



## CHILD RIGHTS BULLETIN

(for the period 1 July – 31 July 2019)

### Key incidents outlined in this LPHR's Child Rights Bulletin covering July 2019:

- Nine-year-old boy is shot in the head with live ammunition by Israeli forces.
- Two children, including a six-year-old, were physically assaulted by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- At least 26 children were displaced following the demolition or seizure of 66 Palestinian-owned structures.
- As of 31 July, 210 Palestinian children remain in Israeli military detention.

The key incidents and statistics outlined in this bulletin span a range of violation categories: **'Fatalities', 'Injuries', 'Settler Violence', 'Arrests and Detention', 'Interference against Education', 'Displacement and Demolitions'**. They are collated from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**UN OCHA**) and local human rights organisations: Defence for Children International-Palestine (**DCIP**), B'Tselem, Unicef, and Military Court Watch.

This bulletin outlines the specific rights of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) that apply to the key incidents affecting Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territory (**oPt**). As the occupying power, Israel has legal responsibilities under international conventions, including the UNCRC, for the safety, welfare and human rights protection of civilians living in the oPt. This bulletin concludes with a Further Reading section.

LPHR gives special thanks to Salma Alida and Mikhael Johannes for their excellent work preparing this bulletin.

### **FATALITIES**

**There were no child fatalities during the reporting period.** Since the start of 2019, LPHR Child Rights Bulletins have recorded that a total of 17 Palestinian children have been killed as a result of Israeli military and settler presence in the oPt, including 14 children from the Gaza Strip.

## **INJURIES**

Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that 335 Palestinian children (330 boys and 3 girls) were injured during demonstrations of the 'Great March of Return' protests in Gaza during the reporting period. The injuries were caused by the following: live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas canisters (hit by), tear gas inhalation, and other causes that were unspecified. At least [33](#) children were injured in clashes in the West Bank.

Injury incidents in July 2019 include:

- [UN OCHA](#) and [B'Tselem](#) reports that Israeli forces seriously injured a 9-year-old boy, 'Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi, in the head with live ammunition during the weekly protest in Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya) against settlement expansion and access restrictions. Palestinian eyewitnesses indicated that he was not involved in the demonstrations when he was shot. *LPHR has written an [urgent action letter](#) to the UK Foreign Office on this deeply appalling use of live-fire by Israeli forces. Please see more in our further reading section.*
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that at least 9 children were injured by Israeli forces in the first two weeks of July. This includes injuries to a 14-year-old boy - and his mother - while resisting the arrest of the boy by Israeli authorities for alleged stone throwing, and 4 children during search and arrest operations.
- [Al Mezan Center For Human Rights](#) reports that on 19 July, the sixty-seventh Friday of the Great March of Return, a total of 45 children were injured by Israeli forces during unarmed demonstrations. According to medical sources, three of these children are in a critical condition.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that 22 children were injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank in the last two weeks of July, due to tear gas inhalation, rubber and live bullets, and as a result of physical assault. The incidents occurred in numerous locations, including during stop and search operations in Al 'Eizariya and Al 'Isawiya, and during protest against settlement expansion in Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya).

**Article 3(2) of the UNCRC** provides that states shall ensure children the protection and care necessary for their well-being. The excessive use of force by Israeli authorities during the 'Great March of Return' protests and the shooting of a 9-year-old boy in the head with live ammunition, constitute a clearly apparent serious violation of this important legal protection.



Under international law, lethal force such as live ammunition can only be used as a last resort when there is a direct and imminent threat to life or serious injury.

**Article 15(1) of the UNCRC** provides for the right of the child to freedom of peaceful assembly. The excessive use of force that has been used during the ‘Great March of Return’ is a violation of this basic right guaranteed by the UNCRC.

*Please see our further reading section for more on the appalling recent spate of grave incidents of use of live ammunition by Israeli forces against children the occupied West Bank, including the aforementioned shooting of a nine-year-old boy in the head in Kafr Qaddum.*

## **SETTLER VIOLENCE**

**UN OCHA reports that 5 children were injured in settler related incidents in July 2019.** This figure includes incidents involving alleged attacks by Israeli settlers, access prevention, and clashes following the entry of Israeli settlers into Palestinian communities.

Settler violence incidents in July 2019 include:

- **UN OCHA** reports that a child was physically assaulted and injured by settlers in an incident in the H2 area of Hebron city.
- **UN OCHA** reports that a 6-year-old child was physically assaulted and injured by an Israeli settler on 16 July in the Batn al Hawa area of the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

**Article 3(2) of the UNCRC** provides that states should ensure the protection and care of children, as is necessary for their well-being. The Israeli human rights organisation **Yesh Din** reports that incidents of violence by Israeli civilians against Palestinians and their property are a daily occurrence throughout the West Bank but these incidents are rarely investigated properly by Israeli law enforcement. Only 3% of investigations into complaints filed by Palestinians hurt by settlers lead to convictions.

The low rate of investigations into attacks by Israeli settlers suggests that Israel is in violation of its obligations under **Article 39 of the UNCRC**, which stipulates that states should take all

appropriate measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery of a child victim of abuse, and that such recovery should take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

## **ARRESTS AND DETENTION**

**Between 17 July - 23 July 2019, [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli forces conducted 146 search and arrest operations in the West Bank, arresting at least 200 Palestinians, including an unknown number of children. As of 31 July 2019, [Military Court Watch](#) documents 210 Palestinian children in Israeli military detention.**

Arrest and detention incidents in July 2019 include:

- [Military Court Watch](#) reports that a 16-year-old boy from Jayyus was arrested by Israeli soldiers at 2:30am on 2 July 2019, accused of allegedly throwing stones during clashes in January 2018. At the time of this night-time arrest raid on a family home, the child was not informed of the reason for his arrest. On arrival at a military base, the child reports that he was blindfolded, shackled, and searched in his underwear. During interrogation, the child states he was not informed of his right to silence or his right to consult with a lawyer prior to questioning. During the court hearing, the child's family were not present as they were not informed of his hearing. He was charged with throwing stones during clashes, and was finally released seventeen days after his arrest, on 19 July 2019.

**Article 3(1) of the UNCRC** obliges states to ensure that: 'In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration'.

**Article 37(b) of the UNCRC** states that no child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily and that it shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Arresting children at night in their family home, as was the case of the 16 year-old arrested in Jayyus at 2:30am on 2 July, when other options appear to have been available, constitutes an apparent serious breach of **Article 37(b) of the UNCRC**.

**Article 37(d) of the UNCRC** also states that 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. The Israeli



authorities' failure to inform the 16-year-old boy from Jayyus of his right to consult with a lawyer prior to questioning constitutes a serious breach of **Article 37(d) of the UNCRC**.

*Please see our Further Reading section below for more on the very troubling issue of the systematic maltreatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military custody, including the continued use of terrifying night-time arrest raids against children in family homes.*

### **INTERFERENCE AGAINST EDUCATION**

**There were no reported incidents of infringement on education in July 2019.**

### **DISPLACEMENT & DEMOLITIONS**

**According to a breakdown of statistics collated by [UN OCHA](#), 66 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished or seized in July 2019, displacing 47 people, including at least 26 children.**

Demolition and displacement incidents affecting children in July 2019 include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 2 July - 15 July, Israeli authorities demolished or seized 11 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which in practice are nearly impossible to obtain. As a result, at least 1,200 people, including 400 children, have been impacted by these demolitions and seizures. Three of the affected structures were donor-funded water cisterns in the Dkaika, Kashem al Karem and An Najada communities in Area C.
- Between 16 July – 29 July, [UN OCHA](#) reports that a total of 44 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished across the West Bank, displacing 38 people and affecting over 6,000 others. Of the structures demolished, 34 were due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits. The demolitions included 14 donor-funded structures, among which were four water cisterns, affecting the communities of Umm al Kheir and Khashem ad Daraj (estimated population 1,750). Like other communities located in south Hebron, both communities already face severe water shortages.
- On 22 July, Israeli authorities commenced the demolition of 10 buildings, including 70 apartments, in the Palestinian community of Sur Bahir. The demolition forcibly displaced four families, including [14 children](#). Dozens of other Palestinians sustained property

losses. The demolitions followed a ruling by the Israeli High Court of Justice on 11 June 2019, which dismissed a petition filed by residents of Sur Bahir in 2017. The petition had sought to annul a military order prohibiting construction in the buffer zone be annulled, and/or that the demolition of their property not be implemented. In response to the incident, a UN statement was issued, declaring that "[Israel's policy of destroying Palestinian property is not compatible with its obligations under international humanitarian law.](#)" *LPHR has written an [urgent action letter](#) to the UK Foreign Office on this serious incident. Please see more in our further reading section.*

- On 21 July, [B'Tselem](#) reports that Israeli authorities confiscated the tent homes of two families in al-Hadidiyah, affecting 14 people, including 7 children. It further reports that on 30 July Israeli authorities dismantled and confiscated, for the second time, three tents that were used as a home for a family of nine, including four children. One of the tents was donated by the Red Cross after another tent was demolished.

**Article 27 of the UNCRC** protects children's right to a standard of living and seeks to ensure that this standard is adequate with respect to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The UNCRC further adds that State Parties are responsible for taking appropriate measures to provide assistance in respect to nutrition, clothing and housing. The actions of the Government of Israel in rendering children and their parents homeless and disrupting families' livelihoods through demolitions of homes clearly violates both the letter and the spirit of the UNCRC.

**Article 18(2) of the UNCRC** obliges State Parties to give appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities. Demolitions and subsequent forced displacement violate this right as it harms parents and legal guardians' ability to fulfil their responsibilities of looking after and providing shelter for their children.

**Article 16(1) of the UNCRC** protects children's right to not be subject to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family and home and **Article 16(2)** entitles children to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.



## **Further Reading**

### **Use of live ammunition against children in the occupied West Bank**

As recording in the last few Child Rights Bulletins, there has been an appalling recent spate of grave incidents of use of live ammunition by Israeli forces against children in the occupied West Bank. This Bulletin has highlighted the shooting of a nine-year-old boy, 'Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi, in the head with live ammunition. This follows shooting incidents with live ammunition against two children in the vicinity of the Separation Barrier at the end of May; one resulted in the killing of 15-year-old 'Abdallah Gheith on 31 May 2019, the other incident ten days earlier against a 14-year-old boy, 'MS', led to the amputation of his leg.

LPHR has written to the Foreign Office for the Middle East, Dr Andrew Murrison, in relation to these three grievous incidents Our urgent action letter on the two grave shooting incidents at the end of May can be read [here](#). Our urgent action letter on the deeply appalling shooting of nine-year-old 'Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi, which places it in the context of recent similar attacks, can be read [here](#).

### **Night-time arrest raids and systematic maltreatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military custody**

As noted in this Child Rights Bulletin, the practice by Israeli military forces of subjecting Palestinian children to night time arrests in their family homes is ongoing. Please see [LPHR's February 2018 parliamentary briefing on children in military detention](#) for information and analysis on this ongoing systemic practice that terrifies children and their families.

Please also see the [BBC's recent short video of 'Diaries of childhood in Israeli military detention'](#), which provides more information on the treatment of children tried in military courts in the oPt. Furthermore, please see [Hamoked's statement](#) on 2 July concerning the summary dismissal by the Israeli High Court of its petition challenging the ban on minors to telephone their parents whilst in custody if they are classified as a 'security detainee/prisoner' (which applies to the majority of children in custody as stone-throwing is classified as a security offence).

LPHR has been in engagement with the UK government on the issue of the pervasive and systemic maltreatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. For example, please see [LPHR's Urgent Action letter](#) to the then Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt MP, of 15 January 2019, that requests a renewed UK government impetus on this issue. The Minister's response can be read [here](#). Please also see LPHR's [briefing on children in military detention](#) for a comprehensive legal and human rights analysis. The analysis was replicated in the [lead speech of Sarah Champion MP](#) for the parliamentary debate on 7 February 2018.

### **Displacement and demolition**

As noted in this Child Rights Bulletin, the demolition of buildings and displacement of Palestinian children by Israeli forces is ongoing. Please see [LPHR's Urgent Action letter](#) to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office regarding Israel's above-mentioned demolition of homes and apartments in the Palestinian community of Sur Bahir, which commenced on 22 July 2019. The demolitions of 10 buildings, including 70 apartments, have already forcibly displaced 14 children and over 350 others will encounter massive property loss. The demolition appears to violate international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law.