

Since 2007, a UNICEF-led working group has consolidated efforts to report on the impacts of armed conflict on children in Israel and the State of Palestine. The bulletin is published on a quarterly basis highlighting trends and patterns in grave violations against children.

Members of the working group include: DCI-Palestine, B'Tselem, Médecins du Monde – Suisse, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Save the Children, War Child Holland, World Vision, OCHA, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNMAS and WHO.

This edition covers October, November & December 2015.



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Photos above: in October 2016, Israeli Security Forces erected checkpoints outside and inside the Muslim Quarter in Jerusalem's Old City, often searching boys, including on the way to/from school (photos above.)

Photos below: In Hebron's Old City, Israeli Security Forces declared Shuhada Street, where several Israeli urban settlements and the Cordoba school are located, a 'closed military zone' as of October 2015. In December, they installed barbed wire around the school, restricted access to the street and temporarily closed checkpoint 56, forcing the students and teachers to take a long detour.

Photos: UNICEF SoP

In the last quarter of 2015, the situation deteriorated significantly: compared to the third quarter, there was a two-fold increase in grave violations affecting children across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Widespread violence, including stabbings, vehicle attacks, shootings and daily clashes resulted in the killing and injuring of children. The number of children held in Israeli military detention was the highest since March 2009.

Serious concerns arose regarding excessive use of force, particularly in relation to incidents where Palestinian children were shot dead by Israeli security forces after carrying out or being suspected of carrying out stabbing attacks.

The Israeli Knesset (parliament) passed a number of laws with harsher penalties and detrimental implications for the rights of children in East Jerusalem.

KILLINGS AND INJURIES

Twenty-five Palestinian children were killed (20 boys and 5 girls) and 1,310 injured across the State of Palestine (1,282 boys, 28 girls): twenty-three children (19 boys; 4 girls) were killed in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and two children (one boy; one girl) were killed in Gaza. **Three Israeli boys were injured** near settlements in the West Bank, and in West Jerusalem in Israel.

WEST BANK

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 23 Palestinian children were killed and 1,310 children were injured.

Out of the 23 Palestinian children killed, **22 were killed by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) with live ammunition and one by Israeli settlers**; no arrests have been made or indictments issued in relation to any of these killings so far.

For instance, on 25 October, while crossing a checkpoint in Hebron, a 17-year old girl was taken by IDF soldiers for a search, shot with at least five bullets and killed. Israeli authorities said that she had attempted to stab a policeman, however an eyewitness stated that she was not presenting any threat at the time she was shot, and was shouting that she did not have a knife.

In addition, on 22 November, an Israeli settler rammed a 16-year-old girl at Huwwara checkpoint (Nablus), claiming that she was carrying out a stabbing attack; she was subsequently shot by an IDF soldier and another settler, and died of her wounds.

In October and November, 1,310 Palestinian children aged between seven months and 17 years were injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem:

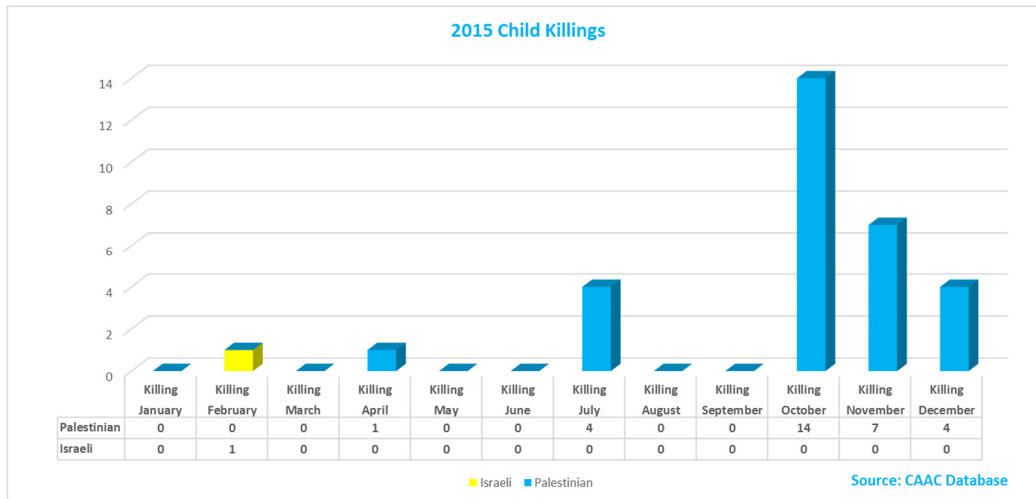
- 984 children (959 boys; 25 girls) were injured during clashes between Palestinians and ISF following Palestinian demonstrations and protests. Children were injured by severe tear gas inhalation (544), rubber-coated metal bullets (302), live ammunition (116), sound grenades or their shrapnel (6), tear gas canisters (6), stones (6), and physical assault (4).
- 321 children (319 boys; two girls) were injured during law enforcement activities by the Israeli military, and in clashes between Palestinians and the ISF, including in and around refugee camps. Children were injured by severe tear gas inhalation (211), rubber-coated metal bullets (59), live ammunition (46), physical assault (4) and sound grenade (1).
- Six children (five boys; one girl) were injured by direct violence by Israeli settlers, and as a result of ISF interventions during clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers.

GAZA

In Gaza, two Palestinian children were killed and 35 Palestinian boys were injured.

On 7 October, a 13-year-old boy was killed by live fire when Israeli forces shot at protesters approaching the fence with Israel. On 11 October, **a three-year-old girl was killed when her house collapsed as a result of an Israeli airstrike on a nearby building. Her five months pregnant mother was also killed.**

Thirty-five boys were injured during demonstrations due to ISF live ammunition (16), severe tear gas inhalation (12) and rubber-coated metal bullets (7).



ISRAEL

Three Israeli boys were injured by Palestinians in two shooting incidents near Israeli settlements in Hebron (two boys), and in a stabbing in West Jerusalem, Israel (one boy).

RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN

No cases of child recruitment were reported in the fourth quarter of 2015.

ARREST AND DETENTION

According to the Israeli Prison Service, **at the end of December 2015, 422 children aged between 12 and 17 years, were held in military detention facilities (414 boys and eight girls).**

This is the highest number of children recorded in Israeli military detention since March 2009.

During 2015, on average 219 Palestinian children were held in Israeli military detention per month, which marks a 15 per cent increase compared to the monthly average in 2014 (188 children).

In October 2015, the Israel Prison Service opened a juvenile section at Givon prison, to deal with the increased volume of Palestinian child detainees. Based on the testimonies of Palestinian children held in the section, **prison conditions did not comply with minimum international standards**, and children reported that the Israel Prison Service imposed **solitary confinement and denied family visits**. This juvenile section was closed at the end of December.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010	314	338	337	328	300	287	281	280	264	251	226	210
2011	221	216	224	217	211	207	201	176	162	150	159	132
2012	166	183	203	218	231	220	210	194	189	164	177	193
2013	219	234	236	236	223	193	195	180	179	159	173	154
2014	183	210	202	196	215	202	192	201	182	163	156	151
2015	163	182	182	164	163	160	153	156	171	307	407	422

ILL-TREATMENT

The Working Group on Grave Violations against Children gathered 61 individual affidavits of children (59 boys and two girls) aged between 13 and 17 years, **reporting ill-treatment while in Israeli military detention in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem.**

58 children reported being subjected to **at least ten different types of ill-treatment**, including but not limited to painful hand-ties, blindfolding, strip-searching, leg-ties, verbal abuse, and physical violence. 31 of the 61 children were **transferred outside the West Bank** to detention facilities inside Israel, in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Articles 76 and 49).

The **arrest of 194 children in East Jerusalem** was documented, including at least 17 children below the age of 12 (age of criminal responsibility). Seven cases of ill-treatment in detention (five boys; two girls) were documented through individual affidavits collected in East Jerusalem. Three children reported they were subject to physical violence, four reported verbal abuse and two children reported threats made against them.

Between October and December 2015, **Israeli authorities placed six children from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem in administrative detention. This practice has not been used against children since 2000 in East Jerusalem and since 2011 in the rest of the West Bank.**

The Israeli Knesset (parliament) passed a number of laws with harsher penalties and detrimental implications for the rights of children in East Jerusalem. On 2 November 2015, the Knesset passed a temporary amendment to the Israeli Youth Law and the National Insurance Law, providing for the revocation of national insurance entitlements for children convicted of “security-related” offences (including stone-throwing) and imposing a fine of 10,000 shekels (approximately 2500 USD) on parents of a child convicted of stone-throwing. The amendments also reduced judicial discretion, instituting mandatory minimum sentences of not less than one-fifth of the potential maximum sentence, and restricting suspended sentences to special circumstances only.

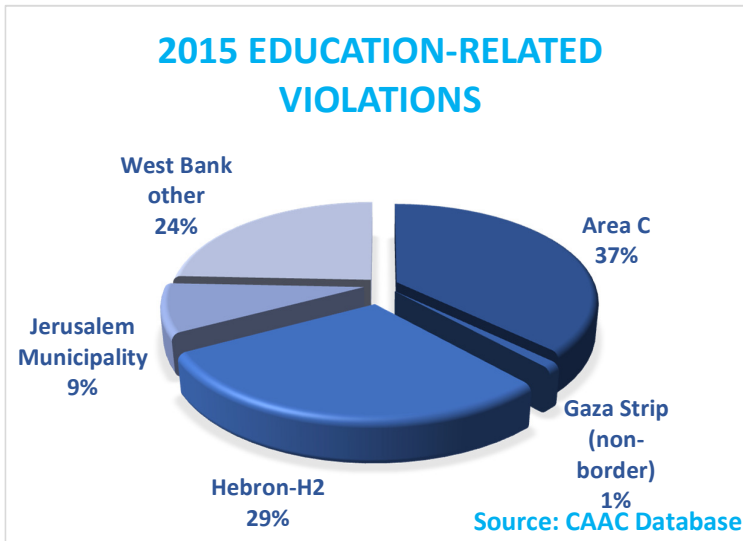
EDUCATION-RELATED VIOLATIONS

Attacks on schools

During the reporting period, **185 education-related incidents were documented in the West Bank**, marking a **sharp increase** compared to the previous quarter (19 incidents – the low number may be a result of the summer vacations) and the rest of the year (106 incidents in total). The 185 incidents included 91 interferences with access to education, 74 attacks on schools, 11 threats of attacks against protected persons in relation to schools, and nine attacks on protected persons in relation to schools.

- 91 incidents of interference with access to education affected 5,741 children. Cases included the loss of school time as a result of delays at check points or school entrances; the preventive closure of schools as a result of military operations; the closure of schools as a result of establishment of closed military areas; and the arrest and detention of school staff and students.
- 74 cases of attacks on schools or instances where schools came under fire were documented. In 69 cases, the ISF fired plastic covered metal bullets (PCMB), tear gas canisters and in some instances, live ammunition at or into school premises. These instances occurred in the context of law enforcement operations by the Israeli military and clashes.
- Nine incidents of attacks against protected persons in relation to education were documented in Hebron (7), Ramallah (1) and Nablus (1). Seven incidents were attributed to the ISF and two to

- Israeli settlers, during which settlers or soldiers accused Palestinian children of throwing stones thrown at them; the children were subsequently beaten and shot at with live ammunition.
- 11 incidents of threats of violence to school and staff were documented in Hebron (5), Bethlehem (2), Nablus (2), Jerusalem (1) and Tubas (1). Incidents involved the ISF entering schools, interrogating school principals in relation to stone throwing, and threatening of closing the school. Seven incidents were attributed to ISF and four to Israeli settlers.



In the last quarter of 2015, the ISF increased harassment and intimidation of volunteers of international humanitarian organizations operating a ‘protective presence’ for school children in the Israeli-controlled part of Hebron’s Old city (H2). This has significantly undermined the latter’s capacity to provide protective accompaniment to children on their way to and from school, and to document child rights violations by Israeli settlers or soldiers. Since the escalation of violence in October 2015, three organizations providing protective presence had to pull out of parts of H2 for periods of between two to three weeks as a result of the implementation of a new ‘closed military zone’.

On 22 October 2015, posters were displayed in H2 with photos of EAPPI and ISM volunteers with a message in Hebrew requesting ISF and settlers to act against them. The messages (translated) said “The persons in these photos are here to harm Israelis for anti-Semitic reasons. DEAL WITH THEM.” Regular physical and verbal attacks by specific Israeli settlers living in H2 have been documented on video in October and November.

UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid & Development Activities visits Hebron

On 10 December, on the occasion of Human Rights Day, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Piper and a group of UN and NGO leaders visited Hebron to see first-hand the situation of human rights defenders in the city, as well as the obstacles to Palestinian children’s right to an education in a safe environment. During this period, obstruction by settlers and Israeli Security Forces of international organizations and local groups attempting to provide a protective presence and documenting human rights violations has also increased. Staff of these organizations have been subjected to physical attacks, arrest, threats by settlers and anonymous death threats. Three of the four organizations providing protective presence have even been obliged to temporarily pull out of H2 at times in October as a result of the threats. Since 3 November, the implementation of a closed military zone in H2 has further prevented these organizations from doing their vital work.

The visit also took the delegation to Cordoba school, where protective presence actors accompany some 100 children through check points to and from school every day. At the school, teachers reported that students these days are unable to concentrate and show signs of psychosocial distress and that they are terrified walking through checkpoints to and from school.

“Human rights defenders play a vital role in promoting human rights,” said Mr. Piper after the visit. “Protective presence organizations are on the front line of this work in the occupied Palestinian territory, embodying the support of the world community to the people of Hebron and defending the rights of Palestinian children, not least to a safe journey to and from school. They must be allowed to continue their work without violence, threats or retaliation.”

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/UNISPAL.NSF/47D4E277B48D9D3685256DDC00612265/C79E4341AA1763F785257F17006DC9ED>

Attacks on hospitals

WEST BANK

Ten incidents of interference with healthcare were documented, predominantly in Jerusalem (6), and also in Hebron (3) and Nablus (1); the most affected hospital was Al Makassed Islamic Charitable Hospital in East Jerusalem, where there were five incidents. Instances include the forced closure of clinics, search and arrest operations by undercover security forces, ISF entering hospitals to obtain recordings of security cameras or medical files, the use of tear gas near neonatal units and the shooting of patients. It is the first time that existing and agreed upon procedures have not been followed – according to the Hospital CEO, normally patients' files can be requested by fax or by a police officer presenting himself or herself at the hospital with a court order, which was not respected in these two cases.

DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS FOR CHILDREN

GAZA

Children in Gaza in need of specialized medical care outside of the coastal enclave continued to face delays when accessing health services, mainly due to the Israeli authorities' denial of permits for accompanying adult relatives to cross the Erez terminal, and to the ongoing restriction of access through the Rafah terminal by Egyptian authorities since 2014.

Displacement

WEST BANK

In the fourth quarter of 2015, **Israeli authorities demolished 37 Palestinian homes and 42 other structures** (including water wells and animal shelters) throughout the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

As a result, 237 Palestinians were left homeless, including 114 children. Another 667 Palestinians, of which 305 children, were also affected by the demolitions, through diminished access to services and threats to livelihood.

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