
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL28th Regular Session

March 2015

23 March 2015

Israel's armed forces and grave violations of children's rights

Statement on behalf of Defence for Children International (DCI) joined by Al-Haq, Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights and Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

Mr. President,

A generation of Palestinian children living under prolonged Israeli military occupation have been arrested, shot, shelled and bombed since 2000, and, during this time, Israeli forces have killed over 1,900 children.

Israel is the only state to automatically and systematically prosecute children in military courts that lack basic standards of due process. Recent amendments to Israeli military laws concerning children have had little to no impact on ending widespread and systematic ill treatment and torture.

Despite well-documented evidence of grave violations of international law, justice and accountability is persistently denied to Palestinian children.

Instead, Palestinian children continually bear the brunt of Israel's repeated military offensives and suffer from a completely man-made humanitarian crisis created by Israel's eight-year long blockade of Gaza.

Between July 8 and August 26, 2014, Israeli attacks on Gaza killed over 500 Palestinian children.

In Gaza, where 43 percent of the population is under 14 years of age, Operation Protective Edge was the sixth Israeli military offensive in the past eight years, and Palestinian children have come of age witnessing death and have been suffocated by a life under siege.

Repeated Israeli military offensives and prolonged military occupation combined with Israel's complete disregard for international law has hindered any meaningful efforts toward implementing comprehensive protections for Palestinian children.

In a context where systemic impunity is the status quo, the need for justice and accountability is urgent.

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on the OPT, and reiterate that Israel's persistent refusal to fully cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms has profound implications for the protection of human rights worldwide.

In order to challenge systemic impunity and increase protections for children, Defence for Children International urges all members of the Human Rights Council

- To demand that Israel end its prolonged military occupation of Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and its eight-year siege on the Gaza Strip, a form of collective punishment prohibited under international law; and
- To call on the Secretary-General to list Israel's armed forces in his 14th Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict for committing grave violations against children during armed conflict.