



Defense for Children
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PALESTINE

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UN body concerned over Israel's abuse of Palestinian children

Ramallah, May 18, 2016—The UN Committee Against Torture expressed concern on Friday at allegations of Israel's excessive use of force, including lethal force, against Palestinians and its ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian detainees.

The Committee, a body of 10 independent experts, reviewed Israel's compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on May 3 and 4.

The “concluding observations” of the Committee, issued on May 13, noted with grave concern Israel's use of administrative detention against “700 persons, including 12 minors,” as of the time of the review session. Under the practice, detainees are “held without charge indefinitely on the basis of secret evidence.”

According to the report, measures taken by Israel to safeguard minors were not “implemented in practice” in cases involving “Palestinian minors accused of security-related offences.”

The Committee expressed alarm at the “many instances in which Palestinian minors were exposed to torture or ill-treatment, including to obtain confessions; were given confessions to sign in Hebrew, a language they do not understand; and were interrogated in the absence of a lawyer or a family member.”

The Committee also took aim at Israel's use of solitary confinement and separation against minors for interrogation purposes.

Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCIP) and the World Organization against Torture (OMCT) presented testimony to the Committee Against Torture in Geneva, and attended the review.

In March, DCIP and OMCT submitted a joint alternative [report](#) to the Committee, focusing on the ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention and the use of excessive force by Israeli forces.

The alternative report was based on testimonies, collected by DCIP, from 429 children detained by the Israeli military or police in the occupied West Bank between January 2012 and December 2015.

Three-quarters of the children interviewed had endured some form of physical violence following their arrest. More than 41 percent were arrested from their homes in the middle of the night. And 97 percent were interrogated in the absence of a parent or legal counsel.

DCIP also documented 66 children held in solitary confinement, for an average period of 13 days, during the reporting period.

Ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian child detainees has regularly been raised by UN human rights treaty bodies. In June 2013, the Committee on the Rights of the Child reviewed Israel's compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and [found](#) that Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces were “systematically subject to degrading treatment, and often to acts of torture” and that Israel had “fully disregarded” previous recommendations to comply with international law.

In addition to concern over the treatment of Palestinian child detainees, the Committee Against Torture also highlighted Israel's excessive use of force against Palestinians.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, quoted in the Committee's concluding observations, some of Israel's responses to alleged attacks by Palestinians "strongly suggest unlawful killings, including possible extrajudicial executions."

The number of child fatalities has drastically increased since October last year, after tensions across East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied West Bank escalated into lethal attacks.

Forty-five Palestinian children from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have been killed since October as a direct result of intensified violence, all except one at the hands of Israeli forces. Of this number, 36 allegedly carried out knife or gun attacks.

According to the Committee, "accountability for instances of excessive use of force is rare."

Since 2014, only one incident, the [fatal shooting of Nadeem Nawara](#), 17, in May 2014, has resulted in both an investigation and indictment. The trial against the Israeli border policeman charged with manslaughter in connection with Nadeem's death began on May 5.

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