

Israeli Abuses of Palestinian Children

The occupying Israeli authorities sustain a protracted “war of oppression, brutality and submission” on Palestinian children.

- Between 500 and 700 Palestinian children are arrested, interrogated and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system each year. An average of 310 Palestinian children are in the Israeli prison system each month for ‘security offences’ according to Israeli Prison Service Data.
- Since 2000 approximately 12,000 Palestinian children have been prosecuted in the Israeli military court system.
- These children are aged between 12 – 17 years old. The vast majority are prosecuted for allegedly throwing stones.
- It is reported that 95% of these children are subjected to torture and inhumane treatment whilst in military custody. This treatment includes beatings, intimidation, being shackled in irons, sleep deprivation, and being denied food, water and access to toilet facilities.
- Children detained are routinely denied access to legal counsel and advice, denied the right to have a parent present during interrogation and forced to sign confessions written in Hebrew – a language they don’t understand.
- When sentenced these Palestinian children are then transferred from occupied territory to prisons inside Israel with the deliberate consequence that they will have little or no contact with parents and families. There are currently over 350 children serving sentences in Israeli jails, leading to concerns for their physical and psychological welfare. 26 children are in solitary confinement.
- The age of the child at sentencing is taken into account and not their age when the alleged offence occurred.

Children in military courts.

Israel is the only country in the world that automatically prosecutes children using military courts. These military courts deny Palestinian children the most basic human and legal rights e.g. access to legal counsel, advice and legal representation. They have a self reported conviction rate of 99.74%.

Upon arrest and during interrogation, children as young as 12 years old are held in solitary confinement and denied solicitors, access to parents and basic rights such as food, water and access to the bathroom. The Israeli military detention system has developed a notoriety for its systematic torture, inhumane maltreatment and psychological abuse of defenceless and innocent Palestinian children.

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It is estimated that Palestinian children make up 45.8 % of the Palestinian population. It is evident that the occupying Israeli authorities are now waging a concerted and targeted war of oppression, brutality and submission upon the children of Palestine. The Israeli state is deliberately trying to criminalise and terrorise Palestinian children. Heavily armed Israeli soldiers routinely arrest children in the street. These children are then held in headlocks, shackled and frog marched to the local military detention centre – where military court prosecutions follow.

Apartheid

Israeli children living in illegal settlements in the West Bank who are charged with offences are subject to a juvenile Israeli civilian and a criminal legal system while Palestinian children in the same geographic area are charged under military courts leading to calls for an end to this apartheid system. In Feb 2017, there were 224 4 children held under Administrative Detention or Internment without trial, a practice which can lead to incarceration for long periods of time without any charges being brought.

The Israeli state policy of terrorising innocent children should be challenged by every civilised society who claim to uphold human and civil rights. Palestinian children are being psychologically traumatised and mentally scarred by this protracted Israeli war on children.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ironically, Israel is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The blatant disregard for the rights of Palestinian children by Israel, its policy of torture and abuse of Palestinian children must be exposed and challenged. The well-being and rights of Palestinian children need to be heard and acknowledged. The war on children has taken on a more deadly and serious turn. Prior to President Trump's announcement that Jerusalem was the capital of Palestine, the number of Palestinian adult detainees was reducing each year while the number of children detained was steadily increasing. Violence against children spiked in the subsequent protests, with a higher number of children injured and detained, including the iconic figure of Ahd Tamimi from Nabi Saleh. Fourteen children were killed by Israeli forces in 2017. Eight children died at the hands of the IOF in the first three months of 2018.

Bibliography:

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For more information on Israeli abuses of Palestinian children please see:
http://www.sadaka.ie/About_Palestine/IsraeliAbuseChildren.html

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