



June 23, 2009

Dear Colleague,

Anti-Israel activity and campaigns in the medical press are unfortunately nothing new; however they have reached a new "low" in the last few months. The most recent manifestation of the anti-Israel phenomenon infecting the medical world is a letter (attached) spearheaded by Dr. Derek Summerfield and signed by 725 physicians, "publicly protest[ing] and appeal[ing] against the recent appointment of Dr. Yoram Blachar, longstanding President of the Israeli Medical Association, as President of the World Medical Association." Derek Summerfield has a life-long agenda of criticizing Israel; he is well known to us through his inexorable venomous campaign against Israel, the IMA and Dr. Blachar, in numerous letters and on the pages of leading British medical journals such as the BMJ and the Lancet.

The "facts" brought in the letter are nothing new. The organizations cited, including Amnesty International, Physicians for Human Rights and the United Against Torture Coalition do outstanding work; however, until recently, the statements and accusations raised were very general and did not allow us to verify any claims. There were allegations made of torture, but no names were provided. The only evidence brought was the testimony of the prisoners themselves. Only in the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) report were names mentioned. We then made an effort, according to the best of our abilities and the resources in our possession, to check each name. Professor Avinoam Reches, Chair of the IMA's Ethics Committee, personally spoke with each and every physician cited in the report that he was able to locate (details were incompletely or inconsistently listed in the report and so it was not possible to reach them all) . Most were never employed by, nor had any connection to, the Israeli Prison Services. Of the three who were employed there, all vigorously denied any involvement in interrogations, torture or medical approval for the above.

The letter further states that Dr. Blachar has made statements which were untrue on at least 10 occasions in the Lancet and the BMJ. No basis is made for these claims other than the opinion of the authors. The signatories then

