



Defence for Children International/Palestine Section
الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال / فرع فلسطين

**Solitary confinement for Palestinian children
in Israeli military detention**

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Submitted to:

- 1) UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967;
- 2) UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- 3) UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children;
- 4) UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children in Armed Conflict;
- 5) UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers;
- 6) UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; and
- 7) UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

This report is submitted on behalf of Defense for Children International Palestine (DCI-Palestine), a national section of the international non-governmental child rights organization and movement, Defense for Children International, established in 1979, with consultative status with ECOSOC.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Since 1967, Palestinian children have been subject to Israeli military law and prosecuted in military courts. Each year approximately 500-700 Palestinian children from the occupied West Bank, some as young as 12 years old, are detained and imprisoned in the Israeli military detention system,¹ where ill-treatment of children is widespread and systematic.² Palestinian child detainees are then prosecuted in Israeli military courts that lack fundamental fair trial guarantees and are not designed or administered to respect children's rights.
2. Since 2000, an estimated 8,000 Palestinian children have been detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. They are arrested, interrogated and detained by a variety of Israeli authorities, including Israel's army, police and security agents.
3. The majority of children are detained from their West Bank homes during the middle of the night by heavily armed Israeli soldiers. Several hours after their arrest, children arrive at Israeli interrogation centers blindfolded, bound and sleep deprived. Interrogations tend to be coercive, including a variety of verbal abuse, threats and physical violence that ultimately result in a confession. In 96 percent of cases documented by DCI-Palestine in 2013, children were questioned alone and rarely informed of their rights, particularly their right against self-incrimination.
4. Unlike Israeli children living in illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian children are not accompanied by a parent and are generally interrogated without the benefit of legal advice, or being properly informed of their right to silence. They are overwhelmingly accused of throwing stones, an offense that can potentially lead to a sentence of up to 20 years depending on a child's age.³
5. Post-arrest, a child's initial appearance in the Israeli military court is usually when he first sees a lawyer and his family. Although many children maintain their innocence, most plead guilty because this is the quickest way out of a system that rarely grants bail.
6. After sentencing, around 50 to 60 percent of Palestinian child detainees are transferred from occupied territory to prisons inside Israel in violation of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The practical consequence of this is that many of them receive either limited or no family visits due to freedom of movement restrictions and the time it takes to issue a permit to visit the prisons.

¹ Exact figures on the number of Palestinian children detained each year by Israeli authorities are not published by the Israel Prison Service (IPS). The estimate of 500-700 children is based on figures provided by the IPS of the number children in prison facilities at the end of each month, and the best estimate of DCI-Palestine lawyers who appear daily in the military courts and conduct regular prison visits.

² See UNICEF, CHILDREN IN ISRAELI MILITARY DETENTION: OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (2013), http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf; and DEFENSE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINE, BOUND, BLINDFOLDED AND CONVICTED: CHILDREN HELD IN MILITARY DETENTION (2012), http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/report_0.pdf.

³ Israel Military Order 1651 Order regarding Security Provisions, § 212(1)-(3) (Nov. 1, 2009).

7. The Israeli military detention system has repeatedly been condemned for its widespread and systematic ill-treatment of Palestinian children.⁴ During 2013, 76.5 percent of Palestinian children detained by the Israeli military in the occupied West Bank endured some form of physical violence during arrest, transfer or interrogation, a slight increase from 2012.⁵

8. Below are common violations raised in the affidavits collected by DCI-Palestine during 2013:

Table 1: Common complaints and areas of concern between 1 January to 31 December 2013

Complaints and areas of concern		West Bank	
		Number of cases	Percentage
	Total affidavits collected	98	
1	Hand ties	98	100.0%
2	No lawyer present during interrogation	94	95.9%
3	Not informed of right to silence	91	92.9%
4	Blindfolds	92	93.9%
5	Not informed of reason for arrest	96	98.0%
6	Physical violence	75	76.5%
7	Verbal abuse, humiliation and intimidation	73	74.5%
8	Strip searched	78	79.6%
9	Denial of adequate food and water	76	77.6%
10	Threats or inducement	39	39.8%
11	Denial of access to toilet	68	69.4%
12	Night arrest	55	56.1%
13	Position abuse	32	32.7%
14	Transfer on vehicle floor	49	50.0%
15	Shown or signed paper in Hebrew	21	21.4%
16	Solitary confinement for more than two days	21	21.4%
17	Detained with adults	3	3.1%
18	Attempted recruitment	0	0.0%
19	Threat of sexual assault	2	2.0%
20	Electric shock	1	1.0%

⁴ See UNICEF, CHILDREN IN ISRAELI MILITARY DETENTION: OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (2013), http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf; DEFENSE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINE, BOUND, BLINDFOLDED AND CONVICTED: CHILDREN HELD IN MILITARY DETENTION (2012), http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/report_0.pdf; The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/25/67 (Jan. 13, 2014), <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/101/98/PDF/G1410198.pdf>; and U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 2013: ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (2014), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/220568.pdf>.

⁵ See DCI-PALESTINE, PALESTINIAN CHILDREN DETAINED IN THE ISRAELI MILITARY COURT SYSTEM (2013), http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/un_sp_doc_opt_detention_2012_final_25jun2013.pdf.

9. Palestinian children that have violence perpetrated against them during their arrest, transfer or interrogation have little recourse because there is no rights-based, child-sensitive complaints mechanism as part of the Israeli military justice system. As a result, impunity for violations is a significant obstacle. During 2013, DCI-Palestine filed 15 complaints with Israeli authorities concerning the ill-treatment and torture of 10 children while in Israeli military detention.⁶ Not a single indictment has been issued against a perpetrator, and in many cases it is unclear if an investigation has been initiated. Further complicating accountability for violence against children in the Israeli military detention system is that many Palestinian families refuse to file complaints for fear of retaliation or simply because they do not believe the system is fair or impartial.

10. Recent amendments to Israeli military law concerning children have had little to no impact on their treatment during the first 24 to 48 hours after an arrest, where most of the ill-treatment occurs at the hands of Israeli soldiers, police and interrogators.

11. DCI-Palestine maintains that Israeli military court judges must exclude all evidence obtained by force or coercion or when a child is not appropriately informed of his right to silence. Additionally, the practice of using solitary confinement on children in Israeli detention facilities must be recognized as a form of torture and be stopped immediately. The prohibition on solitary confinement of juveniles must be enshrined in law. Furthermore, Israeli authorities must implement effective accountability measures to ensure all credible reports of torture and ill-treatment are impartially investigated and perpetrators are held accountable.

12. This report focuses on information and data collected during 2012 and 2013 involving custodial interrogation cases where Israeli military and intelligence authorities used solitary confinement against Palestinian children for interrogation purposes while in Israeli custody.

NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN IN ISRAELI MILITARY DETENTION

13. The average number of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention at the end of each month during 2013 was 199. The data below is compiled by DCI-Palestine from information obtained from the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) and from Israeli army temporary detention facilities. The IPS does not release cumulative figures for each month. Available data is only a snapshot of the number of children in detention on a particular day at the end of each month.⁷

Table 2: Total number of Palestinian children in Israeli detention at the end of each month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Aver.
2008	327	307	325	327	337	323	324	293	304	297	327	342	319

⁶ DCI-Palestine, *Israel's Military Prosecution Denies Parents Right to Accompany Children*, Jan. 16, 2014, <http://www.dci-palestine.org/documents/israel%E2%80%99s-military-prosecution-denies-parents-right-accompany-children>.

⁷ DCI-Palestine provides free legal assistance to children detained under the Israeli occupation and compiles accurate statistics on the number of children detained using incomplete data from the Israeli Prison Service (IPS). For online versions of these tables that are updated monthly, see <http://www.dci-palestine.org/content/child-detainees>.

2009	389	423	420	391	346	355	342	339	326	325	306	305	355
2010	318	343	342	335	305	291	284	286	269	256	228	213	289
2011	222	221	226	220	211	209	202	180	164	150	161	135	192
2012	170	187	206	220	234	221	211	195	189	164	178	195	198
2013	223	236	238	238	223	193	195	179	179	159	173	154	199

14. During 2013, an average of 32 children between 12 and 15 years old were in Israeli military detention at the end of each month.

Table 3: Number of young (12-15) Palestinians in Israeli detention at the end of each month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Aver.
2008	38	40	45	39	37	34	33	21	23	23	25	30	32
2009	50	54	53	47	39	47	42	39	40	44	41	42	44
2010	44	41	39	32	25	23	18	20	32	34	32	30	31
2011	34	45	45	37	38	38	40	34	35	30	33	19	36
2012	26	24	31	33	39	35	34	30	28	21	21	23	29
2013	31	39	39	44	48	41	35	30	27	15	16	14	32

15. During 2013, only one Palestinian girl was held in Israeli military detention.

Table 4: Number of Palestinian girls (12-17) in Israeli detention at the end of each month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Aver.
2008	2	3	3	4	3	6	6	5	6	6	5	7	5
2009	5	7	6	6	5	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	3.25
2010	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.25
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.08
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.50
2013	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.42

16. No Palestinian under the age of 18 years has been held in Israeli military detention pursuant to an administrative detention order since December 2011. However, DCI-Palestine continues to recommend that no child should be the subject of administrative detention and Israeli military law should be amended to reflect this position.

USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR PALESTINIAN CHILDREN

17. Between 2008 and 2013, DCI-Palestine documented 80 cases involving the solitary confinement of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system solely for interrogation purposes. This report is based on 40 solitary confinement cases documented between January 2012 and December 2013.

18. In 2013, solitary confinement was used in 21.4 percent of cases (21 out of 98 cases). In 2012, solitary confinement was used in 19.4 percent of cases (21 out of 108 cases).

19. Children held in solitary confinement during the reporting period spent an average of 10 days in isolation. The longest period of confinement documented in a single case was 29 total days in 2012, and 28 total days in 2013.

20. Palestinian child detainees are held in solitary confinement and interrogated by the Israel Security Agency (ISA) at interrogation and detention centers located inside Israel, including Petah Tikva detention center, Kishon detention center (also known as Al-Jalame), and Shikma prison in Ashkelon.

21. The evidence and documentation collected by DCI-Palestine and included in this report overwhelmingly suggests that the use of isolation for Palestinian child detainees is solely for interrogation purposes. The apparent purpose of using solitary confinement against Palestinian child detainees for interrogation purposes is to obtain a confession and/or gather intelligence or information on other individuals.

22. Globally, children and juvenile offenders are often held in solitary confinement either as a disciplinary measure, or to separate them from adult populations.⁸ Importantly, the use of isolation by Israeli authorities does not appear to be related to any disciplinary, protective, or medical rationale or justification.

Table 5: Common complaints and areas of concern in solitary confinement cases between 1 January to 31 December 2013

Ill-treatment and areas of concern in solitary confinement cases		West Bank	
		Number of cases	Percentage
	Total affidavits collected	40	
1	Hand ties	40	100.0%
2	Blindfolded	38	95.0%
3	Physical Violence	22	55.0%
4	Verbal Abuse, Humiliation, and Intimidation	30	75.0%
5	Strip searched	35	87.5%
6	Denial of adequate food and water	35	87.5%
7	Threats and Inducement	27	67.5%
8	Denied access the Toilet	29	72.5%
9	Position Abuse	31	77.5%
10	Transferred on Vehicle Floor	20	50.0%
11	Shown or signed paper in Hebrew	1	2.5%
12	Confined with Adults	2	5.0%
13	Threats of sexual Assault	1	2.5%
14	Night Arrest	34	85.0%
15	Not informed of right to silence	39	97.5%
16	Not informed of the reason for arrest	38	95.0%
17	No Lawyer present/denied access to counsel	39	97.5%

⁸ Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment, *Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, UN Doc. A/66/268, ¶ 66 (Aug, 5, 2011), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/268.

Arrest & transfer

23. In 34 out of 40 cases (85 percent), children held in solitary confinement reported being arrested from their homes in the middle of the night. Children report that heavily armed Israeli soldiers arrest them in violent circumstances during night raids on their family homes. Children are often woken up by the sound of Israeli soldiers banging on the front door before a family member opens the door or the soldiers force their way in, storming the home.
24. Soldiers gather all the occupants of the house, regardless of their age, in one room or outside and then demand identification. Generally, the entire home will be searched during the raid. Once a child's identity has been verified from his identification card, his family will be informed that he must accompany the soldiers. This moment is most likely the last time the family will see their child until he appears in a military court following an unknown period of solitary confinement and interrogation.
25. Children and their parents are rarely informed of the reasons for arrest, the charges against them, or where the child is being taken. There is no official notification process to inform parents where their child will be or has been taken by the Israeli military.
26. In 38 out of 40 cases (95 percent), neither the parents nor the child were notified of the reasons for arrest or detention.
27. Once the soldiers have identified the child, his hands will be tied with plastic cords, most likely behind his back, and he will be blindfolded and led to a military vehicle. Once inside, he will be transferred to a military camp or directly to an interrogation facility.
28. In 22 out of 40 cases (55 percent), children held in solitary confinement experienced some form of physical violence during arrest, transfer or interrogation. In 30 out of 40 cases (75 percent), children held in solitary confinement were subjected to verbal abuse, humiliation or intimidation during their arrest, transfer or interrogation.
29. In 35 out of 40 cases (87.5 percent), children held in solitary confinement were strip searched during transfer or upon arrival at an Israeli interrogation and detention facility.
30. Out of the 40 cases involving solitary confinement documented by DCI-Palestine during the reporting period, 27 children were held at Kishon (Al-Jalame) detention center, eight were held at Petah Tikva detention center, four were held at both facilities, and one child was held at Shikma Prison in Ashkelon. These facilities are located inside Israel and are operated and/or controlled by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) and/or the Israel Security Agency (ISA).
31. The children taken to Kishon (Al-Jalame) detention center, near Haifa inside Israel, describe being held in isolation in a small cell measuring approximately 2 x 3 meters (6.5 x 10 feet). The children report either sleeping on a concrete bed, on the floor, or on a thin mattress that is often described as "dirty" and "foul smelling." There are no windows and no natural light. The only source of light comes from a dim yellow bulb that is reportedly kept on at all hours. Meals are passed to children through a flap in the door. Cell walls are reported to be gray in color with sharp or rough protrusions that are painful to lean against.

Interrogations

32. Palestinian child detainees held in solitary confinement are questioned by Israel Security Agency (ISA) interrogators, and are not properly informed of their rights.
33. In 39 out of 40 cases (97.5 percent), children held in solitary confinement were not properly informed of their right to silence, were denied access to legal counsel and did not have a family member present during interrogation.
34. Interrogations are typically threatening and lengthy, and child detainees are vulnerable to torture, abuse and other forms of violence. During interrogations, children report being forced to sit in a low metal chair secured to the floor with their hands and feet cuffed to the chair, often for several hours.
35. In 31 out of 40 cases (77.5 percent), children held in solitary confinement reported being subject to position abuse, most commonly being shackled to a chair for prolonged periods in positions that are described as painful.
36. Palestinian children held in solitary confinement are subjected to repeated and prolonged interrogations, with the apparent purpose of obtaining a confession.
37. The interrogation techniques are generally mentally and physically coercive, frequently incorporating a mix of intimidation, threats and physical violence with a clear purpose of obtaining a confession. Shouting and intimidation are regularly used to elicit confessions, incriminating statements, and information on neighbors or family members.
38. In 27 out of 40 cases (67.5 percent), children held in solitary confinement were subject to threats and inducements with the apparent purpose of coercing a confession.
39. The prohibition against torture and ill-treatment applies to acts that cause mental suffering to the victim, including intimidation and other forms of threats. The victim's age and relative position of inferiority must be taken into consideration when assessing the severity of psychological forms of torture and ill-treatment.⁹

Role of informants in interrogation process

40. Israeli intelligence interrogation techniques sometimes include the use of cellmate informants to fool or coerce child detainees into revealing potentially incriminating information or information on other individuals.
41. The custodial context of interrogation combined with isolation creates a psychologically compelling atmosphere that infringes on a child's right not to be compelled to give testimony or to confess guilt.¹⁰ Vulnerability increases when a child in custodial interrogation is denied

⁹ See Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment, *Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, UN Doc. A/66/268 (Aug, 5, 2011), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/268.

¹⁰ CRC Article 40(2)(b)(iv).

access to legal counsel, and his parents are not allowed to be present during interrogation sessions.

42. Given the potentially dangerous consequences of being accused or suspected of being an informant or collaborating with an informant, DCI-Palestine will list the general pattern and process that Palestinian child detainees are typically subjected to when unknowingly encountering informants.

43. Following many days held in isolation and subject to prolonged interrogation sessions, a child will be informed that the interrogation is over and that they will be transferred to a prison cell.

44. Once the child arrives in a typical prison cell, an adult prisoner warmly welcomes him, often bringing warm food, a pack of cigarettes, or other items. The adult prisoner attempts to gain the child's trust by sharing information about the child's family or members of his community. Children report being warned not to talk to anyone but this specific individual regarding their interrogation. Often, the adult prisoner will either ask a child about the interrogation and what questions were asked, or offer to alert others on the outside if he shares information.

45. After a day or two, the child is ushered back to interrogation where he is often confronted with an audio recording or statements he made to the adult prisoner informant. During interrogation, the child realizes for the first time that the adult prisoner is an informant collaborating with Israeli intelligence officers, and the child's interaction with this individual was part of the interrogation process.

46. After being confronted with this reality, children generally provide a confession without access to counsel to allegations made against them during the interrogation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

47. Solitary confinement is a harsh practice that "may cause serious psychological and physiological adverse effects on individuals regardless of their specific conditions."¹¹ Furthermore, "considering the severe mental pain or suffering solitary confinement may cause when used as a punishment, during pretrial detention, indefinitely or for a prolonged period, for juveniles or persons with mental disabilities, it can amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."¹²

48. The use of solitary confinement can amount to acts of torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as prohibited by the International Covenant on Civil and

¹¹ Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment, *Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, UN Doc. A/66/268, ¶ 79, (Aug, 5, 2011), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/268.

¹² *Id.* at ¶ 80.

Political Rights, and defined by the Convention against Torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.¹³

49. Generally, the use of solitary confinement during custodial interrogation “creates a de facto situation of psychological pressure” that can compel detainees to confess or make statements against other individuals.¹⁴

50. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has explicitly found that solitary confinement, when “used intentionally during pretrial detention as a technique for the purpose of obtaining information or a confession” amounts to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

51. Specifically regarding juveniles, “the imposition of solitary confinement, of any duration, on juveniles is cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and violates article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 16 of the Convention against Torture,” both international treaties that Israel has obliged itself to implement.¹⁵

52. International law is clear that juveniles need and are entitled to special protections, safeguards and care due to their status as children,¹⁶ and children should not be subjected to solitary confinement for any duration, or any reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS

53. No child should be prosecuted in military courts that lack comprehensive fair trial and juvenile justice standards;

54. The practice of using solitary confinement on children in Israeli military detention, whether in pretrial detention for interrogation purposes or as a form of punishment, must be stopped immediately and the prohibition must be enshrined in law;

55. Except in extreme and unusual circumstances, all arrests of children should occur during daylight hours;

¹³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), Art. 7, (Dec. 16, 1966), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3aa0.html>; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, G.A. Res. 39/46, Arts. 1 & 16, U.N. Doc. A/RES/39/46, (Dec. 10, 1984), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/39/46.

¹⁴ Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment, *Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, UN Doc. A/66/268, ¶ 73, (Aug. 5, 2011), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/268.

¹⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 77.

¹⁶ Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. Res. 44/25, Art. 19, (Nov. 20, 1989), <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>; Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment 8, U.N. Doc. CRC/C/GC/8, ¶ 18, (Mar. 2, 2007), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=CRC/C/GC/8; UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, G.A. Res. 45/113, U.N. Doc. A/RES/45/113, (Dec. 14, 1990), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/45/113.

56. In all cases the use of single plastic hand ties and blindfolds should be prohibited and the prohibition must be effectively enforced;
57. All children must have access to a lawyer of their choice prior to interrogation, and throughout the interrogation process;
58. All children must be entitled to have a parent present at all times during their interrogation;
59. In every case the interrogation of children should be automatically audio-visually recorded;
60. In all cases evidence obtained as a result of torture or ill-treatment must be excluded by the military courts;
61. In all cases where incriminating evidence is obtained during interrogation where the child was not appropriately informed of their right to silence, this evidence must be excluded by the military courts;
62. Effective accountability measures must be introduced to ensure all credible reports of torture and ill-treatment are properly investigated in accordance with international standards and that perpetrators are brought to justice.