

February 2, 2018

The Honorable Betty McCollum
U.S. House of Representatives

On behalf of Emgage Action, a leading national civic engagement organization for Muslim Americans, thank you for sponsoring H.R. 4391 - Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act.

The United Nations Children's Fund, American Friends Service Committee, Amnesty International USA, Center for Constitutional Rights, Churches for Middle East Peace, and Defense for Children International have all recognized the systematic and widespread mistreatment of Palestinian children who are detained and imprisoned by the Israeli military. Detention and prosecution of Palestinian minors in a military court system is a clear violation of international law and internationally recognized standards of human rights. Furthermore, these continued abuses are hindering the path to a lasting settlement between Palestinians and Israelis because they engender resentment by a future generation that needs to believe that peace is possible.

H.R. 4391 not only addresses the issue of human rights violations, but also ensures that U.S. taxpayer funds are not used to support the military detention of Palestinian children. As Americans, it is extremely important that our money does not facilitate the ill treatment of children anywhere in the world, no matter what other interests are at play.

As a former Department of State official who worked on some of our nation's most challenging security and humanitarian issues, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to you and your fellow co-sponsors for your commitment to justice around the globe. For the first time in Congress, we see our representatives standing up for the rights of Palestinian children. As an organization, we support these efforts and believe that the only path to a lasting peace is to recognize the rights of individuals and ensure the dignity of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Sincerely,



Wa'el Alzayat
Chief Executive Officer
Emgage Action