



CHILD RIGHTS BULLETIN

(for the period 1 January – 29 February 2020)

Key incidents outlined in this LPHR's Child Rights Bulletin covering 1 January - 29 February 2020:

- Two Palestinian children were killed by Israeli forces by the use of live ammunition, one in Gaza and one in the West Bank
- In January, a 14-year-old boy from Gaza, Alaa Hani Hamada Al-Abasi, died of wounds sustained in November when he was hit in the head by a tear gas canister fired by Israeli forces during the ongoing 'Great March of Return' protests, bringing the number of children killed at the demonstrations to 47 since 30 March 2018
- A 10-year-old girl from Gaza, Miral Abu Amsa, died of cancer on 28 February in a Nablus hospital without having seen her father since December, after her family struggled to obtain Israeli-issued permits to leave Gaza to accompany her to hospital
- An 11-year-old Palestinian boy was struck on the head with a tear gas canister shot by Israeli forces near his school in Nablus, and a 9-year-old-boy was hit in the eye by a rubber bullet shot by an Israeli policeman while on his way back home from school in the Al Isawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem
- A 12-year-old and 14-year-old are [filmed](#) by B'Tselem being physically arrested, handcuffed and blindfolded by Israeli forces
- Israeli forces accompanied by two bulldozers and a crane truck confiscated a school building in Khirbet Susiya in the South Hebron Hills, affecting five fourth grade students. A [video](#) of the incident was published by B'Tselem.

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**), Military Court Watch and B'Tselem.

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 that places a spotlight on the issue of Gazan children receiving medical treatment whilst separated from parents due to Israel's permit regime.

FATALITIES

Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that three Palestinian children died as a result of being shot by Israeli forces. One child was killed in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip. Fatalities in the period of 1 January – 29 February 2020 include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 21 January, Israeli forces shot and killed a 17-year-old child after he crossed through the perimeter fence from Gaza into Israel and reportedly threw an explosive device at the soldiers. No Israeli injuries were reported. Two Palestinian 18-year-olds who were with the boy at the time were also shot and killed. The boy's body has been withheld by the Israeli authorities.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that 14-year-old Alaa Hani Hamada Al-Abasi, who was hit in the head by a tear gas canister fired by Israeli forces on 10 November 2019 during a Great March of Return demonstration, died of his wounds on 31 January. His death brings the number of children killed during Great March of Return protests since they began on 30 March 2018 to 47.
- [DCIP](#) reports that 16-year-old Mohammad Suleiman Al-Haddad was fatally shot with live ammunition by Israeli forces on 5 February. The boy sustained multiple gunshot



wounds, including one to the chest. The shooting occurred during multiple clashes across the West Bank in response to the US plan for the Middle East, announced on 28 January. The shooting took place near an Israeli checkpoint in the Bab al-Zawya area of Hebron. DCI reports that an Israeli soldier deployed on a rooftop fired several shots at the boy, who was on the street below. The boy held what appeared to be a Molotov cocktail at the time he was shot. According to DCIP, the boy was far enough away (about 40 metres) from Israeli forces that he likely did not pose any imminent threat when he was shot.

Article 6(1) of the UNCRC provides that every child has the inherent right to life. The above-mentioned shootings of children strongly suggest that Israel's authorities have seriously violated their legal duty under Article 6(1). 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. The shooting of a tear gas canister at the head of a 14-year-old during a demonstration and the shooting of a child in the upper body with live ammunition during clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces, raise serious questions whether the Israeli military forces involved violated the right to life by using excessive lethal force when the child did not pose an imminent threat to life or serious injury. Violations of this legal requirement can entail individual criminal responsibility.

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. However, 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

Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that a total of 204 Palestinian children (203 boys and 1 girl) were injured by Israeli forces during the reporting period. 11 of these injuries were sustained in Gaza and 193 were sustained in the West Bank. The injuries were caused by the following: live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas canisters (hit by), tear gas inhalation, physical assault, air launched explosives, surface launched explosives, and other causes that were unspecified. **Three Israeli children were also reported to have been injured** by Palestinians throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at cars on West Bank roads.

Injury incidents from 1 January-29 February 2020 include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that two Palestinian children were injured following Israeli airstrikes on Gaza. The strikes took place after Palestinians reportedly launched rockets and mortars towards Israel. The projectiles were either intercepted in the air or landed in open areas; an Israeli woman and her baby were injured while running to a shelter in Sderot city. Additionally, [UN OCHA](#) reports that two Palestinian children were injured by a rocket fired towards Israel by a Palestinian armed group, which fell short, hitting a Palestinian house.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 2 January in Bethlehem, Israeli forces shot and injured, and subsequently arrested, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy, reportedly after he brandished a knife when soldiers approached him; no Israeli injuries were reported.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that an 11-year-old Palestinian boy who was hit in the head with a tear gas canister shot by Israeli forces during clashes near Burin school (Nablus), triggering the suspension of classes for the rest of the day. A further seven children were injured by Israeli forces in other clashes during the same fortnight (21 January- 3 February).
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on at least 30 occasions between 21 January- 3 February, Israeli forces opened warning fire in the areas adjacent to Israel's perimeter fence and off the coast of Gaza; injuring three, including one child.



- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in the West Bank between 28 January- 3 February, 287 Palestinians, including 43 children, were injured in clashes in connection to the release of the US plan for the Middle East. Over 80% of the injured were treated for tear gas inhalation, 16% were hit by rubber bullets and 2% by live ammunition. The largest clashes were recorded in Beita village (Nablus), Bethlehem city, the Beit-El/DCO checkpoint (Ramallah), Hebron city, Al 'Eizariya town (Jerusalem), Khirbet 'Atuf village and Tayasir checkpoint (the latter two in Tubas).
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 15 February, a 9-year-old Palestinian boy was hit in the eye by a rubber bullet shot by an Israeli policeman, while he was on his way back home from school, in Al Isawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. The boy was seriously injured and lost his eye. No clashes were recorded at the time of the incident. The Israeli authorities announced the opening of a criminal investigation. Intense Israeli police operations have been ongoing in Al Isawiya since mid-2019, resulting in heightened tensions and disruption of the lives of at least 18,000 residents and severely undermined children's security and psychosocial well-being, according to [UN OCHA](#).
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 4- 17 February, 21 children were injured by Israeli forces during multiple clashes across the West Bank in response to the US plan for the Middle East that was announced on 28 January. An additional seven children were injured by Israeli forces in other clashes recorded during the same period.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that according to Israeli sources, three Israeli girls were injured during the reporting period, following stone and Molotov cocktail throwing by Palestinians at cars travelling along West Bank roads.

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 including the use of live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets and tear-gas canister strikes against children who were unarmed or otherwise not posing an imminent threat

constitutes a serious violation of this important legal protection. The shooting in the eye of a 9-year-old on his way home from school strongly suggests that Israeli forces are breaching Article 3(2).

Article 15(1) of the UNCRC provides for the right of the child to freedom of peaceful assembly. The injury of 127 children during demonstrations during the reporting period, as recorded by [UN OCHA](#), suggests that Israeli forces are using excessive force in violation of international human rights law.

SETTLER VIOLENCE

[UN OCHA](#) reports that six children (four girls and two boys) were injured by settlers during the reporting period. Settler violence incidents in the reporting period include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 5 January, in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2), Israeli settlers broke into a Palestinian home, where they physically assaulted and injured a 17-year-old Palestinian boy. The home (an apartment) is located in a building that was taken over by settlers in 2017. The single Palestinian family who remained in the building has reported ongoing harassment.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in January on Road 60 near Hebron, a Palestinian man and a family of seven, including five children and one woman, were injured when Israeli settlers threw stones at their vehicles. Also in January, a group of around 30 Israeli settlers attacked and threw stones at a house in Madama village (Nablus), injuring a pregnant Palestinian woman.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that individuals believed to be Israeli settlers set on fire a school on 28 January. The school was in Einabus village (Nablus). Graffiti in Hebrew was sprayed on the buildings' walls.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 31 January 2020, at around 13:00, some 20 settlers, escorted by about 10 soldiers, attacked the home of a Palestinian family in the village of Madama Zahiyah. The incident occurred while the family's eight children, between the ages of three and sixteen, were at home. The settlers, some of whom were masked and carried slingshots, came from the direction of the settlement of Yitzhar and started throwing stones at the house. Two windows in the children's room shattered. Reportedly, the



soldiers did nothing to stop the settlers attacking it, shooting tear gas canisters and rubber-coated metal bullets at village residents who came to help the family.

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that settlers continued to bulldoze and vandalise hundreds of olive trees and grape vines belonging to Palestinian farmers during the reporting period. Between 80,000 and 100,000 Palestinian families are reliant on income provided from the olive tree harvest.

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.

ARRESTS AND DETENTION

Between 1 January- 29 February, UN OCHA reports that Israeli forces conducted more than 331 search and arrest operations in West Bank villages and towns, arresting more than 349 Palestinians, including at least 26 children. One child was also arrested in Gaza. As of 31 December 2019 (latest figures available) [Military Court Watch](#) documents 189 Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. Arrest and detention incidents in the reporting period include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 7- 20 January, Israeli forces carried out 115 search and arrest operations across the West Bank and arrested 128 Palestinians, including six children.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that a 14-year-old Palestinian girl lost consciousness and was evacuated to a hospital, reportedly due to trauma she suffered after her home in the Al Isawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem was searched by Israeli forces. The search took place in the context of 81 search and arrest operations across the West Bank between 21 January- 3 February, which saw 89 Palestinians, including 12 children, arrested.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli naval forces arrested three Palestinian fishermen, including a child off the coast of Gaza.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 4- 17 February, Israeli forces carried out 135 search and arrest operations across the West Bank, and arrested 132 Palestinians, including eight children. The majority of the operations were in the Ramallah Governorate (34), followed by Hebron (30) and Jerusalem (26) governorates.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on around 15:30 on 30 January, Israeli soldiers arrested a 12-year-old and a 14-year-old in the West Bank village of Beit Ummar, taking them to an army base. B'Tselem's camera distribution project captured the incident on [video](#). The soldiers dragged the two boys away by their collars, tied the boys' hands with zip ties and blindfolded them. The children were put in a military jeep and taken to an army base. One boy was held at there until 19:00 without a bathroom break and then driven, handcuffed and blindfolded, to the entrance to his village. The other was driven to a facility, he was not told where, where he was put in a cell with two other Palestinians. The next afternoon, the boy was driven, handcuffed and blindfolded, to the entrance to his village. In testimony collected by B'Tselem, the 12-year-old describes being verbally abused by a soldier and being denied access to a bathroom.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 24 January 2020, at around 14:00, a military jeep entered the village of Deir Nidham, northwest of Ramallah. It stopped near the village's old mosque and two soldiers got out, seized a 15-year-old boy and put him in the jeep. The boy was



beaten by soldiers, blindfolded and had his hands tied behind his back. He was taken to a military base. The child was interrogated and threatened without the presence of his parents or of a lawyer. The boy released after six hours, during which he was not given any food or water or allowed to go to the bathroom. The 15-year-old reports being verbally abused and asked for information about other children from his village.

- [Military Court Watch](#) reports that requests by human rights observers to observe the trials of children in Israel's military courts appear to be being refused without proper reason. The barring of human rights observers raises serious concern, given the higher than [99%](#) conviction rate of Palestinians in Israel's military courts and that the ill-treatment of children who come in contact with the military detention system appears to be "widespread, systematic and institutionalised throughout the process", according to [UNICEF](#).

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. The high number of children arrested during the reporting period, along with the above-mentioned arrests of children who were subsequently released hours later, suggest that Articles 3(1) and 37(b) of the UNCRC are being breached.

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 some of the child arrest incidents cited above appear to directly contravene these specific child rights protections, as the children were physically assaulted and verbally abused by soldiers.

INTERFERENCE AGAINST EDUCATION

Infringements on education in the reporting period include:

- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 19 February 2020, Israeli forces arrived at a school in Khirbet Susiya in the South Hebron Hills with two bulldozers and a crane truck. The school's caravan, usually used by the school's fourth grade, which has five students, was confiscated. Forty-seven of the community's children attend grades one to nine at the school. A [video](#) of the incident was published by B'Tselem. Khirbet Susiya is one of several herding communities at risk of forcible transfer. Please see our Further Reading Section below for more information on the very concerning issue of forced displacement and transfer of herding communities.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that during the night on 27 January, settlers used flammable material to start a fire in a classroom in 'Einabus school. The classroom was used by the school's fifth graders, who felt scared while at school the following morning. [Graffiti](#) in Hebrew was found on a wall of the school.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that an 11-year-old Palestinian boy was hit in the head with a tear gas canister shot by Israeli forces during clashes near Burin school (Nablus), triggering the suspension of classes for the rest of the day.

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 demolition of a school's caravan, the firing tear gas canisters near a school in Nablus and arson attack on a school, indicates serious violations of this important access to education right provided by the UNCRC.

DEMOLITIONS & DISPLACEMENT

Demolitions and displacement remain a matter of huge concern. **Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that 92 children were displaced by the demolition of 89 structures during the reporting period.** Please refer to LPHR's Demolitions and Displacement bulletin for information on incidents affecting children in January and February 2020.



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) of the UNCRC** entitles children to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Further Reading

Gazan children receiving medical treatment separated from parents due to Israel’s permit regime

Israeli newspaper [Haaretz](#) and [Physicians for Human Rights Israel](#) report that a 10-year-old girl from Gaza, Miral Abu Amsha, died of cancer on 28 February without having seen her father since December, after her family struggled to obtain Israeli-issued permits for to accompany her to hospital. Miral’s mother had also initially been denied permission to accompany Miral to hospital in Nablus to undergo chemotherapy due to “incorrect details” on her application form. She was eventually allowed to visit Miral in hospital, reportedly following publicity around the case. Miral's father didn't apply for permission to accompany her as chances he would get permission were slim.

The Haartez article includes this commentary: *“Miral is not the last child from Gaza who will die without one of her parents at her side. Being cut off from parents has a serious mental and physical impact on a child with cancer.... [Physicians for Human Rights-Israel is currently dealing with the fate of three additional young children from Gaza who have cancer, one of them just 2 years old. They are being [denied permission to leave the Strip](#) for vital medical treatment; the refusals and rejections are grounded in various strange excuses. One dire case is that of Yassin Razaka, a child of 4 who has leukemia. On one occasion he was denied entry to Nablus, as though he were a security risk; another time the authorities informed the family that he was “illegally present” (apparently, in Gaza) and therefore his entry into the West Bank for lifesaving treatment was being denied. This is a toddler suffering from cancer.”*

Between October 2018 and July 2019, [Physicians for Human Rights Israel reports](#) that one in five children who were treated outside the Gaza Strip were not accompanied with any parent.

Many parents who turned to Physicians for Human Rights-Israel in 2019 had waited for months before receiving a permit for a relative to accompany their child instead. Once the child had gone for their treatment with that relative, the parents reapplied in order to replace the escort, hoping that the answer would arrive in time and allow them to join their child. More often than not, these applications are never answered or are turned down again.

Physicians for Human Rights Israel has repeatedly demanded that the military authorities give greater weight to ensuring hospitalised children have their parents by their side, and to avoid potentially jeopardising the children’s chances of recovery by denying their parents the right to accompany them. Israel has justified its rejection of these permits by arguing that approval was granted to another relative instead, and that the child still made it to the treatment facility.

The International Society for Social Pediatrics and Child Health (ISSOP) published a [statement](#) on forced separation of children from parents on 18 March 2020. After specifically highlighting Gaza permit cases amongst other examples, they set out their position with reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is worthwhile repeating here in full:

“ISSOP strongly condemns such actions that are violations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These violations result in acute distress for children at the time of separation, and will result in lasting adverse emotional and physical sequelae across their life course.



“Articles of the CRC most relevant to the rights of children not to be separated from their parents and care givers include:

Article 2. Child rights are to be respected without discrimination of any kind, including race, colour, sex, language, religion or political affiliation.

Article 3. The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

Article 9. A child should not be separated from parents against their will.

Article 16. There should be no arbitrary interference with a child’s privacy.

Article 19. Children shall be protected from psychological violence.

Article 20. If a child cannot be looked after by their parents, the state has a responsibility to provide alternative care.

Article 22. A child seeking refugee status should receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance.

Article 37. No child should be tortured or treated in a cruel or inhuman way. Children who are detained should not be imprisoned with adults and they should have the opportunity to remain in contact with their family.

“In all situations, except those in which violence is being perpetrated by parents, the separation of children from their parents is likely to be counterproductive. Separation provides no solutions to the underlying policy issues, whilst considerable short and longterm distress and sequelae are created.

“ISSOP therefore condemns such separation unreservedly and calls for authorities in all countries to respect the rights of children and ensure that parental support for children is always available. If parents are incapacitated or in another country, then humane protection must be provided and return of the child to the parents or close carers facilitated at the earliest opportunity.”

Israel routinely denies or delays permission for Palestinians from Gaza to exit for medical treatment. The pervasive denial and delay of travel permits by Israeli authorities for medical cases strongly suggests that Israel is in breach of its obligations under international law to

ensure the health and welfare of the Palestinian population under its control, a [finding](#) made last year by UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian Territory, Professor Michael Lynk.