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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

4 May 1987

Dear Mothers,

As you know, a delegation from Mothers for Freedom came to see me on 13 January. I found their stories deeply moving. It is quite wrong for families to be torn apart in this way.

Since then I have visited the Soviet Union. I thought you might find it helpful to have an account of my talks there. With Mr Gorbachev I made a point of expressing the hope that more prisoners of conscience would be released and that Soviet Jews would be allowed to emigrate if they so wished. Mr Gorbachev told me that the Soviet Government considered all humanitarian cases very carefully and would continue to deal with them attentively, with positive results where possible.

The Foreign Secretary also raised these questions with the Soviet Foreign Minister and handed him a list of imprisoned Soviet citizens and others who have been refused exit visas and about whom the Government have received representations in recent months. Mr Shevardnadze undertook to look into the cases listed. The helpful information supplied by your delegation was taken into account when compiling these lists.

I was glad to have been able to meet the refuseniks Mr and Mrs Begun and Rosa Ioffe on 1 April and to hear their concerns at first hand. I regard my meeting with them as a gesture of solidarity with all those suffering the long vigil to leave.

I have noted the increase in the latest figures for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. I am also aware of recent reports in Israel and elsewhere that the Soviet authorities may be preparing to allow large numbers of refuseniks to leave and are showing greater respect for Jewish culture at home. These are encouraging signs.

I therefore very much hope that we shall see a genuine and sustained improvement in the coming months and that some at least of you may soon have the joy of being reunited with your children.

Warm regards.

Yours sincerely

Ransau Shalita



CF

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 May 1987

Dear Charles,

/ Please refer to the enclosed copy of your letter of 13 January about the call on the Prime Minister by a delegation from the group 'Mothers for Freedom'.

You suggested that a reply to the letter which the delegation left with the Prime Minister might be needed after her visit to Moscow. A letter to the group from the Prime Minister giving a brief account of her talks would no doubt be greatly appreciated.

/ I enclose a draft which covers the ground in standard terms. If the Prime Minister agrees to reply to the group, her letter could be returned to us for delivery by our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

Yours ever,

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
No 10 Downing St

DSR 11 (Revised Sept 85)

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1 +

FROM: PM

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

Your Reference

BUILDING:

ROOM NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

TO: Mothers for Freedom
1 Bak Street
78 Hamasger Street
Tel Aviv
Israel

Copies to:

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SUBJECT:

PRIVACY MARKING

..... In Confidence

CAVEAT

As you know, a delegation from Mothers for Freedom came to see me on 13 January. I found their stories deeply moving. It is quite wrong for families to be torn apart in this way. ~~As a mother myself, I can well appreciate the pain and sorrow you must all feel.~~

Since then I have visited the Soviet Union. I thought you might find it helpful to have an account of my talks there. With Mr Gorbachev I made a point of expressing the hope that more prisoners of conscience would be released and that Soviet Jews would be allowed to emigrate if they so wished. Mr Gorbachev told me that the Soviet Government considered all humanitarian cases very carefully and would continue to deal with them attentively, with positive results where possible.

Enclosures flag(s)

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I therefore very much hope that we shall see a genuine and sustained improvement in the coming months and that ^{you are at least} you may soon have the joy of being reunited with your children.

AYW