

Palestinian Children Face Routine Physical Abuse, Violence and Torture During Arrest Raids and Detention by Israel

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An attorney and international advocacy officer for [Defence for Children International-Palestine](#) (DCI-Palestine) says that 2014 was “devastating” for Palestinian children.

Whether they were killed, injured or left homeless and traumatized in the Gaza Strip during Israel’s [summer attack](#), or whether they faced “increasing levels of violence [by Israeli forces] ... at demonstrations [or] as part of military operations throughout the West Bank” including occupied East Jerusalem — especially during frequent arrest raids — Palestinian children were regular targets of Israel’s systematic violence throughout 2014, says [Brad Parker](#) of DCI-Palestine.

Parker told The Electronic Intifada in a recent interview that Palestinian children face routine physical abuse, violence and torture during arrest raids and detention. “In about twenty percent of cases, kids are brought and held in [solitary confinement](#) solely for interrogation purposes,” a practice that has been condemned by international law, which equates it to torture, Parker explained.

Youths arrested in Beit Ommar

Palestinian news sources reported this week that [twenty Palestinians](#), including at least six teenagers, were arrested by Israeli forces overnight on Thursday in the southern occupied West Bank village of [Beit Ommar](#), a day after 18 Palestinians were arrested and detained there.

Mohammed Awad of the Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements in Beit Ommar described the raids “as the largest military invasion” into the village by Israeli forces since 2004, Samidoun, the Palestinian prisoner solidarity network, [reported](#).

At the same time, Israeli forces [carried out arrest raids in East Jerusalem](#), taking at least eight Palestinian youths, according to Ma’an News Agency and Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. At least four young men were arrested in [Jenin](#) and Nablus in the northern West Bank as well on Thursday.



Othman, 15, was put on house arrest for eleven months in 2014. Israeli interrogators were physically violent toward Othman, and threatened to rape him, his father told DCI-Palestine. ([DCI-Palestine](#))

In a report filed on the last day of 2014, DCI-Palestine says that “2014 brought no respite for Palestinian children, whether entangled in the Israeli military detention system, living in residential areas in the Gaza Strip, or simply on their way to school.”

DCI-Palestine has recently launched a campaign entitled “[No More Forgotten Lives](#)” which [aims to pursue accountability for Israel’s killing, arrest, detention and torture](#) of Palestinian children.

The organization [says](#) that in 2014, “the average number of children held in Israeli military detention stood at 197 per month.”

On Friday, The Electronic Intifada spoke with Parker about the ongoing arrests and detentions of Palestinian children. Listen to the interview via the media player above, or read the transcript below.

Transcript of interview with Brad Parker

Nora Barrows-Friedman: Can you talk about the arrest campaigns this week in occupied East Jerusalem and Beit Ommar? What do these raids typically look like, and where are the children taken to?

Brad Parker: So, typically Palestinian children are arrested in night raids like this by Israeli forces — forces come in the middle of the night, anywhere from 12am to 5am, have a strong military presence, heavily-armed soldiers, they bang on a child’s door, soldiers storm the home, check IDs, usually if a child’s name is on the intelligence officer’s list, the child will be taken out of the house, typically handcuffed, blindfolded, and their hands tied with a plastic cord, ushered out into a military jeep. Sometimes the kids face physical violence during that

transfer process when they're in the back of the jeep. They'll be transferred around the West Bank, maybe detained at a military camp, spend the rest of the night into the morning really just waiting for whatever comes next. They don't really have a sense of what comes next.

In the morning, they're typically brought to a police station inside a settlement, where they appear in interrogation rooms. Their parents haven't been notified where they've been taken, and if they don't have access to counsel, that interrogation is typically meant to coerce a confession — to have some type of evidence against the child that then could be used later on in the military courts.

Once an interrogation finishes — if there's a confession — and if there's not a confession, kids typically are transferred inside Israel to Meggido prison in the north, and sometimes they can be held at Ofer prison just outside of Ramallah. So, typically, that's where kids go. The families don't know where they've been taken. Nobody really hears from them until they appear in a military court, which could be anywhere from twenty-four to forty-eight hours later — that's the first time they typically see their families, they first see an attorney. Because of that, they sometimes have confessions against them before they've even spoken with an attorney.

The typical situation is really not meant to find justice or seek justice — it's really about control and using the military court system and arrests to target youth, to create that control, to keep kids from participating in weekly protests, from participating in anything that can be somewhat political. And that's the general case that we see based on our evidence gathering throughout the West Bank.

NBF: Based on that evidence gathering, can you tell us what typically happens to children in Israeli detention, and if the historic Israeli policies of torture, interrogation and psychological trauma are still in effect, or if anything's changed over the past year?

BP: Children still face ill-treatment and torture — it's widespread, systematic throughout the Israeli military detention system. Nothing really has changed over the past not only one year but the past decade. It's really become more and more a part of what Palestinian children who are arrested by the Israeli army encounter when they're in detention, within custody with Israeli forces.

NBF: And what kind of torture and interrogation does DCI-Palestine typically see happening to these kids?

BP: So, in about 75 percent of these cases, Palestinian kids arrested by the Israeli army face some type of physical violence during arrest, transfer or interrogation. It could be anything from being slapped in their face, being hit with a rifle, being hit with a helmet, kicked, punched, beaten in the back of a jeep.

In interrogation, physical violence is a little bit less common over the past few years, but you still see kids being slapped, punched, shoved against walls during interrogation. In about 20 percent of cases, kids are brought and held in solitary confinement solely for interrogation purposes — this is a practice that's condemned by the international community, international law. International law equates it to torture, considers it a form of torture when solitary confinement is used against juveniles.

So these are the typical scenarios and issues that kids face.

“Devastating”

NBF: Let’s talk about 2014 in this context — of course, in Gaza during the attack over the summer, more than 500 children were killed, and hundreds of thousands remain in serious need of psychological treatment from multi-layered and repeated trauma. And in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, arrest raids like the ones we’ve seen this week, along with incessant home demolitions, arrest and detention of parents and family members, and daily dehumanization of children continued unabated.

Can you assess 2014 in terms of what needs to be done to protect the rights of Palestinian children, and what your No More Forgotten Lives campaign aims to accomplish?

BP: 2014 was devastating for Palestinian kids in Gaza, kids were being killed at a higher rate than at any time before, their homes, schools, families were destroyed. For six and seven-year-old kids, this was the third or fourth major military offensive that they’ve lived through.

In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, we saw increasing levels of violence against Palestinian kids at demonstrations, as part of military operations throughout the West Bank, associated with arrests and search-and-rescue operations, et cetera. It was pretty devastating on all fronts. We saw increased deaths because of live fire used at protests and demonstrations — the May 15th Nakba Day protests outside of Ramallah resulted in two children, two Palestinian teenagers [being killed with live ammunition](#).

It was caught on security camera footage that we were ultimately able to release and publicize, and then this campaign, No More Forgotten Lives really attempts to take the evidence that we’ve collected around those two deaths, tie it together with the complete lack of accountability and impunity for these violations, to highlight the number of kids that have been killed in 2014, and really that nothing has been done to hold anybody accountable.

The May 15th killing of [Nadim Nuwara](#) was highly publicized because of the video we released, and ultimately a soldier was arrested and implicated in his murder, but what we’ve seen is that instead of being charged with homicide, murder, some higher-level offense, he’s currently charged with manslaughter. He was held in custody, but now he’s been released on house arrest.

So even when there is something that resembles some type of accountability, it’s still extremely weak and doesn’t conform with international law standards. So the No More Forgotten Lives campaign really seeks to highlight this impunity and lack of accountability and show that Palestinian kids are being targeted, are being killed — and we need to speak out and demand justice. Because the Israeli authorities are not interested in accountability for serious violations of childrens’ rights.

NBF: How can people learn more about the campaign, and what’s one important thing, or ten important things, that international civil society can do today to help?

BP: To learn more about the campaign, you can go to [NoMoreForgottenLives.com](#), or to our website, [dci-palestine.org](#). Each website will have more information on the campaign, more information about us as an organization and the things that we document.

Really, coordinating efforts and demanding justice and speaking about Palestinian rights and Palestinian childrens' rights through a human rights lens rather than through a political lens – it is the most important thing the international community can do.

So often, people defer to the politics and forget the human aspect of what the occupation is, what the impact the occupation has on families, on children. And that's really the thing that we try to highlight as an organization.

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