



Briefing No. 52

SADAKA صدقة
The Ireland Palestine Alliance ♦ www.sadaka.ie

A Different Kind of School Run

"The soldiers make me very scared. When I come to the school, I don't know if I will make it back home. Maybe they will kill me for no reason or maybe they will take me to jail. Whenever I see the Israeli soldiers, I am frightened"

Abdul, 16 years old, [Burin Community School, West Bank, Palestine](#)

In the first few days of a return to school 2021, primary school children in Tubas village in the northern West bank were teargassed by Israeli military and [had to be evacuated](#). Palestinian children being escorted by international volunteers in the South Hebron Hills were intimidated and injured by [illegal Israeli settlers](#) as they walked to their school. These are not isolated or unusual incidents.

Palestinian children are routinely harassed by Israeli military and illegal settlers as they try to get to their classrooms.

Sadaka, The Ireland Palestine Alliance, in partnership with Defence for Children International, is running a campaign to highlight the extraordinary difficulties faced by Palestinian children as they try to safely get to their classrooms. 'A Different Kind of School Run' will run from August 23rd to September 6th, 2021. [#no way to treat a child](#)



- Israeli forces, private security guards, and settlers launched an average of [10 attacks per month](#) on West Bank kindergarten and school students, staff and facilities between January 2018 and June 2020
- 53 Palestinian schools are currently facing [demolition orders](#) issued against them by Israeli authorities.
- It is estimated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that more than half a million children across Palestine face challenges in accessing quality education in a safe, [child-friendly environment](#).

A Different Kind of School Run



Palestinian girls running past Israeli security forces on their way to school *Photo: Oren Ziv, ActiveStills*

Israel is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has been heavily criticised by the Committee on the Convention for its abuse of Palestinian children and for multiple breaches of its responsibilities. [Defence for Children Palestine note that](#) 'Attacks on schools violate international humanitarian and criminal laws and are one of the six grave violations against children in conflict that are identified and condemned in the UN Security Council's Children and Armed Conflict agenda.'



Palestinian children watching an Israeli bulldozer closing in *Photo: Oren Ziv, Khan al Ahmar, ActiveStills*

"I remember once we asked the soldiers if we could go through the pathway without going through the search room. One of the soldiers shouted at us and threatened to shoot at us. My classmates and I were terrified and immediately went into the search room."

Aya, 16 years old, Bethlehem

The Palestinian childhood experience of safely accessing education is indicative of their entire life experience under occupation and siege. Already this year, [79 children have lost their lives](#) in the West Bank and Gaza as a direct result of Israeli military and illegal settler presence. Many more have been injured, made homeless, traumatised.

A Different Kind of School Run

The journey to and from school is just part of the wider system of human rights abuses perpetrated by Israel against the most vulnerable section of the Palestinian population. Each year, approximately 500-700 Palestinian children, some as young as 12 years old, are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. Israel is the only country in the world that routinely detains and tries children in a military system.

"My dream is for the army not to come and attack us and live a normal life like everyone else"

Muna, [Burin Community School, West Bank, Palestine.](#)



A Palestinian man accompanies children on their way back from Khan Al Ahmar village school, West Bank, which faces a forcible displacement order. *Photo: Ahmad al Bas, ActiveStills*

Israel has a responsibility to protect children and teachers from harassment and violence by illegal settlers and military on their way to and from school. The protection of children in accordance with international law should be paramount for any country. As Ireland assumes Presidency of the UN Security Council in September, and as a country with a strong track record in advocating for human rights, Ireland has a unique role to play in ensuring that the rights of Palestinian children are upheld while accessing education.

Marie Crawley, Chair of Sadaka the Ireland Palestine Alliance stated,

'The political parties must now also ask themselves if repeated condemnation of breaches of international law is enough or if more needs to be done to end these egregious violations against children. Israel is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but in flagrant breach of it in practice. With Ireland assuming the role of Presidency of the UNSC in September, we should use this opportunity to bring Israel to account for its systematic, persistent and downright shocking violations of the rights of Palestinian children.'

Resources and further information

1. [Return to school rekindles fear of Israeli soldier and settler violence \(DCI Palestine, 14 October 2020\)](#)
2. [Israel's school demolition order leaves Palestinian children in limbo \(Middle East Eye, 9 October 2020\)](#)
3. [Hope under the rubble \(Save The Children, 2021\)](#)
4. [The Six Grave Violations \(UN, 2021\)](#)
5. [10 attacks on Palestinian education per month by Israeli authorities and settlers \(Norwegian Refugee Council, 12 November 2020\)](#)