



## CHILD RIGHTS BULLETIN

(for the period 1 June – 31 August 2021)

### Key incidents outlined in this LPHR Child Rights Bulletin covering 1 June – 31 August 2021:

- Six children died after being shot by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, including an 11-year-old boy shot in the chest, a 13-year-old shot in the neck, two 15-year-olds shot in the head, a 16-year-old shot in the chest and a 17-year-old shot in the back
- A nine-year-old boy died after finding and handling an explosive remnant of war on land near his home in the occupied Gaza Strip
- A 17-year-old died during a home demolition in occupied East Jerusalem
- A 15-year-old boy was abducted and subjected to a sustained brutal attack by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank on 17 August

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**), Yesh Din, Military Court Watch (**MCW**) 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.

For all our previous bulletins, please visit the [Children's Rights Project](#) page of LPHR's website.

### FATALITIES

Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that eight Palestinian children died during the reporting period of 1 June – 31 August 2021. Six children were shot by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank. One child died after finding and handling an explosive remnant of war in the

**occupied Gaza Strip. One child died during a house demolition in occupied East Jerusalem. This brings the total number of Palestinian child fatalities reported in LPHR Child Rights Bulletins in 2021 to 85.**

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 9 June, a nine-year-old boy was killed by the detonation of an explosive remnant of war (ERW) in Gaza City. Obaida Salahuddin Salman al-Dahdouh was killed after he found ERW on agricultural land adjacent to his home and brought it with him to his front yard, [DCIP](#) reports. The military action in Gaza in May 2021 left debris and farmland heavily contaminated with ERWs. Obaida's 16-year-old brother was hit with shrapnel in his legs and arms when the ERW exploded.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in June, two Palestinian children were killed by Israeli forces using live ammunition against Palestinians protesting the establishment of a new Israeli settlement near Beita village, Nablus. Since the establishment of the Israeli settlement in early May, Israeli forces have shot and killed five Palestinians with live ammunition during protests in Beita. On 11 June in clashes that erupted during a weekly demonstration, Israeli forces shot in the chest and killed 16-year-old Mohammad Said Mohammad, according to [DCIP](#). On 16 June, Israeli forces shot 15-year-old Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa in the head with live ammunition. [DCIP](#) reports that Ahmad did not present any threat to Israeli forces at the time he was shot.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that a boy died after being shot with live ammunition by Israeli forces on 23 July. Israeli forces entered An Nabi Salih (Ramallah) to carry out an arrest operation, and when Palestinian residents threw stones at them, soldiers shot live ammunition and tear gas canisters. [DCIP](#) reports that 17-year-old Mohammad Munir Mohammad Tamimi was shot in the back with live ammunition by an Israeli soldier who was inside a military vehicle three metres away. According to the Israeli military, Mohammad was throwing stones and endangering the life of soldiers.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli forces shot and killed an 11-year-old boy on 28 July near the entrance to the town of Beit Ummar (Hebron). The boy was sitting in a car with his father when he was shot. UN OCHA reports that the car slowly drove away from soldiers when some of them started running after the vehicle and opened fire. According to the Israeli military, the driver did not heed an order to stop, and soldiers aimed at the wheels. [DCIP](#) reports that 11-year-old Mohammad Mo'ayyad Bahjat Abu Sara was shot in the chest.



- [UN OCHA](#) reports that a child died during protests near Israel's perimeter fence around Gaza. [DCIP](#) reports that 13-year-old Omar Hasan Mousa Abu Al-Nil died a week after being shot in the neck with live ammunition by Israeli forces. Omar was shot at around 17:30 on August 21, while standing 70-100 metres away from the perimeter fence observing the demonstrations. On the day Omar was shot, hundreds of Palestinians protested near the perimeter fence in the eastern Gaza Strip. Israeli forces fired live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas grenades at protesters, injuring at least 20 children, according to DCIP.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 24 August, a 15-year-old boy was shot and killed by Israeli forces during a night-time search and arrest operation in Balata refugee camp (Nablus). [DCIP](#) reports that Imad Khaled Saleh Hashash was shot in the head by Israeli forces at around 04:00 as he stood on the roof of his home watching as Israeli forces conducted a raid.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 28 August, 17-year-old died when a concrete wall fell on him while he was helping his neighbours demolish their home in Beit Hanina in East Jerusalem, following a demolition order. 'Self-demolitions' are typically carried out so that the home owners avoid paying fines and the cost of the Israeli authorities carrying out the demolition.

**Article 6(1) of the UNCRC** provides that every child has the inherent right to life. Under international law, lethal application of force can only be used as a last resort when there is a direct and imminent threat to life or serious injury. Israeli forces have been documented to consistently apply lethal application of force where there is lack of evidence to suggest any direct and imminent threat to life. Violations of this legal requirement resulting in an unlawful extrajudicial killing should entail individual criminal responsibility. Indeed, part of providing meaningful protection under the UNCRC involves investigation of, and accountability for, child deaths caused by unlawful application of force. 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 fatal shootings and ensure legal accountability and justice is delivered where there is criminal wrongdoing. However, there is strong evidence indicating that Israel is systemically failing to provide genuine accountability for child deaths,

with data collected by the Israeli human rights organisations, [B'Tselem](#) and [Yesh Din](#), clearly demonstrating that Israeli soldiers who harm or kill Palestinians are very rarely indicted.

## INJURIES

**Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that 411 Palestinian children were injured by Israeli forces during the reporting period. These injuries were caused by tear gas inhalation, rubber bullets, live ammunition, physical assault and other unspecified weapons.**

Injury incidents from 1 June – 31 August 2021 include:

- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 1 June, a 17-year-old was beaten by Israeli soldiers during a night time raid on his family home. The boy reports that the soldiers tied his hands behind his back and blindfolded him before he was punched in the head, shoulders and chest. Violent night-time military incursions into Palestinian homes in the West Bank occur on a regular basis. *Please see our Further Reading section below for more information about this practice.*
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the fortnight 15- 28 June, Israeli forces injured at least 1,075 Palestinians, including 238 children, across the West Bank. The majority of children were injured during protests (against the establishment of a new Israeli settlement) in Beita, 47 of them by rubber bullets.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that between 29 June- 12 July, Israeli forces injured at least 981 Palestinians, including 133 children, in clashes across the West Bank. Of those injured, 892 were in Nablus governorate, including during protests against settlement expansion in the villages of Beita and Osarin.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the fortnight 13- 26 July, Israeli forces injured 615 Palestinians across the West Bank, including 24 children, the youngest of whom is a three-month-old baby. In Ein al Hilwa in the Jordan Valley, 13 Palestinian children were injured when Israeli settlers tried to confiscate a water tank, triggering clashes between Palestinian residents and Israeli forces.



- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in July, Palestinians throwing stones injured at least four Israeli settlers, including a one-year-old baby, travelling in East Jerusalem.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 22 July, six children were injured as a result of an explosion in a building in Gaza City. The three-storey structure collapsed and several nearby houses and shops sustained damage. UN OCHA reports that some sources suggested that the blast resulted from explosives which were being stored in the building.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in two separate incidents in August, five children were injured while handling explosive remnants of war in Gaza city.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 21 August, hundreds of people held a mass demonstration on the Gaza side of Israel's perimeter fence that encloses the Gaza Strip. During the protest, people hurled stones and other objects towards Israeli forces and Israeli forces fired live ammunition and tear gas canisters. The Ministry of Health in Gaza documented 53 Palestinian injuries, including 25 children. 46 of those injured were hit with live ammunition.
- Additional injuries are reported below in the Settler Violence section.

**Article 3(2) of the UNCRC** provides that states shall ensure children the protection and care necessary for their well-being. The hundreds of children injured by Israeli forces prima facie violates both the letter and the spirit of Article 3(2).

Article 3(2) should be read with **Article 3(1)**, which provides that “in taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures States Parties must place the best interests of the child as a primary consideration”. Even assuming that the use of the force by the police during the above-mentioned protests against settlements was an ‘appropriate measure’, it failed to recognise the potential presence of children and apply sufficient protection. The same applies to the assault of a child during a night time raid on his home and to the explosion in Gaza City. Palestinian armed groups must take measures to protect civilians including not storing explosive weapons in densely populated civilian areas.

Equally, the lack of safety measures in place with regard to protecting children from unexploded ordnance in Gaza suggests a level of neglect that amounts to a violation under Article 3(1) and Article 3(2) of the UNCRC.

## **SETTLER VIOLENCE**

**Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that 13 Palestinian children were injured by Israeli settlers during the reporting period. At least 24 children have been injured by Israeli settlers in 2021.**

Settler-related injury incidents between 1 June – 31 August include:

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the period 1-14 June, perpetrators known or believed to be Israeli settlers injured four children. In one incident in East Jerusalem, a Palestinian and his two children were pepper-sprayed and required medical treatment.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the period 15-28 June, Israeli settlers injured four girls. The girls were pepper-sprayed in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the period 29 June- 12 July, Israeli settlers injured four children in the West Bank.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 17 August, Israeli settlers abducted a 15-year-old boy in the West Bank, subjecting him to a sustained brutal attack. Settlers chased and struck the boy with their vehicle near Silat adh Dhahr village (Jenin), before tying him to the hood of their vehicle and driving him to the previously evacuated Israeli settlement Homesh, where they tied him to a tree and beat him until he lost consciousness. [DCI](#) reports that the boy was beaten with wooden sticks before he was taken to the Homesh, where the settlers then beat, pepper sprayed, blindfolded the boy. He was hit, kicked, slapped and spat on him for around 90 minutes. The settlers also hung the boy from a tree. One of the settlers tasered the child with an electrified baton and burned the sole of his foot.



**Article 3(2) of the UNCRC** provides that states should ensure the protection and care of children, as is necessary for their wellbeing. The ongoing violent attacks on children by Israeli settlers strongly indicates that Israel is in breach of Article 3(2). 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 and that these incidents are rarely investigated properly by Israeli law enforcement. Only 3% of investigations into complaints filed by Palestinians injured 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 June 2021- 31 August 2021, UN OCHA reports that Israeli forces conducted over 711 search and arrest operations in the West Bank, arresting at least 54 children. As of 30 June 2021 (latest Israeli Prison Service figures available) [Military Court Watch](#) documents that 170 Palestinian children (12 – 17 years old) are held in Israeli military detention facilities.**

[DCIP](#) reports that between one to four of these children are held under [administrative detention](#), meaning they are being detained without charge or trial based on secret evidence. The majority of child detainees were forcibly transferred to and or unlawfully detained inside Israel. It is a grave breach of international humanitarian law to transfer detainees outside of occupied territory. [MCW](#) reports that 60% of children continue to report experiencing some form of physical abuse following their arrest. Reported violence includes: punching, kicking, slapping, being put in a stress position and struck with objects such as guns.

Arrest and detention incidents in the reporting period include:

- [MCW](#) reports that on 1 June, a 15-year-old boy was questioned at Etzion police station following a telephone summons from an Israeli intelligence officer. He was held for five hours and questioned without being informed of his legal rights before being released without charge. In [testimony](#) given to MCW, the boy describes being threatened with extreme physical violence by one of his interrogators.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the fortnight 1- 14 June, Israeli forces carried out 129 search-and-arrest operations and arrested 265 Palestinians, including 30 children, across the West Bank. Of the total, 17 children were arrested in Jerusalem.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 4 July, the Israeli authorities summoned a nine-year-old Palestinian boy for interrogation for unknown reasons in the Old City of Jerusalem. Between mid-April and 12 July, at least 65 Palestinian children were arrested by the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem.

**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’. Further, **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 summons of a child below the age of criminal responsibility and the continuation of incidents where children are detained, interrogated, allegedly threatened with violence and or assaulted before being released, suggests that both Article 3(1) and Article 37(b) are being breached.

Under Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, it is illegal for the occupying power to imprison detainees inside its own territory. Israel’s continued detention of Palestinian children from the West Bank inside Israel appears a clear breach of Article 76, which amounts to a war crime under international law

## **INTERFERENCE AGAINST EDUCATION**



**Infringements on education in the reporting period of 1 June- 31 August include:**

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that Israeli authorities demolished an under-construction school in Shu'fat (East Jerusalem).
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in August, around 100 children were affected by the demolition of an extension to a building planned to be used as a kindergarten in the Beit Safafa neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in August, two schoolchildren were injured in clashes that erupted with Israeli forces in the vicinity of a school in Tayasir community (Tubas).

**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.

**DEMOLITIONS & DISPLACEMENT**

Demolitions and displacement remain a matter of huge concern. **Data collected by [UN OCHA](#) records that 462 people, including 272 children (126 girls and 146 boys) have been displaced by the demolition of 330 structures during the reporting period, taking the number of children displaced by demolitions in the West Bank in 2021 to 531. In Gaza, about 8,250 people (including an unspecified number of children) remain internally displaced following damage to or the destruction of their homes during the military action that took place 10- 21 May.**

**Incidents of demolitions and displacement during the reporting period include:**

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that during the fortnight 1- 14 June, the Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced the demolition of 53 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank for lacking building permits, displacing 71 people, including 43 children and otherwise affecting more than 1,000 Palestinians. Most of those affected were in the Massafer Yatta area of Hebron, where the Israeli authorities destroyed a water

network serving multiple communities. [B'Tselem](#) reports that dozens of families were left without a water supply.

- [UN OCHA](#) reports that following the repair of the above-mentioned main water pipeline serving multiple communities in Massafer Yatta, the Israeli authorities destroyed it for the second time on 23 June.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 7 June 2021, the Israeli authorities dismantled and confiscated residential structures, displacing 37 people, including 24 children, in the community of Badu al-Mu'arrajat in the Jordan Valley. The [community](#) was targeted again on 12 June, when Israeli forces dismantled and confiscated three tents that were home to two families numbering 17 people, including 9 children.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 8 July, Israeli forces attempted the forcible transfer of residents of Khirbet Humsah (northern Jordan Valley) to an area located near 'Ein Shibli. Israeli forces declared Khirbet Humsah a closed military zone and dismantled nine tents and four huts used as residences, 17 agricultural structures, four water tanks and water lines. The structures belonged to nine families (including 34 children). The residents' belongings were loaded onto trucks and transported to 'Ein Shibli. A JCB heavy machinery vehicle is shown on [video](#) to be present at the demolition scene.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 14 July, Israeli forces confiscated at least 49 structures in the Palestinian community of Ras al Tin, displacing 84 people, including 53 children.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that on 15 July, Israeli forces in Humsa – Al Bqai'a confiscated a recently installed structure used to accommodate a family of eight, including six children, who had lost their previous home the week before in the abovementioned attempted forcible transfer on 8 July.
- [B'Tselem](#) reports that on 4 August, in the community of Khirbet Ibziq in the northern Jordan Valley, Israeli forces dismantled and confiscated structures (including 4 residential tents) owned by 3 families, leaving 25 people including 17 children homeless during a heat wave.
- [UN OCHA](#) reports that in August, the Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced people to demolish 108 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank due to the



lack of Israeli-issued building permits. This caused the displacement of 160 people, including 97 children, and affected the livelihoods of over 1,000 other people. All targeted structures were recorded in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

**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. Demolitions affect this right as it physically displaces children from their family homes without first giving them access to a legal system through which they could challenge such actions.

### **Further Reading**

#### **Continued abuse of children held in Israeli military detention**

[Military Court Watch](#) reports that Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces continue to be mistreated. In 2021, the majority of Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces report being physically abused. Half also report being threatened, usually during the course of their interrogation. Reported threats include: long-term detention; threats of violence; death threats; cancellation of family work permits; arrest of other family members, such as mothers or sisters; tasing, placed in solitary confinement and threats to demolish the family home. In 2021, 50%

of all Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces were strip searched. Most children are strip searched on arrival at an Israeli Prison Service facility. In some cases, children also report being strip searched earlier on at a military base or police station in the West Bank. In some cases strip searches are conducted in the presence of a group of soldiers and generally minors report feeling humiliated by the experience.

In 2021, no Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces were informed of their right to silence. Additionally, 80% report being shown, or made to sign, documentation written in Hebrew at the conclusion of their interrogation. MCW reports that some children refuse to sign the documentation, others sign following an oral translation provided by their interrogator, whilst others sign with no understanding whatsoever.

### **Night-time military raids on family homes in the West Bank continue**

Hundreds of times a year, Israeli troops invade Palestinian homes in the West Bank in the middle of the night, according to Israeli human rights organisation [Hamoked](#). So far in 2021, 40% of children arrested by Israeli forces were arrested during the night, according to [Military Court Watch](#). MCW's annual [report](#), reports that night arrest operations tend to intimidate targeted communities and children report being "shocked" or "terrified" when confronted with heavily armed soldiers in their homes or bedrooms. This sense of fear only increases in cases where the front door is broken in or blown open using explosives. In some cases houses are searched and property damaged.

In addition to the arrest of children from their family homes at night, children living in the West Bank are also impacted by military raids on their homes during which they are not arrested. [B'Tselem](#) reports that military incursions into Palestinians' homes in the dead of night, in which soldiers wake entire families, including small children and infants, have long since become part of the routine of living under occupation. Israeli soldiers enter bedrooms, rummage through the inhabitants' private belongings, at times beating some of them, and leave the entire household stunned and terrified. This harmful invasion into what is supposed to be a personal, safe space is traumatic for children. For more information on the mental health impact of military home invasions, please see the joint [report](#) 'A Life Exposed: Military invasions of Palestinian homes in the West Bank' by Yesh Din, Physicians for Human Rights Israel and Breaking the Silence.