

Date: June 25 2018

To the UN Committee against Torture,

I am writing you on behalf of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture in Palestine in relation to the elaboration of a List of Issues Priori to Reporting to prepare the upcoming review of Israel. I would like to draw the Committee's attention to an issue of crucial important to the fight against torture in Israel. This is the torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli detention and the long term impact it has on their lives.

During the 2016 review of Israel, TRC submitted a report outlining the range of violations of the Conventions that Palestinian minors are exposed to in Israeli detention. In its concluding observations, the Committee expressed its concern *"at allegations of many instances in which Palestinian minors were exposed to torture or ill- treatment, including to obtain confessions; were given confessions to sign in Hebrew, a language they do not understand; and were interrogated in the absence of a lawyer or a family member. The Committee is also concerned that many of these children, like many other Palestinians, are deprived of liberty in facilities located in Israel, thus hindering access to visits of relatives who live in the Occupied Palestinian Territory."* The Committee continues to recommend implementation of legal safeguards, investigations, prosecutions and redress and rehabilitation for the victims.

Unfortunately, the Committee's recommendations are not implemented and the situation is in many ways further deteriorating. During the period 1 June 2016 to 20 June 2018, TRC has supported 844 Palestinian minors who have been tortured or ill-treated in Israeli detention. Analysis of data in TRC's Anti-Torture Database indicates that the most common forms of abuse are beatings, threat, humiliations, positional torture, deprivation of normal sensory stimulation and various forms of psychological torture. Some were also exposed to burns, electric shock, penetrating injuries and witnessing the torture of others. Almost all minors reported having been imprisoned with adults. No safety measures were taken in favor of their age.

The minors also report being chained in settlements or temporary military headquarters for short periods of time until moved to custodies or interrogation centers. House arrest practices continue at an increased scale. Such practice makes the family play the role of the prison guards which is indeed very difficult for both the child and his family. They are denied access to education with no suitable alternatives offered.

This causes a number of serious physical, psychological and social consequences for the minors including problems related to respiratory system; abdominal pain and stomach pain; skin diseases; arthritis and limb pain; headache; alienation; posttraumatic stress disorder, with symptoms such as hyper vigilance, over reactivity and insomnia; phobic disorders and social avoidance and isolation; behavioral problems such as poor concentration, school truancy, aggression, agitation; adjustment disorder and dissociation; and anxiety disorder.

Most of those children are unable to reintegrate into their own families and societies. Their families often report noticeable change into their previous personality-pre-morbid personality.





TRC is trying to get those children back to their normal life style in terms of resuming their scholastic burden, social life and leisure activities. We provide them at first some kind of psychological first aid, debriefing-Crises intervention and then re-evaluate their progress according to the W.H.O welfare scale and other scales adopted by TRC professional team. We do the best we can to rebuild those children self-esteem and self-confidence. We offer those who suffer from dramatic conditions deeper psychotherapy such as CBT, EMDR, and narrative therapy.

We hope that the upcoming review of Israel will provide an opportunity for the foremost international anti torture experts to assess the situation and highlight the needs for improvement.

In this context, it is crucial for the TRC that the Committee asks targeted questions to the Israeli Government already at the stage of the LoIPR. The therefore request that the Committee considers raising the following questions

1. Why are Palestinian minors in custody treated differently from Israeli minors in custody. Why are special laws applied to them and not to their Israeli peers?
2. What is being done to ensure that minors who are detained enjoy all necessary procedural safeguards to protect them from torture and ill-treatment including and in particular: insert most important safeguards.
3. What is being done to ensure that all persons involved in the detention of minors are aware of international human rights standards. Has the Government considered publically communicating a no-tolerance policy.
4. To the extent that detention is legal at all, why are those minors kept with adults and not in special detention centres? What is being done to avoid detention with adults?
5. What is being done to hold accountable those responsible for torture and ill-treatment of minors in detention.
6. What is being done to ensure that minors can effectively complain about their treatment and get access to all relevant forms of reparation.
7. What is being done to ensure that they get adequate medical treatment while in detention?

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