



CHILD RIGHTS BULLETIN

(for the period 1 September – 30 September 2019)

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

- Two Palestinian children killed in incidents involving the firing of live ammunition by Israeli forces
- 359 children injured by Israeli forces in Gaza during the 'Great March of Return' demonstrations, 61 of them by live ammunition and 97 by rubber bullets
- At least 26 children displaced following the demolition or seizure of 52 Palestinian-owned structures

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**), Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Military Court Watch, B'Tselem, and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (**ICAHD**).

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.

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FATALITIES

Two Palestinian children were killed in the oPt in September 2019. Since the start of 2019, LPHR Child Rights Bulletins have recorded that a total of 20 Palestinian children have been killed

as a result of Israeli military and settler presence in the oPt, including 16 children from the Gaza Strip. [UN OCHA](#) reports that 46 Palestinian children have been killed at the 'Great March of Return' demonstrations since they started in March 2018.

- UN OCHA reports that on 6 September, a 14-year-old boy and a 17-year-old boy were shot and killed by Israeli forces during the 'Great March of Return' demonstrations near the perimeter fence held to the east of Jabaliya and Gaza City. News outlets identified the boys as 14-year-old Khalid Abu Bakr al-Rabai and 17-year-old Ali Sami Ali al-Ashqar. The UN Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov condemned the killings, stating that Israel must "use lethal force only as a last resort, and only in response to imminent threat of death or serious injury."

Article 6(1) of the UNCRC states that every child has the inherent right to life. Part of providing meaningful protection under the UNCRC involves review of and accountability for child deaths. To fulfil its obligations under international law, it is necessary that the Government of Israel thoroughly and transparently investigate the circumstances of the above-mentioned killings and ensure legal accountability and justice is delivered where there is criminal wrongdoing. There is strong evidence indicating that Israel is failing to provide accountability for child deaths, with data collected by [B'Tselem](#) and Israeli human rights organisation [Yesh Din](#) suggesting that soldiers who harm or kill Palestinians or damage their property are very rarely indicted.

Additionally, **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.

INJURIES

Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that a total of **530** Palestinian children were injured during the reporting period. 359 Palestinian children (353 boys and 6 girls) were injured during demonstrations of the 'Great March of Return' protests in Gaza during the reporting period, 61 of them by live ammunition and 97 by rubber bullets. At least 171 children were injured in the West Bank during the reporting period. The injuries were caused by the following: live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas canisters (hit by), tear gas inhalation, physical assault, and other causes that were unspecified.



Injury incidents in September 2019 include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 3–16 September, Israeli forces injured 200 children during the ‘Great March of Return’ demonstrations near the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel. 31 of the injured children were shot with live ammunition.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that a total of 187 Palestinians, including 89 children, were injured in multiple clashes across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 3–16 September. The majority of injuries (120) were sustained during two incidents, when Israeli forces fired tear gas canisters in a neighbourhood of the Israeli-controlled H2 area of Hebron city, following stone-throwing by Palestinians. Another 58 Palestinians, including a six-year-old child hit in the head by a tear gas canister, were injured in various clashes in Al ‘Eizariya town (Jerusalem governorate), some of which erupted during protests in support of Palestinian prisoners.
- [Al Mezan Center for Human Rights](#) reports that on Friday 27 September, during the 76th week of the ‘Great March of Return’ protests, Israeli forces injured 95 people, including 30 children. Of the injured, 40 sustained wounds from live fire, while 27 were hit directly by tear gas canisters. Medical sources reported that five of the wounded are in a critical condition. It is unclear whether children are among the wounded in critical condition.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that 441 Palestinians, including 193 children, were injured by Israeli forces in a ‘Great March of Return’ protest held east of Rafah, near the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel on 27 September. Of the injured, 90 sustained wounds from live ammunition.
- UN OCHA reports that a total of 68 Palestinians, including 7 children, were injured in multiple clashes across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 17-30 September. Of those, 19 people were injured in confrontations with Israeli forces that took place in Al ‘Eizariya town, where ongoing clashes have been occurring on a regular basis for more than a month.

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 use of live ammunition against children who were unarmed constitutes a 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 below for more on the very troubling issue of the large number of injuries during the 'Return Protests' and Israel's policy of preventing injured Gazan protesters from accessing critical medical treatment.

SETTLER VIOLENCE

UN OCHA reports that 2 children were injured in settler related incidents in September 2019. Since the beginning of the year, 41 children have been injured in settler related incidents in the oPt.

Settler violence incidents in September 2019 include:

- UN OCHA reports that between 3–16 September, Israeli settlers carried out eight attacks, resulting in the injury of 2 Palestinians, including a child. In three separate incidents, settlers believed to be from Yitzhar settlement and its surrounding outposts raided the villages of Madama, 'Einabus and 'Asira al Qibiliya (Nablus), where they cut down olive trees, stoned houses, vandalised vehicles and clashed with residents. Israeli forces intervened during clashes that erupted in Madama village, firing tear gas canisters, one of which hit a Palestinian boy in the face.
- UN OCHA reports that between 17-30 September, Israeli settlers stoned and injured a 14-year-old child in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2).

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](#) reported on "settler violence as a vehicle for taking over Palestinian land with state and military backing" in its August 2018 [case study](#) of the Yitzhar settlement, which is now reported by UN OCHA to be the source of one of the settler-violence incidents in this Child Rights Bulletin.



Unimpeded regular occurrences of settler violence against Palestinian children suggests that Article 3(2) of the UNCRC is being breached.

[Yesh Din](#) also reports that whilst incidents of violence by Israeli civilians against Palestinians and their property are a daily occurrence throughout the West Bank 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 [3–16 September 2019](#) and [17–30 September 2019](#), UN OCHA reports that Israeli forces conducted 319 search and arrest operations in West Bank villages and towns, arresting at least 295 Palestinians, including an unknown number of children. As of 31 August 2019, [Military Court Watch](#) documents 185 Palestinian children in Israeli military detention (figures up to the end of September are not available).

Arrest and detention incidents in September 2019 include:

- Between 3-16 September, Israeli forces conducted at least 13 search and arrest operations in Al 'Isawiya neighbourhood, in East Jerusalem, in an apparent continuation of the almost daily operations conducted by Israeli forces in the neighbourhood since June 2019, which have led to at least 92 children from Al 'Isawiya being detained since the start of 2019. UN OCHA reports that since June 2019, Israeli police have been conducting almost daily operations in the neighbourhood of Al 'Isawiya in occupied East Jerusalem, resulting in clashes that, as of 21 August, have led to one fatality, at least 137 injuries and the arrest of 53 children. UN OCHA reports that the longstanding tensions and violence in the neighbourhood have severely undermined children's security and psychosocial well-being.

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’.

Additionally, 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. The almost daily raids and high number of child arrests in the neighbourhood of Al ‘Isawiya strongly suggest that Israel is in breach of both Article 3(1) and Article 37(b).

INTERFERENCE AGAINST EDUCATION

There was one reported incident of interference against education in September 2019.

- Due to Israeli forces’ almost daily raids on the neighbourhood of Al ‘Isawiya, the start of the [new school year](#) in the neighbourhood was delayed by approximately a week, following a Parents Committee decision to prevent the neighbourhood’s children going to school, pending an improvement in the security situation.

UN OCHA reports that three donor-funded structures, including a school in the Hebron governorate and a kindergarten in Abu George Kassarat community, worth over 50,000 euros, are at risk of demolition, after receiving stop work orders in September.

Article 28(1) of the UNCRC stipulates that education should be accessible to all children on the basis of equal opportunity, obliging Israel to ensure that children in the oPt have unrestricted access to education. The prospective demolition of a school in the Hebron governorate and a kindergarten in the Abu George Kassarat community indicates a serious violation of this right.

DISPLACEMENT & DEMOLITIONS

According to a breakdown of statistics collated by [UN OCHA](#), 52 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished or seized in September 2019, displacing 51 people, including at least 26 children, and affecting a total of 1,119 people (including [244 children](#)). [UN OCHA](#) reports that the number of structures targeted during the period January-September in 2019 is 42% higher than for the same period in 2018. Likewise, the number of donor-funded aid structures targeted in this period (97) has shown a three-fold increase compared to the same period in 2018 (32).

Demolition and displacement incidents affecting children in September 2019 include:



- Between 3-16 September, [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli authorities demolished or seized 23 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem on the grounds of a lack of Israeli-issued permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain. At least 29 people were displaced, including an unknown number of children. Four of the targeted structures were residential shelters provided as humanitarian aid for a community in Umm Fagarah, located in an area designated as a firing zone for military training in southern Hebron. Israeli authorities also demolished five water cisterns provided as humanitarian aid in Khirbet 'Atuf (Tubas), affecting over 250 residents.
- [ICAHD](#) reports that on 2 September, the Israeli Civil Administration along with Israeli forces demolished five structures and a 125 metre long fence in Ein Fares, Nahhalin. The structures were donor-funded and were provided as a response to a previous demolition that occurred in the area in July 2019. Five families comprising 39 people, including 20 children, have been affected.

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 rights 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

Update on the shooting of nine-year-old Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi in the head with live ammunition

The Child Rights Bulletin for the reporting period 1-31 July 2019 recorded an incident of Israeli forces shooting a nine year old boy, Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi in the head with live ammunition. The shooting has left Abd with catastrophic injuries and in a prolonged coma. In that Bulletin we referred to our [Urgent Action letter](#) submitted to the UK Foreign Office relating to this specific incident, with suggested recommendations.

After the shooting of 'Abd, the Israeli military stated that live ammunition had not been used against protesters. However, Forensic Architecture, a research agency based at Goldsmiths University, has published an [investigation](#) into the shooting, piecing together video material that was recorded on the day of the shooting to sequence the events that led to the shooting. The conclusion of the investigation is that, contrary to the repeated claims of Israeli officials, the evidence strongly suggests that Abd a-Rahman's a-Shteivi's injury was caused by live ammunition. Please see [LPHR's recent short report](#) for a summary of the findings of the Forensic Architecture investigation and the UK government's response.

We are grateful to Dr Sarah Wollaston MP for her parliamentary question dated [27 September 2019](#) asking Foreign Office Minister Andrew Murrison MP what representations the UK government has made to Israeli authorities in regard to Abd's case. Minister Murrison's reply of [2 October](#) stated that representations had now been made "with the Israeli authorities, stressing the importance of protecting civilians, especially children." LPHR would urge the Minister to go further, and to call for a thorough and transparent investigation into this grievous shooting.

Israel's policy to prevent injured Gazan protesters from accessing critical care

As noted in this Child Rights Bulletin, a large number of Palestinians have been injured during the 'Great March of Return' civilian protests in Gaza, with many sustaining wounds from live ammunition. [The World Health Organisation](#) recently reported that the Israeli forces' use of excessive force, including live ammunition, against civilian protesters not posing an imminent threat to life or serious injury, has caused thousands of injuries, many being very serious. Please



see [LPHR's recent short report](#) on the grave ramifications of the related policy decision made in April 2018 by the Israeli government which prevents anyone involved in the 'Great March of Return' protests from travelling outside of Gaza for medical treatment, unless their situation is 'life-threatening'. The policy has profound consequences for a significant number of seriously injured Palestinians who are denied access to adequate healthcare when it is urgently and critically required.