace in the West Bank and Israeli prison facilities, must stop.¹ There has been case after case of Palestinians, including hundreds of children,² swept up in the Israeli military justice system, where they are not only denied basic rights of due process but subjected to systematic physical and psychological abuse.³ While such abuses are never permissible, we are especially concerned that cases involving abuse of U.S. citizens in the West Bank be thoroughly investigated and that those responsible are brought to justice. We request your answers to the following questions as soon as possible:

¹ B'Tselem, Living Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps (Jan. 2026) (online at https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202601_living_hell_eng.pdf)

² Defense for Children International – Palestine, *Number of Palestinian Children (12-17) in Israeli Military Detention* (online at https://www.dci-palestine.org/number_of_palestinian_children_12_17_in_israeli_military_detention)

³ B'Tselem, *Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison Systems as a Network of Torture Camps* (Aug. 2024) (online at https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202408>Welcome_to_hell_eng.pdf)

1. Has anyone from the State Department met with Mohammed since his release to hear from him directly about his treatment by Israel Prison Service (IPS) authorities? If not, why not?
2. Has the State Department requested the Government of Israel to conduct a thorough, impartial investigation of the abuse that he and the other minors who were detained with him were subjected to?
3. Have any IDF or IPS personnel been punished or held accountable for the abuse of Mohammed Ibrahim?

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



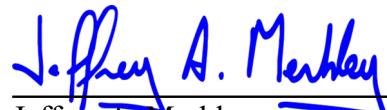
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress