



**Defense for Children
International
PALESTINE**

Israel's Compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Alternative Report to the Sixth Periodic Report of Israel

**ILL-TREATMENT AND TORTURE OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN IN ISRAELI
MILITARY DETENTION AND USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE BY ISRAELI FORCES**

83rd Session of the Committee Against Torture (CAT)

13 October 2025

Submitted By:

Defense for Children International - Palestine

Al-Sartawi Building, 3rd Fl.

Sateh Marhaba, Ramallah

Occupied Palestinian Territory

t. +970 2 242 7530

e. advocacy@dcips.org

www.dci-palestine.org

Executive Summary.....	3
Issue Summary.....	4
Administrative detention.....	4
Post - October 7.....	5
Gaza.....	5
Essential Statistics.....	5
Arrests.....	8
Methods and means of restraint.....	9
Physical violence during arrest.....	9
Transfers.....	10
Physical violence, verbal abuse, humiliation and intimidation.....	10
Medical checks and strip searching.....	11
Exposure and denial of necessities.....	12
Interrogations.....	12
Use of restraints, verbal abuse, threats and intimidation during interrogation.....	12
Denied access to legal counsel or the presence of a parent.....	13
Detention.....	14
Denial of necessities.....	14
The case of Walid Khalid Abdullah Ahmad.....	15
Solitary confinement.....	16
Physical violence during detention.....	17
Responses to Israel’s Submission to the Committee.....	17
Recommended Questions.....	18
Suggested Recommendations.....	18

Executive Summary

Palestinian children comprise about half of Palestine's population of 5.48 million people living in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. From birth, every aspect of a Palestinian child's life is ruled by Israel's regimes of occupation, apartheid, siege, and genocide. Continued military, financial, and diplomatic support to Israel from third states, with no meaningful accountability for repeated violations of international law, have permitted Israeli authorities and forces to continually torture Palestinian children with complete impunity.

In the last two years, following the October 7, 2023 attacks, Israel has unleashed exceptionally brutal torture in a widespread, systemic approach targeting Palestinian children across the occupied Palestinian territory. While the systematic torture of Palestinian children is not new, based on documentation DCIP has collected since its inception in 1991, the scale and brutality of today's torture is unmatched. These practices form part of a broader, coordinated policy of collective punishment, implemented through arrest, detention, and interrogation systems that deliberately deny children protection under international law.

For the first time in history, in March 2025, a Palestinian child died in Israeli custody inside an Israeli prison. 17-year-old Walid Ahmad fell and hit his head in the prison yard, killing him, after enduring six months of prolonged malnutrition, scabies infestations, frequent beatings by Israeli guards, and medical neglect. His death reflects the foreseeable and preventable consequences of Israel's deliberate failure to ensure minimum detention standards and its persistent obstruction of independent oversight.

Palestinian children in the West Bank, like adults, face arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment under an Israeli military detention system that denies them basic rights.

DCIP collected 325 affidavits from Palestinian child detainees from the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem from January 1, 2021 to August 31, 2025 indicating that **74 percent** of children experienced physical violence at the hands of Israeli soldiers, **26 percent** were subjected to stress position abuse during interrogation, and **21 percent** were placed in solitary confinement for interrogation purposes for two days or more.

Every form of ill-treatment and torture, alongside the systematic denial of fair trial guarantees previously imposed on Palestinian children, including practices such as solitary confinement and administrative detention, has intensified since October 2023, as Israeli forces and authorities have expanded and escalated measures that systematically deprive Palestinian children of safety, dignity, and the basic conditions necessary for life.

These findings demonstrate Israel's systematic and institutionalised use of torture and ill-treatment against Palestinian children, in clear violation of its obligations under Articles 1, 2,

11, and 16 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereafter the Convention). The complete absence of independent monitoring mechanisms and accountability measures has allowed this system to persist and expand. DCIP therefore urges the Committee to call for immediate international access to all Israeli detention facilities holding Palestinian children, to ensure compliance with international standards to prevent further child death and torture.

Issue Summary

Israel has the dubious distinction of being the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes between 500 and 700 children in military courts each year, while systematically stripping away the fundamental right to a fair trial. Israel's military legal system is exclusively applied to Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, while Israeli settlers living in the same territory are subject to Israeli civilian law. An Israeli child never comes into contact with the Israeli military detention system.

Israeli forces routinely violate children's rights during arrest, transfer, interrogation, and imprisonment, as well as carry out acts of ill-treatment and torture, as documented by DCIP.

Administrative detention

Arbitrarily depriving Palestinian children of their right to liberty through the use of administrative detention, which is the imprisonment of individuals for prolonged periods without charge or trial, often based on secret evidence amounting to arbitrary detention. Additionally, Israeli military courts routinely rely on this 'secret evidence' that neither the detainee nor their lawyer can review, effectively stripping Palestinian prisoners of their right to a fair trial. In many cases, Palestinian children held in administrative detention go weeks or months without seeing a lawyer, deepening the cycle of arbitrary imprisonment and impunity.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that "[n]o child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily" and arrest and detention must only be used as a measure of last resort¹. Despite these protections under international law, Israel continues to arbitrarily detain children at record levels. As of June 2025, 41 percent of all child detainees are held in administrative detention, according to statistics provided by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS)².

Administrative detention orders are issued by the Israeli military commander of the area, or a military officer delegated by the military commander, and can last up to six months, but there is no limit to the number of times an administrative detention order can be renewed. The orders are approved by military court judges, giving the illusion of independent legal oversight. Yet, Israeli

¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990) 1577 UNTS 3, art 37(b).

² Israel Prison Service <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/kluim_225> accessed 12 October 2025.

military courts fail to meet international standards for independence and impartiality because military court judges are active duty or reserve officers in the Israeli military.

Israel's use of administrative detention has rapidly expanded since October 7, 2023, as shown in Table 1 below.

Post - October 7

Following the October 7 attacks, Israeli forces carried out increasingly brutal arrest operations throughout the occupied West Bank and rapidly expanded their use of administrative detention targeting Palestinian children. Israeli authorities suspended family visits to prisoners and severely restricted lawyers' ability to meet with detainees, including children, hindering their ability to receive adequate legal guidance.

Additionally, Palestinian children interviewed by DCIP after being released from detention report deplorable prison conditions, including overcrowded cells and unsanitary conditions that have resulted in scabies infestations. Children also report being served meager amounts of rotten food, leading to prolonged malnutrition and dehydration. Israeli forces carry out routine and brutal beatings, physically abusing and torturing children with impunity.

Gaza

Following Israeli forces' ground invasion of the Gaza Strip after the October 7 attacks, Israeli forces have abducted and disappeared numerous Palestinian children to Israeli military detention camps like Sde Teiman in southern Israel. Largely, their identities, whereabouts, conditions, and numbers are unknown.

DCIP has interviewed several Palestinian boys who were abducted to these torture sites and then returned to Gaza. Each boy reported exceptionally brutal torture, including methods designed to inflict immense psychological, emotional, and physical pain.

Israeli forces have refused to release any information about detainees from Gaza held in Israeli military bases and detention camps. Additionally, Israeli authorities have blocked the International Committee of the Red Cross and lawyers from visiting detainees.

Essential Statistics

Please note that in tables one through three, there were no children detained from Gaza from 2021 until October 7, 2023, when such arrests began during Israel's ground invasion. Numbers prior to this date include only children from the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These numbers are provided by the IPS, which conducts headcounts in prisons on the last day of the month. These numbers do not include children detained in interrogation centers, police stations, or Israeli military bases, which are not administered by the IPS.

Please note that Table 4 does not include acts of torture and ill-treatment committed against Palestinian children from Gaza. Since October 7, 2023, DCIP has been unable to obtain comprehensive information concerning these cases due to a lack of access to locate and access children who have been detained, severe movement restrictions, and communication disruptions with our field workers in Gaza. Further, Israeli forces continue holding an unknown number of Palestinian children in these camps, and have refused to disclose their numbers, names, whereabouts, or conditions. Consequently, our data concerning Palestinian children in Gaza remains incomplete, underscoring the need for independent access and transparent monitoring to ensure accurate documentation and accountability.

Table 1: Palestinian Children in Administration Detention by Month												
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2021	5	5	5	5	5	8	7	7	7	7	6	5
2022	3	3	2	6	5	5	5	6	7	5	5	7
2023	6	7	10	14	16	18	23	22	23	52	38	49
2024	49	53	61	72	73	75	81	80	85	105	105	112
2025	103	115	119	136	139	147	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Palestinian Children in Israeli Military Detention by Month													
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Avg.
2021	130	146	143	138	161	170	162	157	159	177	155	144	154
2022	131	124	124	140	147	137	127	124	129	150	149	157	137
2023	152	149	151	176	160	160	155	164	156	204	123	137	157
2024	139	189	194	211	223	226	233	240	242	269	287	300	229
2025	303	305	323	338	339	360	-	-	-	-	-	-	328

Table 3: Palestinian Girls in Israeli Military Detention by Month

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2022	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2
2023	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
2024	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
2025	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 4: Instances of Ill-treatment and Torture Against Palestinian Children in the occupied West Bank & East Jerusalem, 1 January 2021 - 31 August 2025		
Forms of Ill-treatment	Number of Cases (Total 325)	Percentage
Hand ties	301	93%
Leg ties	75	23%
Blindfolded	274	84%
Physical violence	239	74%
Verbal abuse, humiliation, and intimidation	204	63%
Strip searched	177	55%
Denial of adequate food and water	187	58%
Threats and inducements	123	38%
Denial of access to the toilet	136	42%
Stress position abuse	83	26%
Transfer on the vehicle floor	170	52%
Shown or signed documents in Hebrew	119	37%
Solitary confinement (for more than two days)	68	21%
Confinements with Adults	27	8%
Threats of sexual assault	2	1%
Electric shock	4	1%
Night arrest	153	47%
Not informed of rights	215	66%
Attempt at recruitment	10	3%

Not informed of the reason for arrest	289	89%
No access to counsel before interrogation	180	55%
No family member present during interrogation	306	94%
Exposure to elements	79	24%

Arrests

In contravention of Article 11 of the Convention, Israeli forces continue to regularly employ methods of torture and ill-treatment against Palestinian children during arrests. Through forms of tying and restraint, as well as physical violence during arrest, Israeli forces blatantly mistreat and traumatize children they arrest, including those who are too young to be prosecuted. Out of 325 cases, **89 percent** of children reported that their arrests were conducted without providing

themselves or their families with the reason for their arrest. A justification for an arrest is rarely presented during a child's arrest.

Methods and means of restraint

During arrest, most children are bound by Israeli forces, usually with plastic zip ties. Several children also report having their legs bound, with many also being blindfolded during their arrest. These arrests are often conducted at night, in which Israeli military forces invade Palestinian homes, without a warrant and arrest children in front of their families.

“The first night of my arrest was one of the most difficult nights. I was very scared. I was thinking about where the soldiers would take me, and why I was arrested in the first place,” recounted 17-year-old Muhannad S., who was arrested around 3:30 a.m. on 12 May 2022. During his arrest, Israeli soldiers bound his hands behind his back, gagged him with a piece of cloth, blindfolded him, and strip-searched him.

On 16 June 2024, seven-year-old Bahaa H. was buying candy with friends on the first day of Eid, when they came across a group of Israeli forces carrying out arrests. Bahaa allegedly threw stones at their heavily armed military vehicles, to which the soldiers responded by firing live ammunition near him. Bahaa was apprehended, Israeli forces began beating Bahaa, and his hands were bound behind his back with a plastic zip-tie. Soldiers refused to release him to his uncle and transported him to a closed military zone, where he was kept outdoors in direct sunlight for nearly three hours. He was eventually released and returned home on foot with hand swelling and visible distress. Nearly two months later, Bahaa had not left his home, stating, “I have not left the house since the incident because I am scared of the Israeli soldiers, and I do not want to get arrested again.”

The age of criminal responsibility under Israeli military law is 12, meaning that children younger than 12, such as seven-year-old Bahaa, cannot be prosecuted in Israeli military courts and, as such, their presence in such detention centers constitutes a violation of both the child's right and Israeli military law. However, Israeli forces continue to detain and harass young Palestinian children, according to documentation collected by DCIP.

Physical violence during arrest

Children are often subjected to violence while they are being arrested. This typically consists of beatings with fists and rifles, being kicked, being pushed, and being slapped.

On 6 June 2024, at approximately 5:00 a.m., Israeli forces entered 17-year-old Hasan's home in Jenin refugee camp, damaged property, and arrested him without presenting a warrant or stating reasons. Hasan, who was diagnosed with cancer, was struck on the head with a rifle butt until he

bled, while another soldier beat his legs. He was then pushed against a glass table, which shattered. “They beat me in front of my mother and two young sisters,” Hasan said. “My mother tried to defend me, but one of the soldiers pushed her forcefully and knocked her down. I was very angry at this behavior, and the scene has not left my mind to this day.”

Transfers

Following their arrest, Palestinian children are transferred to a detention center, Israeli prison, or Israeli military camp. Despite clear international standards present on the treatment of detainees, particularly children, Israel’s practices are consistently in blatant violation of the law.

Israeli practice of transferring Palestinian child detainees follows a pattern. Once a child has been arrested, whether during daylight hours or during a nighttime raid, they soon find themselves bound, blindfolded, and forced into a military vehicle. Detained children generally do not know where they are being taken. In the vehicle, Israeli forces make children sit or are forced to lie on the vehicle’s metal floor, sometimes together with other children. Such transport was described by one child as being “piled on top of one another like cargo.” Here, the majority of children report being subjected to repeated physical violence and verbal abuse.

This transfer period can last anywhere from several minutes to several hours. Children are frequently not transferred directly to an interrogation center, but are first detained at military bases, often in or near illegal Israeli settlements. During this time, children are often bound and blindfolded for lengthy periods of time and denied food, water, and access to toilets.

Children are also frequently transferred across the territorial border between the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, constituting an unlawful transfer in violation of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and constituting a war crime in violation of Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Physical violence, verbal abuse, humiliation and intimidation

Physical violence at the hands of Israeli soldiers commonly occurs in the back of a military vehicle or when the child is taken in, detained in, or being taken out of a vehicle. In most cases, the child is bound and blindfolded and then repeatedly slapped, punched, or kicked. Verbal abuse usually consists of derogatory statements directed against the child’s religion or female family members. Humiliation and intimidation involve shouting curses or degrading statements at a child.

This type of physical and verbal abuse occurs on a systematic basis. On 29 April 2024, Israeli forces detained 14-year-old Majd R., who, following his detention, was assaulted by two soldiers inside a military vehicle. Majd stated, “One of [the soldiers] put his boot on my mouth while stomping on my chest with his other boot.” During his detention at a checkpoint before being

taken to a police station, Majd was subject to more physical assaults and was told in Arabic that he would be strangled to death by a soldier.

On 8 February 2022, 13-year-old Fadi was arrested whilst returning home with groceries. During his transfer period, Fadi was subject to repeated death threats, with soldiers telling him they were going to shoot or hang him.

On 27 August 2025, 12-year-old Imran S. was arrested while playing football with his brother. He was taken into a military vehicle, thrown on the floor and beaten. Imran was repeatedly kicked and insulted, including threats of rape directed at him.

Medical checks and strip searching

Following their arrest, children will often be taken to multiple locations before or after undergoing interrogation, such as checkpoints or military bases. During these intermediate stops, many children report being taken to what they describe as a “clinic” where they are asked a series of general questions about their health by an assumed medical professional. In very few cases do children actually receive a physical examination, particularly of injuries inflicted by physical assaults from the soldiers.

Children generally arrive in the clinic room bound and blindfolded. The child’s blindfold is usually removed, but their hands often remain tied during medical questioning. In some cases, children report that they inform the doctor of injuries sustained or ill-treatment they have suffered, but complaints are typically ignored, and they are not treated for injuries sustained during arrest, effectively denying the child medical treatment.

On 16 July 2024, 16-year-old Mohammad T. was arrested from his home and taken to the nearest military base, where he faced medical negligence.

"I have a bullet injury in my right knee with an exit wound. I was scheduled to undergo surgery on the day of my arrest," Mohammad said. "The soldiers took advantage of my health and forced me to sit and kneel on my injured knee for five hours. I was severely beaten whenever I moved because of the pain."

Mohammad was later transferred in a military vehicle, handcuffed and blindfolded, to the Etzion interrogation center. "When we arrived, they again forced me to sit on my injured knee for around six hours, causing the wound to reopen and bleed heavily. They also put headphones on my ears and played loud, irritating music for about an hour and a half, even after I told them that I have a hearing problem," Mohammad told DCIP.

The medic or military doctor usually asks a series of questions and completes a medical form. The entire process generally takes less than 10 minutes. Once completed, the child’s blindfold is replaced, and they are taken outside to a military vehicle or held nearby.

Out of 325 cases, **55 percent** of children reported they were strip-searched, often multiple times, during transfer to or upon arrival at an Israeli interrogation and detention facility. Children are typically strip-searched shortly after their arrest and then a second time after interrogation upon arrival at a prison. Children describe experiencing feelings of embarrassment and shame as a result.

While the Israeli police have stated strip-searches rarely occur and only when a specific suspicion exists, the IPS confirmed that all detainees, including children, are strip-searched each time they arrive or depart a detention facility.³

Exposure and denial of necessities

During the transfer period, children also report being left outside in the cold, rain, or hot sun for lengthy intervals, usually at one of the intermediate stops. During night arrests, Israeli forces frequently deny the children being detained any opportunity to dress appropriately or bring clothes with them, resulting in children being detained in whatever they are sleeping in. Out of 325 cases, **24 percent** of children reported that they were exposed to elements, while **47 percent** of children were arrested at night.

During arrest and transfer, children report being denied access to a toilet and denied food and water. The denial of basic necessities is prevalent during the transfer period, as children are typically held inside a military vehicle or outside on the ground for prolonged periods, often overnight, while bound and blindfolded.

Interrogations

Torture and ill-treatment are regularly employed by Israeli forces during the interrogation of Palestinian children. Children regularly report being blindfolded, restrained, beaten, threatened and verbally abused during interrogation, and denied their right to access to legal counsel.

Use of restraints, verbal abuse, threats and intimidation during interrogation

Many Palestinian children report having been immobilized during interrogation, often before being beaten or kicked by interrogators. In 2024, two 17-year-old boys, Hasan and Wesam, were arrested from their homes in the West Bank and transferred to Al-Jalame interrogation and detention center. They were ordered to remove their clothes in the presence of security forces before interrogation.

³ UNICEF, *Children in Military Detention Observations and Recommendations Bulletin No. 2: February 2015*, at 10 (2015),

http://www.unicef.org/oPt/Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_-_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_Bulletin_No._2_-_February_2015.pdf.

“While I was naked, he ordered me to turn around, squat, and then stand up,” Wesam told DCIP. “He did that a few times to humiliate me. Whenever he made me stand up and sit down, he would laugh out loud.”

Hasan was interrogated six times during his detention, and Wesam four times. Each interrogation lasted between two and four hours. On each occasion, they were tied by their hands and feet to a metal chair, shouted at, and threatened with prolonged solitary confinement.

On 29 June 2025, 16-year-old Omar A. was detained by Israeli forces while seeking aid near a distribution site in Gaza and transferred to a military base for interrogation. When his answers were deemed unsatisfactory, Omar was subjected to torture. He was taken to the roof of a building, tied to a rope, and suspended upside down. The rope was then released, causing him to fall from a height of approximately five floors before it became taut, halting his fall about half a meter above the ground. He remained hanging for around 20 minutes, struggling to breathe and losing control of his bladder. “It felt as though I was teetering on the brink of death,” Omar recalled.

Omar later endured continuous beatings with batons, sticks, and stun guns before being piled with other detainees into a military vehicle and transported to another facility. At subsequent interrogations, he was stripped, tightly bound, and beaten while questioned about alleged involvement in the October 7 attacks. He was shown photographs of his family, including explicit images of relatives, to coerce him. When his answers were considered unsatisfactory, he was beaten.

A 17-year-old boy detained in 2021 at Al-Mascobiyya interrogation and detention center reported being held bound and blindfolded in a hallway, where he was repeatedly slapped, pushed, punched, or kicked by passing personnel. “Every two to three minutes, someone would come by and slap, push, punch, or kick me,” he told DCIP. He was later interrogated without a lawyer present and subjected to further violence. He alleged that he was then knocked onto the floor while blindfolded and raped with an object by his interrogator, introduced as Captain Kamel, and was threatened with continued sexual violence until he confessed to the allegations against him, or if he told his lawyer what had occurred.

Denied access to legal counsel or the presence of a parent

When Palestinian children are detained by Israeli forces. The child is informed about the accusations against them during the interrogation. The charges against the child are in the charge sheet, though not all accusations will be included in the charge sheet. Any evidence of such a crime(s) is kept as “secret,” only to be discussed at the child’s trial, often days or even months after their initial arrest. Interrogations are used to coerce confessions of whatever the child has been accused of, and children are frequently forced to sign documents in Hebrew. Out of 325 cases, **37 percent** of Palestinian children are shown or sign documents in Hebrew, a foreign

language to them. Children often confess to whatever they have been charged with out of fear and pressure from the soldiers interrogating them. Out of 325 cases, **55 percent** of Palestinian children were denied access to legal counsel before being interrogated, and **94 percent** reported that no family member was present during their interrogation.

17-year-old Muhannad S., detained in May 2022 from his home near Jenin, was interrogated for five hours by five Israeli officers without being informed of his rights and without the presence of a lawyer or family member.

Detention

On November 6, 2024, the Knesset passed a new law targeting the rights of children. The new law allows children as young as 12 years old to be imprisoned and given a life sentence by Israeli authorities if the child is convicted of murder or attempted murder, classified as a “terrorist act” or in connection with a “terrorist organization.” The children charged with such crimes are overwhelmingly Palestinian. This law applies only to Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinian children from East Jerusalem, all of whom are prosecuted in Israeli civil courts. Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank are subject to Israeli military law, under which the age of criminal responsibility is 12 and imprisonment is permitted.

Denial of necessities

Detained children are systematically deprived of food, water, hygiene, rest and medical attention. Out of 325 cases, **58 percent** reported lacking access to adequate food and water. Children describe being given very little to eat and, often, the food that is served is described as spoiled, moldy, or insufficient. Similarly, children often reported the water provided to them as being unclean.

16-year-old Mohammad S., who was detained from Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on January 24, 2025, described the water as “murky, white appearance revealed tiny creatures swimming within it, visible to the naked eye. We had no choice but to drink it, as there was no alternative.” Several children described being forced to consume spoiled food or unclear water under threat of beatings.

Hygiene conditions inside detention facilities have rapidly deteriorated since October 7. Children are often denied access to toilets or showers for days at a time. Out of 325 cases, **42 percent** reported being denied access to the toilet. When permitted, bathroom use is sometimes restricted to less than a minute, with punishment administered if this limit is exceeded. Cells are consistently described as overcrowded, foul-smelling, and infested with insects. Children reported being forced to sleep on thin, dirty mattresses or directly on the floor, while blankets were described as soiled and malodorous. With the absence of fresh air and no possibility to

bathe or wash clothes, many children developed rashes, such as scabies, fungal infections, and skin infections.

Sleep deprivation is a systemic feature of Palestinian children's detention. Children report that guards regularly carry out nighttime raids, sometimes using stun grenades, to keep children awake.

Omar A., 16, held at Sde Teiman military base, reported that soldiers allowed him to rest only until 2 a.m., after which stun grenades were thrown into the section and beatings resumed until 4 a.m. "Throughout the day, I was handcuffed and not allowed to sleep, sit, or change my position," he recalled. "Insomnia is a silent killer, and the exhaustion I feel is not merely physical; it penetrates my very soul, as if the ordeal of detention has merely transformed rather than concluded." The cumulative effect of this deprivation is severe psychological distress. Children consistently described exhaustion, disorientation, and feelings of despair. For some, prolonged lack of sleep exacerbated existing physical conditions, while others experienced nightmares and persistent insomnia well after being released.

Children report that requests for medical assistance are ignored, delayed, or met with punishment. Injuries caused by beatings are left untreated, while illnesses contracted in detention spread unchecked due to overcrowding and poor hygiene. Other children described fainting due to dehydration, untreated skin infections, and denial of even basic pain relief

Amal N., 17, from Ramallah, was detained pursuant to administrative detention orders at Megiddo prison beginning in January 2021, where he remained for over a year without charge or trial. Amal suffers from myasthenia gravis, a rare autoimmune disease requiring constant treatment and monitoring, yet Israeli authorities failed to ensure continuity of care, placing his life at serious risk throughout his detention.

The case of Walid Khalid Abdullah Ahmad

Walid Khalid Abdullah Ahmad, 17, is the first Palestinian child to die inside an Israeli prison in the history of Israel's military occupation, according to documentation collected by DCIP. Walid died on March 22, 2025, in Megiddo prison after nearly six months in Israeli custody. Despite repeated appeals, Israeli authorities continue to withhold his body from his family.

Autopsy findings revealed that Walid's death was the result of starvation, dehydration, and untreated infections compounded by prolonged malnutrition and systematic medical neglect. Post-mortem examination indicates Walid suffered from extreme body muscle and fat wasting. Walid also had scabies rashes on both legs and his groin, in addition to abrasions on his nose, chest, and right hip. The examination revealed that Walid had significant air collections in both his chest and abdominal cavities, likely caused by blunt trauma, along with signs of inflammation likely caused by infection. Despite multiple visits to the prison clinic in the months

before his death, Walid was never provided adequate care, and his clear malnutrition and dehydration were ignored. His death resulted from months of systematic starvation and abuse, illustrative of Israeli prison conditions.

Solitary confinement

Between 2021 and 2025, DCIP documented 68 cases (**21 percent**) of Palestinian children held in solitary confinement that lasted for over two days. The length of solitary confinement in Israeli prisons and detention centers ranges from several days to over a month. Some children were held for periods of 15 to 22 days, while the longest period of time in isolation was 40 days. Interrogators routinely used the threat of prolonged solitary confinement as a means of coercion to extract confessions.

Cells are typically small, unsanitary, and without natural light. Children reported being held in a windowless room with rough, gray walls, with pit toilets on the floor that emit foul odors, and a dirty mattress on the floor. Lighting conditions varied between cells kept in constant darkness and those with glaring bright lights left on at all hours, both of which contributed to disorientation and distress. In some cases, children described being kept in windowless cages measuring about one square meter in size, in which they were blindfolded, handcuffed, and unable to stretch their legs.

Children consistently reported severe psychological consequences, such as experiencing depression, anxiety, fear, confusion, and despair during isolation. Several contemplated or attempted suicide while in solitary confinement. In September 2022, after 17-year-old Rami had been held in solitary confinement for 29 consecutive days, he attempted to commit suicide by hanging himself with part of a blanket, before a guard intervened.

In addition to isolation itself, children described systematic sleep deprivation and physical abuse while confined. Reports included being prevented from resting through repeated night raids, the use of stun grenades inside detention sections, and prolonged stress positions. Some children also described being subjected to beatings and electric shocks during the period of confinement.

16-year-old Omar A. was interrogated repeatedly over the course of a week, during which he was subjected to sustained torture, including beatings, electric shocks, and stress positions. He was prohibited from sleeping during the day and subjected to repeated night raids. Soldiers used stun grenades and assaults between 2 and 4 a.m. to prevent rest, making sleep impossible. He was subsequently confined for a week in what soldiers referred to as the “disco room,” a small cage-like space where extremely loud, chaotic music was played at all hours. Omar described suffering from constant headaches each morning and evening from the continuous noise.

Physical violence during detention

Palestinian children detained by Israeli forces are routinely subjected to physical violence amounting to torture. Children report being frequently beaten throughout detention, often while blindfolded and restrained. Beatings are inflicted with fists, boots, rifle butts, batons, and stun guns, and typically occur during inspections or as punishment for minor acts such as speaking or refusing food.

Children are frequently subjected to stress positions, in which they are forced to stand, squat, or kneel for prolonged periods, often while shackled. Out of 325 cases, **26 percent** of children report abuse via stress positions. Military dogs are sometimes deployed during inspections to intimidate children while physical violence is administered.

Responses to Israel's Submission to the Committee

Israel's assertion before the Committee that the Convention does not apply beyond its sovereign territory is false in both law and fact. As the occupying power, Israel exercises effective control over the occupied Palestinian territory, including the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, and is therefore bound by its obligations under the Convention and other international treaties in all areas under its jurisdiction. The Committee and other UN treaty bodies have repeatedly affirmed that human rights obligations extend to all persons subject to a state's effective authority and control, irrespective of territorial claims.⁴ Israel's measures in the occupied territory, including the arrest, interrogation, and detention of Palestinian children, are therefore subject to the full application of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Israel's periodic reports to the Committee, particularly those submitted in [2021](#) and [2023](#), present a grossly misleading account of its compliance with the Convention. Evidence collected by Defence for Children International – Palestine between January 2021 and August 2025 demonstrates a consistent, systematic pattern of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian children by Israeli forces, in violation of Articles 1, 2, 11, and 16 of the Convention. Israel's treatment of Palestinian children demonstrates a complete disregard for their special protection under international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires that deprivation of liberty be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Israel perpetuates an unlawful system of discrimination and institutionalized impunity incompatible with its obligations under international law.

⁴ Committee Against Torture, *General Comment No 2: Implementation of Article 2 by States Parties* (24 January 2008) UN Doc CAT/C/GC/2, para 16; Human Rights Committee, *General Comment No 31: The Nature of the General Legal Obligation Imposed on States Parties to the Covenant* (26 May 2004) UN Doc CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para 10; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No 24: State Obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Context of Business Activities* (10 August 2017) UN Doc E/C.12/GC/24, para 30.

Recommended Questions

1. What measures has Israel taken to ensure that all instances of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention, including the use of solitary confinement, stress positions, and prolonged deprivation of food, water, and medical care, are independently investigated, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and sanctioned commensurate with the gravity of the crimes committed?
2. How many cases involving allegations of torture or ill-treatment of Palestinian children have been opened by Israeli authorities since 2021? Of these, how many have resulted in criminal investigations, indictments, or convictions of members of Israeli security forces?
3. What steps has Israel taken to ensure that Palestinian children are not unlawfully transferred from the occupied Palestinian territory into detention facilities inside Israel, in violation of Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute?⁵

Suggested Recommendations

The State of Israel must:

- Release all Palestinian child detainees and abolish the military prosecution and detention of Palestinian children;
- End all forms of torture, ill-treatment, and coercive interrogation of Palestinian children in military detention, especially the use of solitary confinement, in compliance with international law;
- Establish an independent international prison assessment mechanism with immediate and unimpeded access to all facilities where Palestinian children are detained, to conduct regular inspections ensuring compliance with international standards, the provision of adequate food, water, medical care, sanitation, and rest, and the prompt, transparent investigation and public reporting of all cases of torture and ill-treatment;
- Ensure that all children are treated with dignity, have prompt access to legal counsel and family members from the moment of arrest, and are interrogated only in the presence of an adult guardian and in their native language;
- End the use of administrative detention, night arrests, and military courts for Palestinian children, and ensure that any deprivation of liberty is used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible time.

⁵ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (adopted 12 August 1949, entered into force 21 October 1950) 75 UNTS 287, art 49(6); Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (adopted 17 July 1998, entered into force 1 July 2002) 2187 UNTS 3, art 8(2)(b)(viii).