

Israel's War on Palestinian Children

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Israel is a serial human rights abuser. It's one of the world's worst. It's war on Palestinian children alone reflects it.

They're systematically abused unjustly. Up to 700 are arrested annually. Most are lawlessly charged with stone-throwing. Children young as five are terrorized. They're too young to know why.

They're abusively treated during arrests, transfers and interrogations. They're denied fundamental rights.

In 1991, Israel ratified the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It didn't matter. It brazenly violates its provisions.

Article 37 states in part:

"No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

"No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily."

"The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time."

"Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age."

"Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action."

Principle 1 of the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child states:

"Every child, without exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to (fundamental human and civil) rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family."

They're entitled to special protections and opportunities to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially under conditions of freedom and dignity.

Not in Occupied Palestine. Israel treats them mercilessly. It treats them like adults. Arrests are lawless and violent. Homes are broken into unannounced pre-dawn.

Property is damaged or stolen. Children are blindfolded, shackled, and beaten. They're thrust into jeeps. Sometimes it's face down.

At detention centers, they're interrogated harshly. They're painfully shackled. They're denied access to family members and legal counsel for days.

They're threatened, terrorized, beaten, slapped, kicked, denied food and water for prolonged periods, and deprived of sleep.

Confessions are forcibly extracted. They're forced to sign them in Hebrew they don't understand. Many become traumatized. Hundreds of complaints are filed. Doing so does no good.

Israel is the only nation trying children in military courts. Palestinians aren't afforded the same rights as Jews. Failure to do so is blatantly discriminatory.

Under international law, adulthood begins at age 18. Israel considers children aged 16 and over adults. Military order 378 permits up to 20 years imprisonment for stone-throwing.

Fourth Geneva's Article 147 requires fair trials. Israeli military courts are rigged to convict. Kangaroo court justice prevails.

Netanyahu and most other Israeli officials call criticism of flagrant state human rights abuses "anti-Israeli bias."

Israel operates extrajudicially. Palestinian children endure some of its worst abuses.

On November 19, [Defence for Children International Palestine](#) discussed July through September Israeli violations. Increased violence occurred.

Mohammad A (aged 14) "was shot in the leg by live ammunition." Laith E (aged 8) "was shot in the forehead and injured by a rubber-coated metal bullet."

So was Basel S (aged 15). Live ammunition wounded Muhammad G (aged 16). Musab S (aged 6) "was shot in the eye with a rubber-coated metal bullet as he was walking next to his mother."

Israel bears full responsibility for these type incidents. They repeat with disturbing regularity. Arrests and brutal treatment follow.

Since the start of the September 2000 second Intifada, Israel arrested and brutalized over 9,000 Palestinian children.

Illegitimate military orders authorize them. They violate core international law provisions. Arrests are lawless and violent. Evidence is contrived to convict.

Forced confessions are used to pressure defense lawyers to accept plea bargains. The alternative is much longer sentences.

Israel takes full advantage. Plea bargains extract a high price. So does bail when authorized. Israel profits hugely. Collective punishment pays well.

[Addameer](#) addressed the issue. In October, it headlined “Economic Exploitation of Children in the Military Courts.”

It’s been following Ofer and Salem Military Courts cases. It found a disturbing trend. Arbitrary detentions result in “exorbitantly high fine(s) or bail.”

Economic exploitation is official Israeli policy. Palestinians face enormous financial burdens. Children given plea bargains or released on bail follow lawless arrests.

No evidence exists to convict them. Some are arrested randomly. Israel does it to harass and intimidate. Training exercises include breaking into Palestinian homes violently.

Terrorizing residents follows. Children are treated like adults. They’re processed through lawless military courts. According to Addameer, 27 children’s rights international conventions are violated.

During arrest and detention, “children are put under military and police interrogation which includes aspects amounting to torture, including:

physical assault, stress positions, sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, verbal threats, isolation in two meter by two meter cells, and denied access to parents or lawyers.”

Innocence is no defense. Forced confessions are extracted. They’re used against them. They extort huge penalties from parents.

Bail when granted can be up 4,000 NIS (around \$1,000) or higher. Most Palestinians are poor. Many are deeply impoverished. They struggle to get by. Any fine or bail amount is unaffordable.

Parents are forced to borrow, if able, or deprive family members of basic needs.

“An often overlooked consequence is the psychological affects it has on the family who are under financial burden despite the child’s innocence and arbitrary arrest,” said Addameer.

On September 29, Qusai Z (aged 17) was arrested. He was accused of stone-throwing and participating in a demonstration. Peaceful protests are considered illegal. Palestinians are denied all fundamental rights.

Military Order 101 prohibits gatherings of more than 10 Palestinians without advance IDF authorization. Violators are subject to up to 10 years imprisonment, heavy fines or both.

Qusai was innocent. Charges against him were bogus. Ofer’s military court judge ordered him released on 2,500 NIS bail. He did so after 11 days in detention.

Qusai’s family is poor. His mother told Addameer:

“My husband died six years ago, and I support my four children by myself, so I had to

borrow 1,000 NIS from my neighbors.”

Qusai’s older brother was arrested three months earlier.

“This financial exploitation practiced against Palestinian prisoners and detainees in occupation prisons is a systematic policy to put pressure on the Palestinian society,” said Addameer.

It “takes advantage of the impoverished financial situation and helps the occupation (evade its) financial responsibilities towards the Palestinian prisoners and detainees.”

Addameer calls it “emotional blackmail.” It’s economic and financial extortion. It’s ruthless exploitation.

It steals from people with barely enough to live on. Some have too little. It does so based on lies. Innocence is no protection. Occupation harshness persists.

Osama R was lawlessly arrested coming home from school. He was falsely charged with stone-throwing. No evidence proved it. He was released on 1,500 NIS bail. After his hearing, his father said:

“What the occupation is doing is emotional blackmail. Israeli police called me a number of times, telling me to go to the police station in Kiryat Arba Settlement to pay my son’s bail, using statements such as:

‘Your child is very young. It is sad if he stays in prison. Your son needs to spend Eid vacation with his family,’ and other statements to make me pay the bail.”

“We will not accept financial and emotional blackmail, despite the fact that I support my family of twelve, and I am unable to pay this amount of money. I refuse to pay by force. I refuse financial blackmail.”

Mohammad F was arrested. He was falsely charged with stone-throwing. His lawyer arranged a plea bargain.

He remains imprisoned. His family is financially unable to make bail. “Despite this,” said Addameer, “he is expected to receive a month or month and a half extension if his family does not pay” the required amount.

Israeli extortion costs Palestinians up to 15 million NIS annually. It’s money they can’t afford. Israeli ruthlessness extracts it.

Profiting on Palestinian misery is official Israeli policy. It’s longstanding. It’s unrelenting. Western media ignore it. Pro-Israeli bias is longstanding.

The Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners’ Affairs “made an important step towards confronting the occupation’s economic exploitation policies by announcing that they will stop assisting in paying the fines as a way to choke the military court system,” said Addameer.

It’s “a necessary step to support the Palestinian prisoners movement and its struggle to confront” Israel’s ruthless military judicial system.

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