



2019 YEAR IN REVIEW CHILD RIGHTS BULLETIN

This year-in-review bulletin collates key statistics and incidents reported in LPHR Child Rights Bulletins during 2019. It also incorporates key incidents from 1 October – 31 December 2019, which do not have a stand-alone bulletin.

Key statistics and incidents outlined in LPHR's 2019 Year In Review Child Rights Bulletin include:

- 29 children were killed by Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank during 2019
- Over 4,500 children have been injured by Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank arising out of a number of different incidents, including the use of live ammunition and tear gas canister strikes resulting in catastrophic injuries
- Schools in the H2 area of Hebron City have been subjected to repeated tear gas canister attacks, resulting in schoolchildren requiring medical treatment for tear gas inhalation
- As of 31 December 2019, 186 Palestinian children were recorded as being in Israeli military detention. Many more children have been subjected to arrest operations in the West Bank during the year, including terrifying night-time arrest raids in family homes
- Children continue to be displaced and otherwise affected by ongoing home demolitions that increased by 35% (623 demolitions) compared to 2018

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

Since the start of 2019, LPHR Child Rights Bulletins have documented the fatality incidents of a total of 29 Palestinian children (27 boys and 2 girls) killed by Israeli forces in the oPt, including 25 children in the Gaza Strip. Nine of those children were killed between 1 October and 31 December 2019. Fatality incidents in 2019 include:

- On 11 January 2019, 13-year-old 'Abd a-Ra'uf Salahah was hit in the head by a tear gas canister fired by Israeli forces during a weekly demonstration near the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel. 'Abd succumbed to his wounds and died three days later. 'Abd was the first of the 29 Palestinian children killed by Israeli forces in 2019.
- Four boys were killed by Israeli forces in February 2019 during the ongoing 'Great March of Return' protests in Gaza. Three of the boys - 13-year-old Hassan Iyad Abdel Fattah Shalbi, 14-year-old Yusif Said Hussein al-Dayeh, and 17-year-old Hamza Mohammad Rushdi Ishteiwi - were killed by live ammunition. A fourth boy, 16-year-old Hassan Nabil Ahmad Nofalby, was killed by a tear gas canister strike to his head.
- Of the four boys who were killed by Israeli forces in March 2019, one was a volunteer medic who was shot in his side during a military raid in the West Bank. 17-year-old Sajed Abdul Hakim Helmi Mizher was confirmed to have been wearing an orange medic vest when he was shot.



- In May 2019, a 19-month-old baby Saba Mahmoud Hamdan Abu Arar and a 3-month-old baby Maria Ahmed Ramadan Ghazali died from extensive shrapnel wounds in a targeted airstrike against family homes in Northern Gaza. 11-year-old Abdel-Rahman Talal Attieh Abu Jidian was also killed in these airstrike incidents.
- On 31 May 2019, 15-year-old 'Abdallah Gheith was fatally shot in the chest by Israeli forces near the An Nu'man checkpoint (in the West Bank) when he was attempting to cross the Separation Barrier to enter Jerusalem to attend prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque. During Ramadan, Palestinian men between 16 - 30 were barred from entering Jerusalem.
- On 6 September 2019, 14-year-old Khalid Abu Bakr al-Rabai and 17-year-old Ali Sami Ali al-Ashqar 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.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that 35 Palestinians, including nine children, were killed by Israeli forces between 12-14 November following an escalation in hostilities between Israel and various Palestinian armed factions triggered by the Israeli military force's targeting and killing of a senior operative in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's armed wing in Gaza. Five of these children were members of the same family, killed in an airstrike against two family homes built of tin shacks in Deir El-Balah on 14 November 2019. [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) reports that the children killed in the Deir-El Balah airstrike include 13-year-old Wasim Al-Sawarka, 12-year-old Muhannad Al-Sawarka, 2-year-old Mu'ath Al-Sawarka, 3-year-old Salim-Al-Sawarka and 3-month-old Firas Al-Sawarka. After an investigation into the incident, the Israeli military stated on 24 December 2019 that they made a "[mistake](#)" in attacking the two homes. An internal investigation concluded that the Al-Sawarka homes were mis-labelled in the army database as a "military compound" used by Islamic Jihad. [B'Tselem](#) reports that contrary to the military's official statements, the target – the Al-Sawarka family compound – had not been reassessed for many months, and no attempt was made to ensure no civilians were on site prior to the attack. Devastating military attacks against family homes in Gaza was a key recurring feature of the military offensive on Gaza in 2014, as examined extensively in joint work by [Al Mezan and LPHR](#).

- During the same hostilities, [DCIP](#) reports that 3 children were killed by Israeli forces in attacks in the Gaza Strip on 13 November. Two brothers, 17-year-old Ibrahim Ayman Fathi Abdulal and 16-year-old Ismail Ayman Fathi Abdulal, were killed when an Israeli weaponised drone targeted the family's carpentry shop. Both boys sustained shrapnel wounds to the head and upper torso and were pronounced dead at Shifa hospital. Seven-year-old Amir Rafat Mohammed Ayad was killed when a drone-fired missile struck the motorcycle he was riding with his father and brother. Amir sustained injuries all over his body from shrapnel and died immediately. At the time he was killed, Amir, his father and brother were travelling to Shifa hospital to check on the condition of another brother, Ihab, who had been wounded in an earlier strike near the family's home.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that a 16 year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by Israeli forces east of Khan Yunis (Gaza) on 29 November. The incident occurred when a group of youths approached Israel's perimeter fence around Gaza and clashed with Israeli forces. According to Israeli sources, the youths burned tires and threw stones and explosive devices at the Israeli soldiers.

Article 6(1) of the UNCRC provides that every child has the inherent right to life. The above-mentioned airstrikes resulting in eight child fatalities and the use of live ammunition resulting in one child fatality strongly suggest that Israel's authorities have seriously violated their legal duty under Article 6(1). The killing of the five children in their family home, the two children in a carpentry shop, and a child being driven on a motorcycle, raise serious questions of whether the Israeli military forces violated fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions under international humanitarian law. Violations of these legal obligations can entail individual criminal responsibility.

In regard to the killing of the child at the Gaza perimeter fence, international human rights law requires that intentional lethal force be used only when absolutely unavoidable where there is an imminent threat to life or serious injury. The bare facts of the case raises a key question of whether excessive force by Israeli forces was used in a situation not permitted by international human rights law.

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. In respect of the Al-Sawarka family homes being targeted resulting in five children being killed, although an investigation has been opened and completed with a finding that the family home was mistakenly targeted, there must be a full and proper criminal investigation to determine potential individual criminal wrongdoing. In this regard, there is significant concern raised by B'Tselem that adequate due diligence was not carried out by military authorities prior to the egregious fatal attack.

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.

INJURIES

At least 4,598 children were injured in 2019. These injuries arose in a number of different contexts, including violent clashes in the West Bank, the use of force against civilians during the 'Great March of Return' demonstrations in Gaza, and attacks on school compounds. The overall number is suspected to be higher as there have been periods where an exact number of children who were injured in specific incidents was unclear. Where we have not been able to discern the exact number of children within an overall group of Palestinians injured, they have not been included within this summary.

Within this overall number, around a quarter occurred between 1 October – 31 December 2019. In that time [638](#) Palestinian children (615 boys and 23 girls) were injured by Israeli forces in Gaza during the reporting period, 95 of them by live ammunition, 272 by rubber bullets, 82 by tear gas (inhalation), 47 by tear gas canisters (hit), 34 by air-launched explosive weapons, and two by surface-launched explosive weapons. At least [372](#) children were injured in the West Bank during the same reporting period. The injuries were caused by the following: live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas inhalation, physical assault, and other causes that were unspecified. Notable injury incidents recorded by LPHR's Child Rights Bulletins during 2019 include:

- On 6 January 2019, a 16-year-old boy was shot in the head by an Israeli border officer using a sponge bullet. The boy had been having coffee with his friend before going to school. He was shot at from less than 10 metres away. The boy survived but had a fractured skull and was not able to return to school for at least a month. This incident was aggravated by the fact the victim's friend was fired at when he attempted to attend him.
- On 8 February 2019, 43 children were injured by Israeli forces' use of live ammunition and tear gas canisters during the Great March of Return demonstrations in Gaza. Throughout 2019 more generally, large numbers of children have been injured (some permanently disabled) as a result of excessive use of force against civilians at these demonstrations. These injuries are exacerbated by Israeli's [policy](#) of denying protesters permission to travel for medical care. [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 1 October – 31 December 2019, 580 children (569 boys and 11 girls) were injured during demonstrations in Gaza by Israeli forces, including the 'Great March of Return' protests. 94 of the injured were shot with live ammunition.
- On 21 May, a 14-year-old was shot in the leg with live ammunition by an Israeli soldier while retrieving a football near the Separation Barrier in the Bethlehem area. The boy reports waiting approximately 45 minutes for an ambulance and being searched and questioned by soldiers. The boy's leg was amputated below the knee due to irreversible tendon damage.
- 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. The shot to 'Abd's forehead resulted in a large hole, multiple skull fractures and serious brain damage; a Ct [scan](#) showed around 100 fragments lodged in the boy's brain. (Please see our [blog](#) on 'Abd case for more details).
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 1 October – 31 December 2019, 336 Palestinian children (318 boys and 18 girls) were injured by Israeli forces during clashes in the West Bank, with 313 of the injuries occurring in Hebron City (H2). The injuries were caused by tear gas inhalation, live ammunition and rubber bullets.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 29 October – 11 November 2019, 285 school children and 35 teachers were treated for tear gas inhalation, after Israeli forces shot tear gas canisters



and sound bombs into the yards of two school compounds in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2), on three separate occasions. According to various Palestinian sources, only one of the incidents (on 3 November) was preceded by stone-throwing at Israeli forces by Palestinian children.

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that at least 51 children were injured by Israeli forces between 12-14 November 2019 following an escalation in hostilities between Israel and various Palestinian armed factions triggered by the Israeli military force's targeting and killing of a senior operative in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's armed wing in Gaza. Some of the injuries (number unconfirmed) were reportedly hit by Palestinian rockets falling short in Gaza, and the rest by Israeli airstrikes.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 10 – 23 December 2019, a 16 year-old Palestinian boy was shot and injured with live ammunition on Road 60 near Bethlehem, reportedly as he was about to throw a Molotov cocktail at Israeli vehicles; the boy was subsequently arrested.

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 demonstrations and the use of live ammunition against children who were unarmed or otherwise not posing an imminent threat 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' in violation of international human rights law, as found by the [UN independent Commission of Inquiry into the Gaza Protests](#), encompasses a violation of this basic right guaranteed by the UNCRC.

SETTLER VIOLENCE

Since the beginning of the year, **55** children have been injured in settler related incidents in the oPt. [UN OCHA](#) reports that 13 children were injured in settler related incidents between 1 October – 31 December 2019. Incidents reported by LPHR's Child Rights Bulletins in 2019 include:

- On **30 March** 2019, a 17-year-old girl was injured by settlers while with her family on their way to their land near Jibiya village in Ramallah.
- On **11 April** 2019, a Palestinian boy was injured in a stone-throwing incident by settlers in Jenin.
- In **May, June and July** 2019 in the Israeli-controlled H2 area of Hebron city, four children in total were physically assaulted by Israeli settlers.
- On **16 July** 2019, a six-year-old child was physically assaulted and injured by an Israeli settler in the Batn al Hawa area of the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.
- In **August** 2019, two girls were injured in settler related incidents in Al Ja'ba (Bethlehem).
- In **September** 2019, Israeli settlers stoned and injured a 14-year-old child in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2).
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between **1–14 October** 2019, four Palestinians, including one child, were physically assaulted and injured by Israeli settlers in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city and in the Khirbet al Marajim community.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that the olive harvest season, which began in early October 2019, was disrupted in a number of areas by Israeli settler violence. The olive harvest season, which takes place every year between October and November, is a key economic, social and cultural event for Palestinians. Between **80,000 and 100,000** families are said to rely on olives and olive oil for primary or secondary sources of income. The real or potential adverse impact on the children of these families in reducing their standard of living is clear. Incidents in the reporting period have included: the physical assault and injury of farmers in Tell (Nablus) and Al Jab'a (Bethlehem); and seven incidents involving the setting on fire to, or vandalising of, around 100 olive trees and the theft of produce in the villages of Burin (Nablus), Kafr ad Dik (Salfit), Shufa (Tulkarm) and Al Jab'a (Bethlehem).



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 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. As the occupying power, Israel has the obligation to protect Palestinian civilians from all acts or threats of violence, including by Israeli settlers, and to ensure that attacks are investigated effectively and perpetrators held accountable.

Please see our Further Reading section below for more information about the concerning impact of settler violence on the olive harvest in the oPt.

ARRESTS AND DETENTION

The total number of children involved in search and arrest operations by the Israeli forces for 2019 is unknown. As documented in earlier bulletins, children are often involved in search and arrest operations where hundreds of Palestinians are arrested. Between 1 October – 31 December, UN OCHA reports that Israeli forces conducted 738 search and arrest operations in West Bank villages and towns, arresting at least 490 Palestinians, including at least 48 children. Terrifying night-time arrests raids of children in their family homes have been documented in LPHR Child Rights Bulletins during 2019. As of 31 December 2019, [Military Court Watch](#) documented 186 Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. Arrest and detention incidents recorded by LPHR's Child Rights Bulletins during 2019 include:

- In our January 2019 bulletin we referred to the case of '[S.S.I.D](#)', a 17-year-old-boy who was searched at a temporary Israeli military checkpoint, and found to be in possession of a swiss army knife which he stated he used for his work at a car wash. He was blindfolded and taken to a military base. He reported being interrogated without a lawyer, verbally abused, strip searched twice, left in solitary confinement in a windowless cell for three days, and not given any food, drink, or access to a toilet.
- On 2 July 2019 a [16-year-old-boy](#) from Jayyus was arrested by Israeli soldiers at 2:30am, accused of allegedly throwing stones during clashes some 18 months earlier in January 2018. At the time of his arrest he was not informed of a reason. On arrival at a military base he reports that he was blindfolded, shackled and searched in his underwear. He reports that he was not informed of his right to a consultation with a lawyer prior to questioning.
- [Military Court Watch](#) reports that on 28 October 2019 a 14-year-old boy from Al 'Arrub refugee camp was subjected to a night-time arrest by Israeli soldiers at 3:00am. In his testimony, the child reported that his parents were not told of the reason for his arrest, nor were they provided with any documents. During his arrest, the child stated that the soldiers tied his hands to the front with a plastic tie and blindfolded him, before they put him on the floor of their vehicle and verbally abused him. The boy then reported being left tied and blindfolded in a courtyard until around 1:30pm the following day, during which time a passing soldier tightened the tie around his hands even more, punched him in the back and kicked him on his leg. Following interrogation, the boy reported that he was searched in his underwear, before being strip searched at Ofer prison. The boy stated that he was accused of throwing stones on Route 60 near Bethlehem, which he denied. After attending three military court hearings, the boy reported that he was finally released on 5 November 2019, with the court imposing a suspended sentence of six months and a fine of 1,000 shekels.
- [Military Court Watch](#) reports that a 17 year-old boy from Aida refugee camp was subjected to a night-time arrest by Israeli soldiers at 3:00am on 5 November. In his testimony, the child reported that he woke up to the sound of a soldier's voice in his bedroom, and later discovered 15 other soldiers in his home. The child's family were told that he had been arrested on suspicion of throwing stones at soldiers in his refugee camp. During his arrest, the child described how the soldiers tied his hands to the front with a plastic tie which was tight and painful, and blindfolded him. He described how a soldier beat him on his back and



that he was made to kneel on the ground for about three hours before being taken to the police station. During the three hour interrogation, the boy stated that his blindfold was removed and he was able to speak to a lawyer whilst the interrogator remained in the room. The child reported that he denied the accusation that he threw stones at soldiers, and in response, the interrogator slapped him on the face and punched him in the chest. Following interrogation, the child reported being taken to Ofer prison where he was searched in his clothes. Following a hearing at Ofer military court, the boy stated that he was finally released without charge on 12 November 2019, with the court imposing a fine of 500 shekels.

- [Military Court Watch](#) reports that a 14-year-old boy from Aida refugee camp was subjected to a night-time arrest at his home by Israeli soldiers at 3:00am on 6 November. In his testimony, the child reported that his parents were not told of the reason for his arrest, nor were they provided with any documents. During his arrest, the child described how the soldiers painfully handcuffed him with his hands to the back and how he was blindfolded. He described how he was punched in the head by a soldier when he was blindfolded and made to kneel for thirty minutes in cold weather at a military watchtower. During interrogation at the police station, the child reported that the interrogator would not tell him the reason for his arrest, but insisted that he confess and banged the table each time the child refused. Following a second interrogation, the child states that another interrogator threatened to lock the boy up on a cell by himself if he did not confess. The boy described that he was scared of these threats, so he confessed to throwing a pipe bomb at Rachel's Tomb. The child reported that he was then taken to Ofer prison where he was strip searched and told by a soldier to crouch up and down while naked. Following 11 military court hearings, the child stated that he was released on bail on 19 December because his lawyer could prove he had confessed after being threatened. The boy reported that the court imposed a charge on his father of 10,000 shekels and that he was under house arrest, with the exception of attending his school.

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. The above-mentioned arrests of children at their family homes during the night when other options are available to perform an arrest, in addition to an inappropriate length of imprisonment, constitutes an apparent serious breach of Articles 3(1) and 37(b) of the UNCRC.

Article 37(a) of the UNCRC states that no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. **Article 37(c) of the UNCRC** obliges states to ensure that every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. The circumstances of the child arrest incidents cited above appear to directly contravene these specific child rights protections, as the children were physically assaulted by a soldiers and subjected to degrading treatment during their imprisonment.

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

Notable infringements on education recorded by LPHR Child Rights Bulletins during 2019 include:

- Our [March 2019](#) bulletin reported at least three incidents where Israeli forces fired tear gas canisters into school compounds in the Israeli controlled Hebron City (H2), injuring large numbers of both students and teachers who had to be treated for tear gas inhalation. This followed one tear gas incident against in school in Hebron City (H2) in February 2019. and was followed by two further tear gas incidents against schools – one in Hebron City (H2) and one in Qaladiya refugee camp - in April 2019.
- In May 2019 [13 educational facilities](#) were damaged by targeted strikes by the Israeli Air force. More recently, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) reports that 15 school buildings were damaged during the Israeli forces' military escalation on the Gaza Strip that began on 12 November 2019.



- A [UN OCHA report](#) in May 2019 found that child labour is increasing in Gaza in order to alleviate poverty and secure daily expenses. Most families with working children are considered to live below the poverty line. The report found that the deteriorating socioeconomic situation in Gaza has a negative impact their access to education at school and in the home, evidenced by an increasing number of school drop-outs.
- Due to Israeli forces' almost daily raids on the East Jerusalem 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 between 29 October – 11 November 2019, Israeli forces shot tear gas canisters and sound bombs into the yards of two school compounds in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) on three separate occasions, resulting in 285 school children and 35 teachers being treated for tear gas inhalation.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 29 October – 11 November 2019, almost daily police operations in the Al Isawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, most of which resulted in confrontations and arrests, have disrupted the daily life of some 18,000 Palestinians. School children have been affected, as a two day strike was declared by the parents' committee in all the neighbourhood's schools, protesting police violence.
- Throughout 2019 our Child Rghts Bulletins have highlighted an ongoing threat of demolition of some 50 schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as [stated](#) by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, the UNICEF Special Representative and UNESCO.

Article 28 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 repeated use of firing tear gas canisters and sound bombs in a school in Hebron city (H2), causing harm to students and teachers, indicates a serious violation of this important access to education right provided by the UNCRC.

DEMOLITIONS & DISPLACEMENT

Demolitions and displacement remain a matter of huge concern. At the end of December 2019 [UN OCHA](#) reported that the number of structures subjected to demolitions in 2019 was 35% higher (623 demolitions) than for 2018. The number of Palestinians displaced by demolitions during 2019 was 95% (914 individuals) higher than compared to 2018. More than half of those displaced were children.

In order to fully document these issues LPHR has created a new [Demolitions and Displacement monthly bulletin](#). The first bulletin provides an overview of demolition and displacement incidents during 2019, and information on incidents affecting children in December 2019.

Demolition and displacement incidents affecting children in October and November 2019 include:

- Between 1 - 14 October 2019, [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli authorities demolished or forced people to demolish 31 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 52 people were displaced, including an unknown number of children. The largest incident took place in Jabal al Mukabbir neighborhood in East Jerusalem, where 13 structures, including a home, were targeted. Representatives of the affected families reported that they received no demolition orders or prior notice.
- [ICAHD](#) reports that on 5 October 2019, Palestinians were forced to self-demolish three residential buildings in the Beit Hanina neighborhood of East Jerusalem, resulting in the displacement of six refugee families consisting of 33 people, including 13 children. [UN OCHA](#) reports that over one quarter of this year's demolitions in East Jerusalem (52 of 178 structures) were carried out by the Palestinian owners, mainly to avoid paying the municipality cost of the demolition.
- [ICAHD](#) reports that on 15 October 2019, a Palestinian family was forced to self-demolish two floors out of a six-storey residential building, still under-construction, in Sur Baher in an area located on the Jerusalem side of the Separation Wall. According to the family, they started to build the building in 2016 after receiving a building permit from Ministry in the Palestinian Authority, but then they received a stop-work order from the Israeli authorities. In June 2019, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled in favour of the demolition, based on a



2011 Israeli military order that declared a section of Sur Bahir located near the Separation Wall as a security buffer zone. Six families, consisting of 20 people, including 8 children, were affected.

- Between 29 October – 11 November 2019, [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli authorities demolished or forced people to demolish 19 structures in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, displacing 49 Palestinians, including an unknown number of children. Six of these structures, including four previously provided as humanitarian aid, were in herding communities located in areas declared closed for military training (“firing zones”). Another three structures (all residential) were located in Palestinian Bedouin communities to the east of Jerusalem, next to an area planned for the expansion of the Ma’ale Adummim settlement (the E1 plan). Nine structures were demolished in East Jerusalem, including a home self-demolished by its owners in Al Isawiya.
- Between 12 – 25 November 2019, [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli authorities demolished or seized 39 structures, displacing 63 Palestinians (including an unknown number of children), and otherwise affecting 380 others. 35 of the targeted structures, including two previously provided as humanitarian aid, were located in Area C of the West Bank. The largest incident occurred near Za’tara village (Bethlehem), in an area designated as a firing zone for military training, where the authorities demolished 13 structures, including homes, animal shelters, water tanks and solar panels.
- On 28 November 2019, [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli forces punitively demolished four homes and three water cisterns in Beit Kahil village (Hebron), in Area B of the West Bank, displacing 15 people, including six children. The structures belong to the families of four Palestinians accused of kidnapping and killing an off-duty Israeli soldier in August 2019. The incident triggered clashes with Israeli forces, which resulted in the injury of six Palestinians, including two children. This is the seventh punitive demolition incident so far this year, carried out citing “deterrence needs”. Punitive demolitions are illegal under international law as they constitute collective punishment in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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. Punitive demolitions interfere severely with this right, since not only do the demolitions disrupt children's families and uproot them from their homes, but they also constitute collective punishment carried out as part of Israeli government policy on whole families and communities in response to the actions or alleged actions of individuals. This is a serious violation of the Geneva Convention.

Further Reading

Impact of settler violence on the olive harvest in the oPt

As noted in this Child Rights Bulletin, olive-based livelihoods in many areas of the oPt are undermined by Israeli settlers who uproot and vandalise olive trees, and intimidate and physically assault Palestinian farmers, including during the olive harvest season. This affects the children of Palestine as between 80,000 and 100,000 families are reliant on income provided from the olive tree harvest. The [UN OCHA October Humanitarian Bulletin](#) reports that Palestinians with olive groves located in the closed area between the Barrier and the 'Green Line' (also known as the 'Seam Zone'), and in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, face year-round access restrictions, attacks and threats that prevent them from safely maintaining their olive-based livelihoods. The OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin also reported that whilst the olive oil yield



for the West Bank in 2019 is estimated to reach a record yield of 27,000 tonnes, the realisation of a potential harvest is severely compromised due to access restrictions and attacks and intimidation by Israeli settlers.

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. We strongly recommend that Israeli authorities must end night arrests to bring themselves into compliance with their legal duty under article 3 of the UNCRC to act in the best interests of the child. Accordingly, we call upon Israeli authorities to reform their practices so that children are only be arrested during daylight hours and that in all other cases a summonses should be used; and that detention must only be used as a measure of last resort. Please see [LPHR's February 2018 parliamentary briefing](#) on children in military detention for information and analysis on the ongoing systemic practice of night-time arrests 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.