

## **UNICEF on "Children in Israeli military detention": first progress report**

**JERUSALEM, 14 October 2013** - On 6 March 2013, UNICEF released a briefing paper titled "Children in Israeli military detention" which outlined practical measures to improve the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military custody. The paper stated that there appeared to be a pattern of ill-treatment during the arrest, transfer and interrogation of child detainees in the West Bank. In response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel stated it would study the conclusions of the report and work to implement its recommendations in cooperation with UNICEF.

UNICEF has since worked closely with the office of the Israeli Military Advocate General, with the diplomatic community and with international, Israeli and Palestinian organizations in order support the process of translating the recommendations into concrete actions.

Seven months after the paper was released, reports of violations are ongoing. Israeli authorities are taking steps towards addressing some of UNICEF recommendations, including:

1. In September 2013, the IDF Central Command for the West Bank has agreed to pilot test in two areas in the West Bank, a new approach: to issue summons of children in lieu of night arrest at home, which can be traumatic for children and their siblings. This is a critical development, in line with one of the paper's most important recommendations, which states that "arrests of children should be conducted during daylight, notwithstanding exceptional and grave situations".
2. In April 2013, Israeli Military Order 1711 came into effect, reducing the time a Palestinian child can be detained prior to appearing before a military court judge for the first time. The new order reduces the time from four days to 24 hours for children aged 12-13, and from four to two days for children aged 14-15. There is no change for children aged 16-17. This measure is in line with the report's recommendation that children "in detention shall, within 24 hours of their arrest, have prompt and effective access to an independent judicial review of the legality of their arrest and detention". However these time periods can be extended if "special circumstances" are alleged.

3. In The Military Prosecutor stated that since June 2013, the remand hearings for children were held separately from the adults, as the result of a verbal agreement between the prosecution and the judges.

UNICEF will continue to engage with Israel's Military Advocate General and advocate for the implementation of all 38 recommendations of the briefing paper, to improve protection for children in conformity with international standards. These recommendations include the prohibition of practices such as blindfolding, painful restraint, physical abuse, strip searching and solitary confinement of children. They stress that except in extreme circumstances, children should not be arrested at night, a lawyer or family member should be present during interrogation of child suspects and a video-recording should be made.

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**The first periodic progress report can be downloaded at this link:**

*[http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF\\_oPt\\_Children\\_in\\_Military\\_Detention\\_Bulletin\\_No\\_1\\_October\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Military_Detention_Bulletin_No_1_October_2013.pdf)*

**The briefing paper on "Children in Israeli military detention" can be downloaded at this link:**

*[www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF\\_oPt\\_Children\\_in\\_Israeli\\_Military\\_Detention\\_Observations\\_and\\_Recommendations\\_-\\_6\\_March\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf)*

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**About UNICEF**

UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).