

New Probe Exposes Horrific Child Abuse by Israeli Forces

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Palestinian children face chokeholds, stun grenades, and forced confessions at the hands of Israeli forces, Human Rights Watch report reveals

The findings are contained in a report—[Israel: Security Forces Abuse Palestinian Children](#)—based on interviews with six children between the ages of 11 and 15, and corroborated by witness testimony and video evidence. All of the children were accused of throwing rocks between March and December 2014—a common charge that can lead to decades in prison.

“Israel has been on notice for years that its security forces are abusing Palestinian children’s rights in occupied territory, but the problems continue,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East and North Africa director for HRW. “These are not difficult abuses to end if the Israeli government were serious about doing so.”



Israeli forces are choking, beating, and abusing Palestinian children as young as 11, arresting and coercing them into confessions without granting them access to lawyers or even informing their parents of their whereabouts, a [new investigation](#) from Human Rights Watch reveals.

In each case, parents were not told their child had been arrested and the children were not provided lawyers during their interrogations. Two boys and one girl said they were forced under threat of beatings to sign confessions that were written in Hebrew, a language they don’t understand.

The families of two children were not permitted to visit or even call them during their respective incarcerations of 64 and 110 days.

Israeli forces inflicted violence on the children using stun grenades, chokeholds, and physical beatings. Two children urinated on themselves throughout the course of the arrest due to fear, and several say they suffer lasting psychological impacts, including nightmares.

“When they drove me from the settlement to the office, they put a black cloth bag on my head, and were shouting, ‘We’re going to beat you, you’re going to tell us who was with you throwing stones,’” 11-year-old Rashid from the Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem told HRW. “Then they were pushing me around, and cursing me, in Arabic. They kicked me in the shin, and my leg turned different colors. I was freezing. They kept putting me into a car and

taking me out.”

Most of the children’s full names are being withheld in the report for their protection.

Though the HRW report falls short of calling the atrocities torture, many organizations—from [Defense for Children International-Palestine](#) to the [United Nations](#)—have extensively documented Israel’s systematic torture and mistreatment of Palestinian children.

The problem is compounded by the large scale of such arrests and detentions. Palestinian human rights organization Addameer [reports](#) that approximately 700 Palestinians under the age of 18 from the occupied West Bank alone are prosecuted in Israeli military courts every year after being arrested and detained. The organization estimates that more than 8,000 Palestinian children have been incarcerated by Israel since 2000.

Whitson emphasized in a statement that Israel’s abuse of Palestinian children is “at odds with its claim to respect children’s rights,” and the U.S. shares responsibility for this mistreatment: “As Israel’s largest military donor, the U.S. should press hard for an end to these abusive practices and for reforms.”

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