

BRICUP Newsletter 64

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BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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Behind the Stephen Hawking story

Readers of the BRICUP Newsletter probably know already that early in May Professor Stephen Hawking of Cambridge University withdrew from a major conference in Israel. Despite, or maybe even assisted by, a confusing set of news briefings from the university, this rapidly became the biggest story in the history of academic boycott to date. The announcement zipped round the world at breakneck speed; in Israel it became the main news item. BRICUP is used to trying very hard to interest even our local media in matters we think are well worth an airing. However this time we found ourselves at the centre of a media storm without, of course, the infrastructure to do more than improvise.

It is often the case that the public record of events is a manufactured veneer designed to selectively

emphasise or obscure particular aspects of what actually happened. And even when there is no deliberate spin, what survives in the record are some apparently free-standing facts with no indication of the more complex activities that preceded and made them possible.

Since BRICUP has had a ringside seat, and even a participatory role on this story, we are able to give you a little more insight into what went on behind what was reported.

The announcement

On April 4th we heard from colleagues both in Israel and in Palestine that it had been announced that Stephen Hawking had agreed to participate in the Israeli Presidential Conference in Jerusalem on June 18-20. This annual event is a vanity project of President Shimon Peres, initiated some 5 years ago. It aims to collect a gaggle of celebrities ranging this year from Prince Albert of Monaco through Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman to Barbra Streisand. It is by no stretch an academic event, but its close identification with the Israeli state clearly makes it a boycott target according to the PACBI guidelines.

BRICUP's intervention

With such a high profile UK scientist due to participate there was no doubt that BRICUP should approach Hawking in the hope of dissuading him. Three of us spent several days drafting and redrafting a persuasive (we hoped) letter, to be sent with an accompanying 2-page 'Fact Sheet' providing telling evidence of Israel's violation of the rights of Palestinians. To give it extra force we decided to try and recruit signatures only from senior scientists. Twenty UK professors from 15 universities and 11 disciplines agreed to do so. And then at the last minute Noam Chomsky agreed to add his signature. On April 27th we emailed this message to Professor Hawking.

Combined operations

BRICUP was not the only group to write to him. We soon discovered that the Cambridge branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign had already done so, and what is more had pre-existing links to Hawking's office. (Doubtless many other individuals and organisations also wrote asking Professor Hawking not to go.) From this point on the two organisations worked together as an effective team.

Professor Hawking's office got in touch to tell Cambridge PSC that he wanted to hear directly from senior academics in Palestine. This was immensely encouraging, as it meant that he was at least considering the possibility of pulling out. BRICUP was able to suggest appropriate names, at least some of whom were contacted and sent in responses.

Withdrawal

What happened next was – waiting, for several days. Then on May 3 we received a copy of Hawking's letter to the Israeli President's office. In it he said that he had originally intended to give a talk at the conference expressing his opinion on the prospects for a peace settlement; and also welcomed the opportunity it would give him to lecture on the West Bank. However it was the unanimous advice of Palestinian academics who had contacted him that he should respect the boycott – and hence he would withdraw. His letter ended "Had I attended I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster."

Making it public

A resounding result. But curiously it was followed by silence. After a few days we re-contacted the Cambridge office to ask how the news would be announced, and were told they had no plans to do so. No announcement from Israel either. On Tuesday May 7th we pointed out to Hawking's people that we were among about ten people who had been copied with Stephen Hawking's letter of withdrawal, so that it was only a matter of time before it leaked out in an unpredictable fashion. (In fact we were already receiving messages from people round the world who had more than an inkling of what was afoot, and who we had to persuade to sit tight.) We suggested that it would be better to have a controlled announcement.

By email Professor Hawking's PA confirmed that Tim Holt, the acting Head of Communications for Cambridge University, had agreed that the following announcement could be posted on the BRICUP and PSC websites:

We understand that Professor Stephen Hawking has declined his invitation to attend the Israeli Presidential Conference Facing Tomorrow 2013, due to take place in Jerusalem on 18-20 June. This is his independent decision to respect the boycott, based upon his knowledge of Palestine, and on the unanimous advice of his own academic contacts there.

Because BRICUP has no office and hence no office hours it went up on the BRICUP website that evening, and on the PSC website the next day. We posted these exact words, with no hype, and not even at the top of the website.

The frenzy begins

Within an hour or so Matthew Kalman, a Jerusalem-based freelance journalist working for the Guardian, had spotted it, and broke the story in the following day's paper. Other newspapers piled in, as well as wire agencies, the BBC, Huffington Post, and the rest. It dominated the news in Israel. Readers of this Bulletin who were on a Buddhist retreat may not have noticed this, but the rest of our readers will have spotted some of it.

Quite spectacular was the level of aggressive invective directed at Stephen Hawking personally in some papers and on some web-sites. Hypocrisy for being willing to use technology of alleged Israeli origin in his speech synthesiser. Weak-mindedness (yes!) for being so easily suborned by pro-Palestine fanatics. And so on.

Cambridge loops the loop

Then on the Wednesday afternoon we began to hear incredible rumours, which nevertheless turned out to be true. Tim Holt (yes the same Tim Holt) had issued a statement that Hawking's withdrawal was based solely on health problems, and had nothing to do with politics. He demanded that BRICUP take the notice down from its website. We were contacted by several journalists who had covered the story and who now felt their careers were at risk for apparently peddling a false story without adequate checking. We had no alternative but to reveal the email evidence that our posting had been approved by the very man who was now denying its truth.

What happened next has been described by [Matthew Kalman in the Daily Beast](#), in a story he posted later that day. Kalman had by now managed to get access to a copy of Hawking's formal letter of withdrawal. He read it out to Holt. "You were right," he said. "Stephen did send a letter on Friday to the Israeli Presidential office saying that he would respect the boycott. Your sources were correct and you have my apologies. I was misinformed." Holt then put out

another statement saying that Hawking had, indeed, withdrawn for political reasons. Cambridge's 'correction' to our story had lasted a full 4 hours.

There is an unexplained mystery here. Tim Holt had been one of the copied-in recipients of the May 3rd withdrawal message sent by Hawking's PA to Israel. The mystery is how Holt had managed to be misinformed about a letter that he had himself seen, and for which he had approved an announcement summarising its contents.

Tim Holt has not yet apologised for his unsubstantiated, one might think unprincipled, attack on BRICUP.

Confusion worse confounded

To say that Cambridge's double denial did not improve clarity on the subject is an understatement. Newspapers which had rushed to condemn BRICUP and all who sail near her were now having to get back into some alignment with the actual facts. In all the ducking and weaving some readers may well have been left with a degree of uncertainty about where the truth lay (which is one reason for writing this piece). But in fact Cambridge's looping the loop probably served to keep the story alive in the media for longer. And the next day we released the text of our letter to Hawking; and the presence of Noam Chomsky among the signatories generated another day's coverage (including a whole page in the Guardian).

Outlook changeable

It has been a bumpy ride, and both Cambridge PSC and BRICUP representatives were hanging on to our seats during some of it. Luckily our nerve held, and we were able to help the truth of Stephen Hawking's brave and principled decision to emerge.

The aim of academic boycott is not to bring Israel to its knees by the withholding of favours by the world's academics. Rather it is to generate occasions for public debate and education, within and beyond the academic community. Dialogue (if you can call it that) has been the officially sanctioned mode for persuading Israel to change tack. After so many decades of intransigence and mounting atrocities, academic and other forms of boycott send the message that 'business as usual' is no longer an option for us, or for Israel. Stephen Hawking has propelled that message beyond time and space.

With 'the world's most famous scientist' on side for academic boycott, even the strident attacks of the pro-Israel bully-boys in the media will not be able to push this genie back into the bottle. And his decision is already having effects beyond academia. The organisers of the latest demonstration by the *Red*

Card Israeli Racism campaign (against Israel hosting the UEFA Under-21 football competition) called for UEFA to "follow the example of Stephen Hawking". Time will tell, but it seems to us likely that his decision will prove to be a game changer in more ways than one.

Jonathan Rosenhead

Debating the Academic Boycott in the North

On April 29th, the first of what it is hoped will be a series of regional public debates on the academic boycott was held at the Friends Meeting House in York.

The impetus for this event originated in discussions between local BRICUP members and Professors Pauline Kollontai and Sebastian Kim from the Centre for Religion in Society (CRiS) and Professor David Maughan Brown, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of YSJU, at York St John University (YSJU) concerning a meeting they organized jointly with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem last November (Mediating Peace: Reconciliation through art, music and film - see [BRICUP Newsletters 55](#) and [56](#) (August and September 2012)). David Maughan Brown chaired the debate. Both YSJ speakers are totally committed to the principle of engagement and dialogue as the essential and only ethical means for the achievement of peace and reconciliation in all conflicts. They were therefore happy, on their return from Jerusalem, to join with BRICUP in a public debate of the motion

'This meeting believes that UK academics should join the movement for academic boycott by refusing to engage with any Israeli academic institutions until Israel ends the Occupation and abides by International Law'.

The motion was proposed by Sue Blackwell and seconded by BRICUP's chair, Jonathan Rosenhead. In opposing the motion, Professors Kollontai and Kim first made it clear that they were debating the ethical, political and tactical implications of academic boycott alone, and not boycotts in general. A lively and informative debate followed, which was conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good will, enhanced by some insightful contributions from the floor.

The BRICUP team provided an overview of Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people and

international law over 65 years as the underlying justification for the boycott. They focussed in particular on the complicity of Israeli universities and academics in these abuses, and how Israeli government policy of closure, harassment of staff and students and isolation from the international community has effectively limited the right to education to generations of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. The team made the case for an academic boycott of Israel on both ethical and tactical grounds, as a peaceful and effective way to influence public opinion, to bring pressure to bear on Israel and to demonstrate to the Israeli people that there is a price to pay for their government's flouting of international humanitarian law..

The CRiS team, while fully acknowledging Israel's crimes, argued forcefully that the change in attitude in Israel necessary for an end to the conflict can occur only by continuing to confront and challenge the Israeli people directly, and that a boycott of academia would cut off dialogue with that section of Israeli society which is already most critical of its government's policies on Palestine. Their estimate that opposition to Israeli government policy on Palestine amongst Israeli academia was as high as 80% was vigorously challenged by BRICUP, as was the assertion that all Palestinian academics were not united in their support for the PACBI call for academic boycott.

The York audience of around 50 was drawn from diverse backgrounds. An initial show of hands indicated that 66% were already in favour of the boycott, 13% were against and 20% were undecided. After the debate the vote in favour of the motion increased to 83% with just 15% against and only one undecided audience member left. BRICUP supporters at the University of Leeds are currently planning a similar event on their campus in the autumn. BRICUP welcomes opportunities to bring the case for an academic boycott to campuses around the country and is happy to provide speakers at other locations nationwide.

BRICUP is very grateful to all involved in this event: the Centre for Religion in Society for sponsoring this event, to Professors Kim and Kollontai for their participation and to Professor David Maughan Brown for chairing the debate.

Monica Wusteman and David Pegg

The PACBI column

Palestinians Salute the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) for its Endorsement of the Academic Boycott of Israel

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) salutes the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) in the United States for its principled support for the cause of justice in Palestine by adopting, at its annual meeting in Seattle on 20 April 2013, a resolution supporting the boycott of Israeli academic institutions and in solidarity with the world-wide movement responding to this call from Palestinian civil society.

Palestinian academics, students and society at large deeply appreciate and are inspired by this most effective expression of international solidarity that reminds us of similar initiatives taken by academics and academic associations worldwide in the 1980s in support of the academic boycott of South Africa under apartheid.

The adoption of this resolution by the General Membership of the AAAS is precedent-setting. This is the first time that a professional association of academics anywhere outside the Arab world adopts such a clear and unequivocal resolution in support of the boycott of Israeli academic institutions due to their entrenched complicity in Israel's persistent denial of basic Palestinian rights, including the right to education and freedom of movement.

The resolution, approved unanimously, resolves that the Association for Asian American Studies "endorses and will honor the call of Palestinian civil society for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions," and that it "supports the protected rights of students and scholars everywhere to engage in research and public speaking about Israel-Palestine and in support of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement." [1].

PACBI wishes to acknowledge, with gratitude, the determined efforts of all the academics who worked on and who endorsed this unprecedented resolution. Considering the prevailing climate of intimidation in the US academy when it comes to voicing the slightest criticism of Israel's violations of international law, it indeed takes courage to

advocate for the academic boycott and to demand that the rights of those who support the BDS movement should be protected. Such resolutions indicate a refusal to be intimidated by the persistent efforts of apologists for the Israeli state and Israel lobby groups inside and outside the academy to keep BDS outside the domain of acceptable public discourse.

This decision cannot but be viewed as a triumph for the logic of academic boycott against Israel's complicit academy, as consistently reflected in the positions of the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE) as well as PACBI and its partners worldwide. It is, indeed, a significant step in the direction of holding Israeli institutions accountable for their collusion in maintaining the state's occupation, colonization and apartheid regime against the Palestinian people.

The AAAS resolution amounts to a clear decision to challenge the notion that Israel's complicit institutions, including the academy, can be "normal" partners of any self-respecting institution or association. Indeed, it has to be recognized by academics the world over that Israeli universities, in particular, are part and parcel of the structures of domination and oppression of the Palestinian people. Far from being neutral, Israeli academic institutions have played a direct and indirect role in promoting, justifying, developing or otherwise abetting the state's racist policies and persistent violations of human rights and international law. As the resolution acknowledges, it is significant that not only have Israeli academic institutions failed to condemn the state's colonial policies and practices and the longstanding siege of Palestinian education, they have facilitated, enabled, and often encouraged the collaboration of their academic departments, faculty members and researchers with the Israeli military-security establishment, above all in the occupation regime, in flagrant violation of the principles of the independence of universities and academics.

The AAAS has proven beyond doubt that effective solidarity with the oppressed is the most morally and politically sound contribution to the struggle to end oppression and to promote human rights and justice. We are certain that this outstanding expression of solidarity and support for the Palestinian BDS movement will galvanize academics across the United States as well as in other countries to issue similar calls for the boycott of the Israeli academy and its complicit institutions. As in South Africa

during apartheid, only by isolating these institutions can there be any chance of ending their complicity in Israel's multi-tiered system of oppression against the Palestinian people.

PACBI

[1]

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/04/24/asi-an-american-studies-association-endorses-boycott-israeli-universities>

BRICUP supports boycott of the 'Celebrating India in Israel' Festival at the University of Haifa.

BRICUP, the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine has, over the past 9 years, campaigned to bring to the attention of academics and cultural workers not only in Britain but round the world, to the [PACBI call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions](#).

The PACBI call is a general one, but the fact that [this cultural event is going to take place at the University of Haifa](#) is particularly relevant. Like other universities it collaborates with the Israeli military firms that devise and construct the technology that secures the oppression of the Palestinian people. Like other universities it runs courses specially targeted at the requirements of the military. Like other universities it discriminates against Palestinians.

However the University of Haifa has some special claims to infamy. When a masters student uncovered evidence of the killing of 200 unarmed Palestinians by an Israeli unit in 1948, veterans of that unit protested. The outcome? The student thesis, initially given an exceptionally high mark, was recalled and re-graded as a fail. When the celebrated historian Ilan Pappé defended the student publicly he was hounded from the university.

But consider another academic at Haifa. Professor Arnon Sofer developed the idea of the 'separation' wall, and persuaded the Israeli government to adopt it. Sofer also campaigned on the danger of the Palestinian 'demographic time-bomb' which unless dealt with would result in Israelis having to "kill and kill and kill. All day, every day". Professor Sofer was not hounded out of the University.

We join [InCACBI, the Indian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) in urging

potential participants to reflect upon the ethical implications of accepting an invitation to participate in an event at the University of Haifa.

The list of Israel's violations of human rights and international law is long and grotesque: home demolitions, the use of white phosphorous, political and child imprisonments, racist marriage bans, piracy and execution in international waters, collective punishment, occupation, checkpoints, roadblocks, and the bombing and closing of educational institutions.

Participation would, however good the intention, help to whitewash Israel, making it seem as if despite all this, they can continue with business as usual. That is what the 'Brand Israel' project funded by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is all about.

Cancellation of attendance will encourage writers, artists and academics around the world to take a stand for justice and an end to apartheid.

BRICUP

Holding Doctors Accountable for involvement in Torture. Part 1.

Periodically we report on developments in the campaign to persuade the relevant professional associations, the Israeli Medical Association (IMA) and the World Medical Association (WMA), and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to investigate the unassailable body of evidence gathered over many years that Israel indulges in torture as a routine and that doctors are involved on an institutionalised basis, in violation of all medical ethical codes- not least the WMA's anti-torture Declaration of Tokyo. The convenor of a campaign launched in 2009 with the backing of 725 physicians from 43 countries (including 114 professors), Dr Derek Summerfield reports here on developments so far. We are reporting in some detail in two parts: Part 1 follows; Part 2 will be included in the next (June) edition of the BRICUP Newsletter.

The history of the campaign and its current status

The campaign started in 2009 amidst considerable media publicity - in medical journals, the Israeli press etc - with our sending an evidence-based dossier to the World Medical Association (WMA), the international watchdog on medical ethics about longstanding collusion by Israeli doctors and more

particularly by the Israeli Medical Association (a WMA member) with torture as state policy in Israel. We sent the WMA evidence from reputable human rights organisations spanning many years- both international (eg Amnesty, Defence of Child International, DCI) and national (Physicians for Human Rights-Israel PHRI, Public Committee Against Torture in Israel PCATI). The Israeli organisations PHRI and PCATI had also submitted evidence independently in support of our appeal- in particular the 2007 'Ticking Bombs' report and, later, the 2011 report 'Doctoring the Evidence, Abandoning the Victim' (see below) which both carried details of specific cases and names of Israeli doctors incriminated. We sent further material subsequently, including Case 'M', presented at an international health & human rights meeting by PHRI founder Dr Ruchama Marton in the presence of then WMA President Dr Dana Hanson and the new IMA President Dr Leonid Eidelman. The Declaration of Tokyo requires that, having heard the details of Case M, these 2 post-holders were obliged to take urgent action...but they did not.

This was a point at which IMA President Yoram Blachar had become WMA President, which was rather as if Donald Rumsfeld had become President of Amnesty International. IMA President Blachar had always refused to take action he was mandated to take under the declaration of Tokyo, despite the documentary evidence in the public realm, had vilified those who raised the matter, and had actually supported "moderate physical pressure" (the Israeli euphemism for torture) in the medical journal The Lancet and in an Israeli newspaper. Since the IMA had proved impervious to direct appeals, we turned to the WMA, addressing their Council and asking them to examine the probity of Dr Blachar's position as WMA President and the IMA as WMA members. We had in mind the precedent set during the apartheid era when the Medical Association of South Africa were obliged to withdraw from the WMA following the very charges our evidence base was laying at the doors of the IMA: medical collusion with torture and state atrocity. We attracted considerable support beyond the 725 signatories, including specific endorsements from Noam Chomsky and Norman Finkelstein.

Blachar's response- **and this whilst WMA President!**- was to condemn the signatories (noting that some had Arab names etc) in the media, and via London lawyers threaten a libel suit against the campaign convenor Derek Summerfield. The WMA otherwise did not acknowledge our appeal and we later established that though our letters had been addressed to the WMA Council (whose members

come from various countries), the WMA secretariat had not forwarded any of them- presumably conspiring to keep the matter under wraps at HQ.

After a year of effort it became clear that the WMA simply would not abide by its mandate when it came to Israel. The next step was to write to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, [using the email address publicised for this very purpose](#), presenting our whole case and asking in addition for attention to the fact that the WMA was not fit for purpose and indeed in breach of its own mandate. When the Rapporteur changed from Manfred Nowak to Juan Mendez in late 2010 we re-sent the material with reminders but received no acknowledgement from the Office (bar one request in 2011 to re-send, following an article in the British Medical Journal by Prof Alan Meyers and Dr Derek Summerfield).

On 19 March 2013 we received a reply on behalf of the Special Rapporteur on torture, Prof. Juan Mendez. The writer, Stephanie Selg, said:-

“Many thanks for the additional information you have provided. The Special Rapporteur is indeed following the Jaradat case but cannot, at this stage, comment any further as the communications are confidential per the rules given to the mandate by the HR Council.

With regard to the other allegations you have raised in the past, the Special Rapporteur have not acted upon because they refer to the conduct of the Israeli Medical Association and the World Medical Association. Both of these entities are civil society organizations and not States, and I do not have a mandate to work on matters that do not engage the international responsibility of a State member of the United Nations.

The Special Rapporteur has dealt with medical complicity with torture in a variety of situations, including in Israel, and I will be willing to act on information from you and your colleagues that concern the actions of Israeli State agents in specific cases.

Stephanie Selg, Associate Human Rights Expert, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights”

Our response is:

Dear Ms Selg/Office of UN Rapporteur on Torture

As convenor and on behalf of the other 724 signatories from 43 countries I thank you for your

response of 19 March regarding our request for an intervention by the Rapporteur on our evidence-based charge that medical collusion with torture in Israel has been systematic over many years, supported by the Israeli Medical Association (IMA), and that the World Medical Association (WMA) has definitively refused to act despite its mandated duty to do so.

It is disappointing that it has taken your Office two years, a period spanning the tenure of 2 Rapporteurs, to tell us that you have a mandate to deal only with States, whereas the IMA and WMA are civil society organisations. We understand the distinction though would comment that the evidence base makes it clear that as a matter of conscious policy the IMA has functioned as an exemplary State actor, and in addition that doctors in the security units/detention centres where torture is deployed are all State employees. As the 2008 United Against Torture coalition (a coalition of 14 Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations) concluded:” the use of torture by Israeli authorities is both widespread and systematic...the UAT coalition has observed and recorded evidence of acts, omissions and complicity by agents of the State at all levels. The Coalition is of the opinion that until this culture of impunity is addressed, the situation is unlikely to improve.”

Nonetheless, if a national medical association or the WMA are not formally accountable to your Office, to whom are they accountable – given that the evidence against them is as grave as this? The UN Committee for Human Right or other UN body? Surely the WMA must answer to someone!

You confirm that the Rapporteur is “following” the Jaradat case that was the subject of the Lancet report in March we sent you. (See part 2 of this report.) You say that you “will be willing to act on information from you (i.e. us) and your colleagues that concern the actions of Israeli State agents in specific cases”.

In the original dossier we sent you, and re-sent several times, the 2007 “Ticking Bombs” report by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) analysed in detail the role played by detention centre doctors in 9 specific cases of torture, in several cases naming the doctors implicated- and naming also the IMA Head of Ethics who was sent a copy of the report.

We have previously drawn your attention to a subsequent joint report (October 2011) by PCATI and by Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHRI)

entitled “**Doctoring the Evidence, Abandoning the Victim**”. Indeed we understand that Rapporteur Mendez personally received a paper copy of the report when he was in London in late 2011. Based on a series of testimonies and other evidence, primarily the files of over 100 victims of torture and ill-treatment handled by PCATI/PHRI since 2007, it demonstrates a consistent pattern of active or passive involvement by doctors in the practice of torture in Israel on an institutionalised basis. A further copy is attached here. Its summary affirms that “medical professionals abandon their duty by failing to document and report torture; by passing on medical information to interrogators; returning interrogees to the custody of their interrogators when in danger of being exposed to further torture or ill-treatment; and in extreme cases, by taking an active part in the interrogation. Because of their unique social status, the presence of medical professionals in facilities where torture or ill-treatment are carried out indicates the boundaries between the permissible and the impermissible: it grants Israeli Security Agency (ISA) interrogators a stamp of approval, whether explicit or tacit, that their conduct is acceptable”.

The report also notes that this conduct by doctors “furthermore precludes the victim from presenting evidence which can aid in pursuing justice through various legal and administrative proceedings”. The significance of this can be seen in the fact that “over 700 complaints alleging torture/ill-treatment by ISA interrogators have been filed since 2001 and not one single criminal investigation has been initiated”. Complicity by doctors is therefore a significant force in maintaining the impunity of ISA interrogators.

PCATI/PHRI further confirm that “medical staff in prisons, detention centres and hospitals which treat prisoners are part of the broader administrative systems, primarily the medical apparatus of the Prison Service, the Israeli Medical Association and the Ministry of Health”. Torture continues to receive the full institutional backing of the state.

From long experience PCATI/PHRI conclude that “there are serious doubts that the IMA is willing to enforce these rules: persistently repeated requests by PCATI/PHRI calling the IMA’s attention to cases arousing suspicion of doctors’ involvement in torture and cruel or degrading treatment, have not been dealt with substantively.” . PCATI/PHRI note that the IMA’s ethical code contains clauses which do not accord with the fundamental principle of medical ethics, which is that the well-being of the patient should be the doctor’s sole concern. IMA

codes require the doctor to respect “the good of society as a whole and its right to protect itself”, authorising the doctor to assist the security authorities upon their request, even when this may harm the rights of the patient.... “With these clauses, the IMA enables the needs of the security apparatus to be seen as coming before the ethical duties of doctors”.

We would add our own experience over years both before and after our campaign was started in 2009: the IMA has worked hard to block requests and vilify those who made them, has given false assurances in medical journals like the Lancet and British Medical Journal, IMA President Yoram Blachar justified “moderate physical pressure” (the then Israeli euphemism for torture) in the Lancet and in an Israeli newspaper, **and whilst WMA President** started a libel suit against me as campaign convenor when we approached the WMA. Whilst the IMA have regularly pronounced their support for the WMA’s anti-torture Declaration of Tokyo and other protocols, this is mere window dressing and their actual behaviour over many years points the other way. In all this the IMA has functioned as a State actor.

The report is also replete with details of the kind of specific cases which you confirm you would be willing to take action on. Telling examples are given in Section C entitled “The bitter pill: on the Actions and Failings of Medical Staff” *

We would welcome your further advice as soon as possible. **Will you act on these and other specific cases, as your response to us promises? Will you give us an answer to the question highlighted in bold above-to whom is the WMA accountable, for if it is to no one we must conclude that regulation of medical ethics worldwide is essentially a paper exercise.**

We hope to hear from you promptly.

Dr Derek Summerfield, Honorary Senior Lecturer, Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College, London.
Campaign Convenor

*** Note. Part 2 of this report, to be published in June, will list specific examples drawn from this report and the Lancet.**

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Notices

BRICUP is the **British Committee for the Universities of Palestine**.

We are always willing to help provide speakers for meetings. All such requests and any comments or suggestions concerning this Newsletter are welcome.

Email them to: newsletter@bricup.org.uk

Publication date.

Our newsletter is a little late again this month, due to our decision to devote the last issue to deal with the Fraser v. UCU judgement in detail and then the huge interest generated by Stephen Hawking's decision to support the boycott of an Israeli conference.

Normally we aim to publish the Newsletter around the end of the first week of each month and we intend to get back to that schedule over the next few months.

Letters to the Editor

Please note that we do have a "Letters to the Editor" facility. We urge you to use it. It provides an opportunity for valuable input from our supporters and gives you the opportunity to contribute to the debate and development of the campaign. Please send letters to arrive on or before the first day of each month for consideration for that month's newsletter. Aim not to exceed 250 words if possible. Letters and comments should be sent to newsletter@bricup.org.uk

Financial support for BRICUP

BRICUP needs your financial support.

Arranging meetings and lobbying activities are expensive. We need funds to support visiting speakers, book rooms for public meetings, print leaflets and pay the whole range of expenses that a busy campaign demands.

Please do consider making a donation .

One-off donations may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, at BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK or by making a bank transfer to BRICUP at Sort Code 08-92-99

Account Number 65156591

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If you use the direct funds transfer mechanism please confirm the transaction by sending an explanatory email to treasurer@bricup.org.uk

More details can be obtained at the same address.

Like all organisations, while we welcome one-off donations, we can plan our work much better if people pledge regular payments by standing order.

You can [download a standing order form](#) here