

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 bi-monthly basis highlighting trends and patterns in grave violations against children.

Members of the working group include: Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Save the Children, DCI-Palestine, B'Tselem, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, War Child Holland, OCHA, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA and WHO.

This annual edition covers 2012.



Children gazing at buildings destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza during the eight-day escalation of violence in November.

(UNICEF/EIBaba)

- In 2012, Palestinian and Israeli children continued to be significantly affected by the protracted occupation and escalations of violence.
- In March, June, and November 2012 there were escalations of violence between Gaza and Israel which resulted in the killing and injury of Palestinian children, and the injury of Israeli children. Palestinian children were also injured in Gaza during demonstrations, including in the Access Restricted Area (ARA)¹, and increasingly as a result of the detonation of unexploded ordnance.
- In the West Bank, Palestinian children were killed and injured during military operations and as a result of violence by Israeli settlers, which resulted in an increased number of children injured in 2012 compared to 2011.
- An ongoing issue of concern is the number of children forcibly displaced, as a result of demolitions of Palestinian homes, water wells, and animal shelters in the West Bank.

KILLING AND INJURY

In 2012, 50 Palestinian children were killed (40 boys and 10 girls) and 665 injured (640 boys and 25 girls) in the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza).

17 Israeli children were injured in Israel in incidents related to the armed conflict. These numbers mark a significant increase compared to 2011.

¹ When first created in 1995 as part of the Palestinian-Israeli Interim Agreement, the area of restricted access (an area of land on the Gaza side of the 1949 Green Line) was 50 metres wide. Since that time, the Government of Israel has gradually and unilaterally expanded the restricted land area. At current, Gazans are either totally or partially prohibited to enter the area 1,000-1,500 meters from the Green Line.

WEST BANK

In the West Bank, there was a significant increase in the number of Palestinian children killed and injured, largely in link with the high number of demonstrations which resulted in clashes with Israeli Security Forces (ISF). **In 2012, four Palestinian boys were killed in the West Bank** compared to two children in 2011, and **552 were injured** (536 boys and 16 girls), compared to 308 Palestinian children injured in 2011. Of the four boys killed, **two were shot and killed by ISF and another two died as a result of the detonation of an unexploded ordnance** ISF.

Killing

Since mid-November 2012, **an increase in the use of lethal force by ISF** was observed in Gaza and the West Bank also affecting children². On 9 March, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by the Israeli forces in Yatta during an ISF operation to re-arrest a Palestinian man who had been released as part of the Shalit prisoner exchange deal³. Clashes broke out during the operation and the boy was injured with live bullets as he fought with an Israeli soldier. On 12 December, a 17-year-old boy was shot and killed in the Old City of Hebron. He was hit by three bullets fired by an Israeli soldier and killed instantly. According to Israeli reports, the boy threatened a soldier at the checkpoint at the entrance of al-Masharqa neighborhood with a gun that turned out to be a plastic toy. According to Palestinian reports, the boy was returning home after buying his birthday cake when he reached the checkpoint, where an Israeli female soldier fired at him from a close range.

On 6 March, two 12-year-old Palestinian children were killed when an Israeli made unexploded ordnance detonated in Sa'ir village (Hebron).

Injury

In the West Bank, 552 Palestinian children were injured in 2012. Four hundred and thirty-six (436) were injured during demonstrations, 69 during military operations, 39 as a result of settler violence and eight as a result of unexploded ordnance detonation. Seventy nine (79) of the 552 children were under the age of 12 years. **The great majority of children were injured during demonstrations** against the Israel's military operation in Gaza ('Pillar of Defence / Pillar of smoke') in November 2012; for the 'Al Nakba' commemoration, which marks the day of the creation of the state of Israel, when the majority of the Palestinian population became refugees; in support of the prisoners on hunger strike; or during weekly demonstrations against the expansion of settlements or the construction of the Barrier.

Sixty nine children (69), 67 boys and 2 girls, were **injured as a result of military activities**. These children were injured as a result of being hit with live ammunition, hit by rubber-coated metal bullets, hit with tear gas canisters launched at them, during physical assault or as a result of severe tear gas inhalation. These incidents occurred during search operations in villages or refugee camps, or during clashes that erupted between ISF and Palestinians in villages, in refugee camps or at checkpoints. Thirty nine children (39), 33 boys and six girls, were injured in **settler-related incidents**. This marks a decrease

² An additional three children were shot and killed by the ISF in January 2013. Human rights organisations have noticed this increasing trend also for adults starting in mid-November 2012.

³ On 18 December 2011, 1,000 Palestinian prisoners were released in exchange for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

compared to the 53 children injured in 2011. **No children were killed by Israeli settlers in 2012 compared to two children in 2011, but eighteen children were injured directly by Israeli settlers** as a result of being hit with live ammunition, physical assault, stone throwing or Molotov cocktail throwing. The other 21 children **were injured as a result of ISF intervention following clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians.**

The communities most affected by settler violence and in which children were injured are the Old City of Hebron; Al Lubban ash Sharqiya, Huwwara, Nablus town, Qusra and Urif in Nablus Governorate, and the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in East Jerusalem. It is important to note that some of these communities were also highly affected by settler violence last year (the Old City of Hebron; Huwwara, Qusra in Nablus governorate and Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in East Jerusalem).

Eight children were injured as a result of **detonations of unexploded ordnance** while playing or grazing sheep in the fields (Governorates of Hebron, Jericho, Nablus and Tubas).

GAZA

Killing

In Gaza, 46 Palestinian children were killed and 113 injured in 2012. The great majority of the children were killed during the **November escalation in violence.** On 14 November at approximately 15:45 hours, the Israeli Air Force launched an airstrike that targeted and killed the acting chief of Hamas' armed wing, marking the start of a military offensive ("Pillar of Defence / Pillar of Smoke") that ended on 21 November as a result of an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. This operation followed several weeks of intermittent escalations in violence, during which Palestinian armed groups indiscriminately fired rockets into southern Israel, and ISF attacked various targets inside Gaza. **Between 14 and 21 November 2012, 32 Palestinian children were reported killed by Israeli air strikes.** In three other incidents, **three Palestinian children were allegedly killed by Palestinian rockets** aimed at Israel but falling short and landing in Gaza. In addition, **three boys were killed by Israeli fire in the week before November 14:** a 13-year-old was killed due to ISF shooting in Al Qarara, during an incursion in Gaza on 8 November; and on 10 November, two boys aged 16 and 17 were killed by ISF tank shells fired following the injury of four Israeli soldiers as a result of anti-tanks missiles launched by Palestinian armed groups in Al Mentar hill. **At least 255 Palestinian children were reportedly injured during this escalation.**

In addition, another eight children were killed in Gaza in 2012. One boy died due to an **Israeli tank shell** fired at a Palestinian area in Jabalia and three children died as a result of **Israeli airstrikes.** In June 2012, two children, a 2-year-old girl and a 5-year-old boy, were killed as a result of **rockets launched by Palestinian armed groups** towards Israel which fell short. One boy died as a result of **mishandling a weapon** found at home, and one boy died as a result of **mishandling unexploded ordnance** found on the street.

Injury

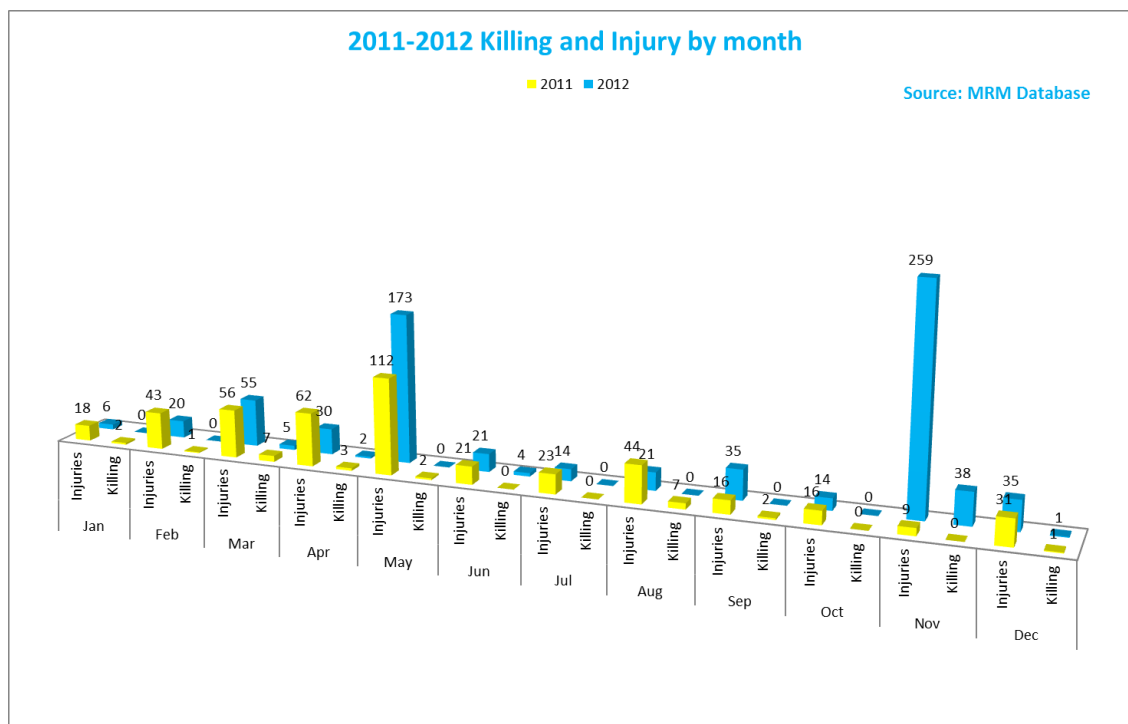
In Gaza, 113 children were injured in 2012 as a result of military activities, during demonstrations or due to the detonation of unexploded ordnance. Seventy one (71) children were injured as a result of **military activities**, 65 of which were due to **ISF airstrikes** and six as a result of **rockets launched by**

Palestinian armed groups towards Israel that fell short. Twenty three boys were injured on 30 March during demonstrations marking the land day anniversary, which is the annual day of commemoration for Palestinians of the marches and strikes that took place in 1976, in response to the Israeli government's announcement of a plan to expropriate thousands of dunams of land for "security and settlement purposes" or during demonstrations against Israel's unilateral imposition of the Access Restricted Areas (ARA). These boys were injured as a result of **ISF firing live ammunition** (21 boys) and due to severe tear gas inhalation (2 boys).

Eighteen children, 15 boys and 3 girls, were injured as a result of the **detonation of unexploded ordnance**. In Gaza the overall number of victims of explosive remnants of war increased by **30 per cent compared to 2011**. This is the **direct result of the increased number of escalations of conflict between Gaza and Israel** in March, June and November, after which the number of incidents normally increases due to civilians, children in particular, mishandling objects that they find in the fields.

SOUTH ISRAEL

In **2012**, no Israeli children were killed, marking a decrease compared to the five children killed in 2011. However **17 Israeli children were injured, marking a significant increase over 2011** when two Israeli children were injured. In November 2012, during the escalation of violence, Palestinian armed groups indiscriminately launched rockets on Southern Israel. As a result, on 15 November, **14 Israeli children, including an 8-month-old baby, were injured**. The other three Israeli children were injured inside the West Bank. On 10 July, **one boy and one girl were injured during clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians** in the Old City of Hebron, and on 8 April a girl was injured when the **vehicle she was travelling in was hit by a stone** thrown by a Palestinian on road 443, on the outskirts of Jerusalem.



RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN BY ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

On 3 June, an ISF airstrike on targeting a motorcycle, on which alleged members of the Abdul Qader Al-Husseini armed group were travelling, in Abasan, southern Gaza, killed two persons. As one of the victims was a 17 year old Palestinian boy, this is recorded as a case of child recruitment.

One case of a boy used as human shield by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) was reported, involving a 15-year-old boy from Beit Ummar who was arrested from his home at 2.30am and forced to walk in front of the military jeep as villagers were throwing stones at the jeep.

Four separate cases of attempted use of children by ISF for military intelligence purposes were reported in 2012 in the Meggido and al-Jalame prison. These cases involved Palestinian boys aged 15 to 17 years who were arrested and offered money, entry to Israel and a car or a mobile phone, in exchange of intelligence on activities in their villages.

ARREST AND DETENTION

In 2012, Palestinian children continued to be arrested and detained by the Israeli Security Forces, and prosecuted in juvenile military courts. **At the end of December 2012, 194 boys and 1 girl aged 12 to 17 years (23 between the ages of 12 and 15 years) were in Israeli military detention** for alleged security violations, marking a 44 per cent increase compared to December 2011. Of the 195 children, **119 were in pre-trial detention** and 76 were serving a sentence. According to the Israeli Prison Service, 63 per cent of Palestinian child detainees were transferred to prisons inside Israel during the reporting period, in \ contravention of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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

ILL-TREATMENT AND TORTURE

In 2012, in relation to the cases of detention mentioned above, **115 cases of ill-treatment were documented through affidavits. All of the 115 boys reported being subjected to ill-treatment by the Israeli army and police. Some of the allegations of ill treatment could be tantamount to torture.**

Forty-six (46) boys were below the age of 16, including one aged nine, one aged 12 and four aged 13 years. Forty-six (46) per cent of the children were **arrested from their homes at night** between 1am and 5am. Seventy-four per cent suffered at least ten different types of ill-treatment including but not limited to being **painfully hand-tied, blindfolded**, strip searched, leg-tied, verbally abused, **subjected to physical violence**, not informed of their rights, and **not allowed the presence of a parent or lawyer during interrogation**. Eighteen per cent of the boys were also held in **solitary confinement** for a period ranging from one to 20 days in the Al Jalame, Hasharon and Peta Tikva interrogation centres, and in the Megiddo prison inside Israel. The average amount of time the 21 boys spent in solitary confinement was 7.5 days. In addition, **two cases of threats of sexual violence were reported**. The great majority (71%) of the cases documented is related to children arrested in the West Bank Area A

and B under the full control of the Palestinian Authority, in particular in the Governorates of Nablus, Qalqiliya and Hebron.

On 1 August 2012, Military Order 1685 came into effect. This Military Order establishes that **children detained by the Israeli military must be brought before a judge within four days of arrest, instead of eight days**, which was the case previously. A new Military Order, issued on 28 November 2012, which will go into effect in April 2013, will further reduce the length of pre-trial detention. This new Military Order stipulates that **children under 14 years old should be brought before a Judge within 24 hours of arrest and children between 14 and 17 years old within 48 hours**.

EDUCATION-RELATED VIOLATIONS

Attacks on schools

In 2012, a significant number of attacks on schools and education facilities were reported both in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). These attacks resulted in damage to schools or interruption of education, and in some instance in direct injury of children. Three hundred and twenty-two (322) cases were reported in oPt, compared to 42 cases reported in 2011. Seven attacks were reported against Israeli schools compared to five cases in 2011.

WEST BANK

Twenty-nine (29) cases were reported in the West Bank compared to 28 in 2011. In 11 instances, the ISF entered or attempted to enter school premises, during search operations, or to remove Palestinian flags from the roof of the school, or for no given or apparent reason, causing disruption of the classes. In some instance the schools were damaged. Seven cases were reported in schools located in Area A and B, three cases in schools in Area C, and one school in East Jerusalem. In an additional six instances, the ISF entered the Haj Ma'zoz Al Masri Secondary School for Girls in Nablus to provide security to the area for Israeli settlers' religious events during the night. In eight instances, schools were targeted with throwing objects. In four instances, on 23 April, 11 August and on 21 and 29 November, Israeli settlers from Yitzhar threw stones at the Urif village school (Nablus). In one instance in particular, on 23 April, the stone throwing triggered clashes with the Palestinians, and when ISF and security staff from the Yitzhar settlement arrived at the scene they fired tear gas at the Palestinians injuring eight children. In the other four instances, the ISF fired live ammunition or tear gas against the schools. In the last three instances, the Israeli Civil administration issued demolition orders against the al-Musafer Primary Mixed School (South Hebron) and against the school in Jinba (south Hebron) and demolished a cultural centre also used for education programmes, built on privately owned land, in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan.

GAZA

The great majority of the incidents reported in Gaza occurred between 14 and 21 November 2012, during the escalation of violence and the 'Pillar of Defence' military operation. Two hundred and eighty-five (285) school buildings were damaged as a result of airstrikes launched by the ISF, including 64 UNRWA school buildings. School buildings were damaged as a result of ISF targeting nearby locations. None of the schools were directly hit. The verification of the level of damage to government, NGO or private schools is on-going. According to preliminary assessments, 10 schools suffered major structural damage. Three UNRWA schools, affecting five distinct schools,⁴ also

⁴ In Gaza, each school building may host more than one school, one in the morning shift and one in the afternoon shift due to shortage of schools.

suffered major damage. In southern Israel, six school buildings were damaged as a result of rockets launched by Palestinian armed groups.

In addition, outside of the November escalation, eight incidents of attacks on schools were reported in Gaza. In one instance, on 11 March, a 12 year old boy was killed while reportedly on his way to school. In the other seven instances, 15 schools, including 4 UNRWA schools, were damaged as a result of Israeli airstrikes targeting Palestinian armed groups training sites, rocket launching sites or the Palestinian intelligence building, which was located in the vicinity of schools.

Six UNRWA health centres, one UNRWA distribution centre and five UNRWA emergency and social service offices suffered minor collateral damage during the November escalation.

SOUTH ISRAEL

Missiles or rockets fired from Gaza damaged an Israeli school in Be'er Sheva on 11 March. No injuries of children were reported as the school was closed on that day as a precautionary measure.

Denial of access to education

WEST BANK

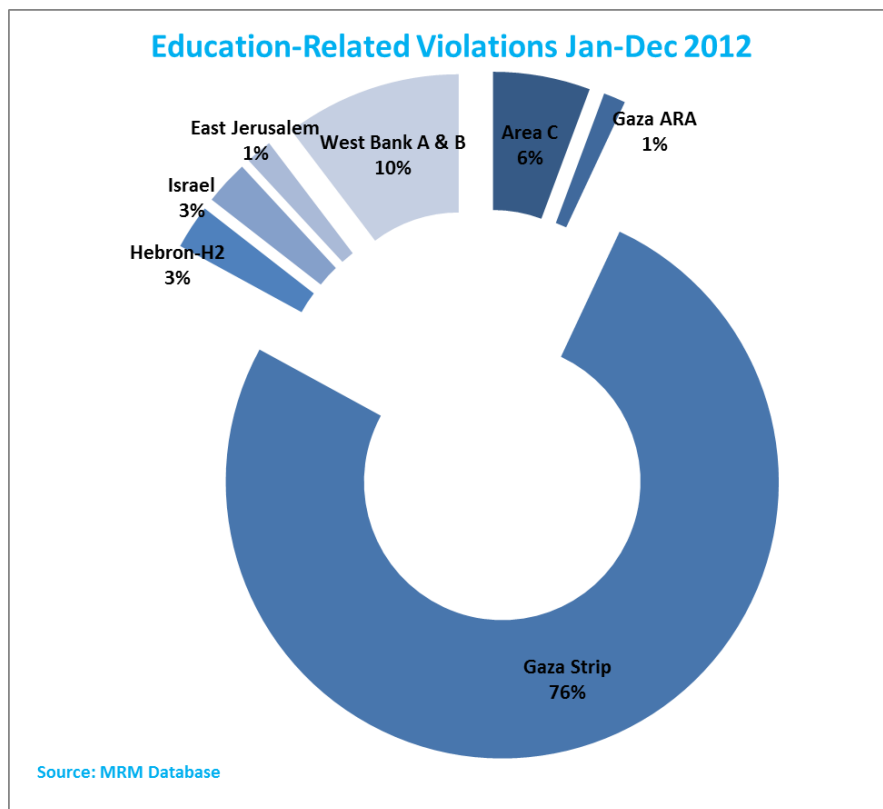
In 2012, students in the West Bank continued to face difficulties accessing schools as a result of ISF operations or settler violence. Forty-nine (49) incidents of denial of access to education were documented in the West Bank. In 16 cases, **students or teachers were arrested**. Instances included children arrested for a few hours while on their way to or from schools, or arrested and detained (12 cases). Instances also included teachers arrested while on their way to school (3 cases) or from inside the school premises (1 case in East Jerusalem on 12 March). In twelve instances, **ISF disrupted the normal classes by attempting to enter the schools, or clashed with the students**. In 10 instances, **students were delayed for school as a result of the ISF closure of roads or checkpoints**. In five instances, the **military escort for school children in at-Tuwani was late or did not arrive** at the agreed meeting point. In two instances **children were attacked by Israeli settlers on their way home from school** in Jerusalem and Hebron. In three instances, **raw sewage from nearby Israeli settlements flooded the school premises** and affected the normal delivery of the classes. In one instance a school in Qalqiliya was handed a **stop work order**.

GAZA

In 2012, schools in Gaza and in Southern Israel were temporarily closed as a result of conflict escalations. Six incidents were reported. Schools were closed for half a day in March in North Gaza due to ISF airstrikes; for one day in May as a result of ISF bullets hitting the "Shuhada' Khuza'a schools for Boys and Girls" during an incursion; and for three days in October (the 7th, the 8th and 24th) in North Gaza (as a result of airstrikes in the first two cases, and of heightened hostilities and exchange of fire close to the school in the third). **The longest period children were forced to be out of school was between 14 and 21 November. A total of 462,000 basic and secondary school students missed school during this period as a result of airstrikes and missiles launched by the ISF.**

SOUTH ISRAEL

In Israel, three incidents were reported. In March and September, **children missed one day of school in Ber Sheva and Ashdod as a result of rockets fired from Gaza**. From 14 and 21 November, **schools in the range of 40 km from the Gaza were closed affecting 317,000 children who stayed home as a result of rockets launched by Palestinian armed groups**.



DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS FOR CHILDREN

GAZA

June 2012 marked the fifth anniversary of the blockade of Gaza, which is ongoing despite some limited easing and is still taking a heavy toll on access to humanitarian assistance for the more than 80 per cent of families who are dependent on humanitarian aid. About one-third of arable land and the majority of fishing grounds in Gaza remain out of bound. Severe restrictions on imports and exports, are ongoing, and so are restrictions on the movement of people by land, air and sea including with the West Bank. This has a specific impact on access to health, as the Gaza health-care system lacks adequate medical equipment, instruments and essential drugs.

The Erez checkpoint with Israel is not open 24 hours, 7 days per week, despite the fact that it serves 1.6 million people, of which half are children, as the main humanitarian access route for the critically ill. The partial operating hours mean that patients may not exit Gaza for treatment after 2:30 pm, or on Fridays after 12:30 pm or on Saturdays. Exceptional access for critically ill patients requires considerable time for coordination with Israeli officials.

In 2012, children in need of specialized medical care outside of Gaza continued to face delays and denials of access to health services. While the overwhelming majority of applications for children who sought medical assistance outside of Gaza were approved (3,338 out of 3,498), 157 applications

were delayed (79 boys and 78 girls), including 50 for children below the age of three. Three applications were denied (two boys and one girl).

In June 2012, the central pharmacy stores of the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza reported that 42% of essential medications were at zero stock, with an additional 13% at low levels sufficient for less than three months. **The MoH can no longer supply patients with drugs for severely debilitating chronic diseases** such as multiple sclerosis or first-line antibiotics at primary health clinic level. At hospital level, shortages have affected oncology treatment, surgeries and dialysis. WHO data showed that 35% of essential medication were at 0 stock for November⁵.

DISPLACEMENT

WEST BANK

The number of demolitions of Palestinian structures resulting in the displacement of Palestinian families in the West Bank marked a small decrease compared to 2011. Nevertheless, the numbers remain significantly high when compared to 2010. **In 2012, almost 886 Palestinians, including 474 children, were forcibly displaced as a result of demolitions of over 604 Palestinian structures by Israeli forces in the West Bank**, compared to 622 in 2011.

The number of structures demolished and people displaced remained high, similar to number of demolitions reported in 2011, which marked a dramatic increase compared to the previous years. **Most of the demolitions (89%) took place in vulnerable communities in Area C**, displacing 815 people, including 447 children. These demolitions were in most cases carried out by the Israeli Civil Administration, which takes responsibility for administering the occupied West Bank. The rest of the demolitions (64, or 11%) took place in East Jerusalem, displacing 71 people, including 27 children. Out of those, 15 were self-demolitions carried out by Palestinian families that had received demolition orders from Israeli authorities. The rest were carried out by different Israeli government bodies, including the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Nature and Park Authority. It is worth noting that **in East Jerusalem, the number of demolitions increased from 42 to 64, representing a 52% increase**, while the number of those affected rose from 203 to 411. The number of those displaced decreased slightly from 88 in 2011 to 71 in 2012.

In addition to demolitions, several hundred people were also displaced as a result of other factors, including evictions (excluding demolitions) and **settler violence** (particularly in East Jerusalem) and **military training in the “Firing zones”**⁶ (in particular in the Jordan Valley and in the Southern Hebron Hills).

In 2012, the UN recorded the eviction of 22 Palestinians, including 10 children, in four separate incidents involving the **take-over of Palestinian property by settlers in East Jerusalem** (in Beit Hanina, Ras al Ahmud, At Tur and Jabal al Mukabber). The evictions were carried out following protracted legal proceedings relating to dispute over property, with settler organizations claiming that they had purchased the Palestinian homes or the land where the homes were located. **In addition to these**

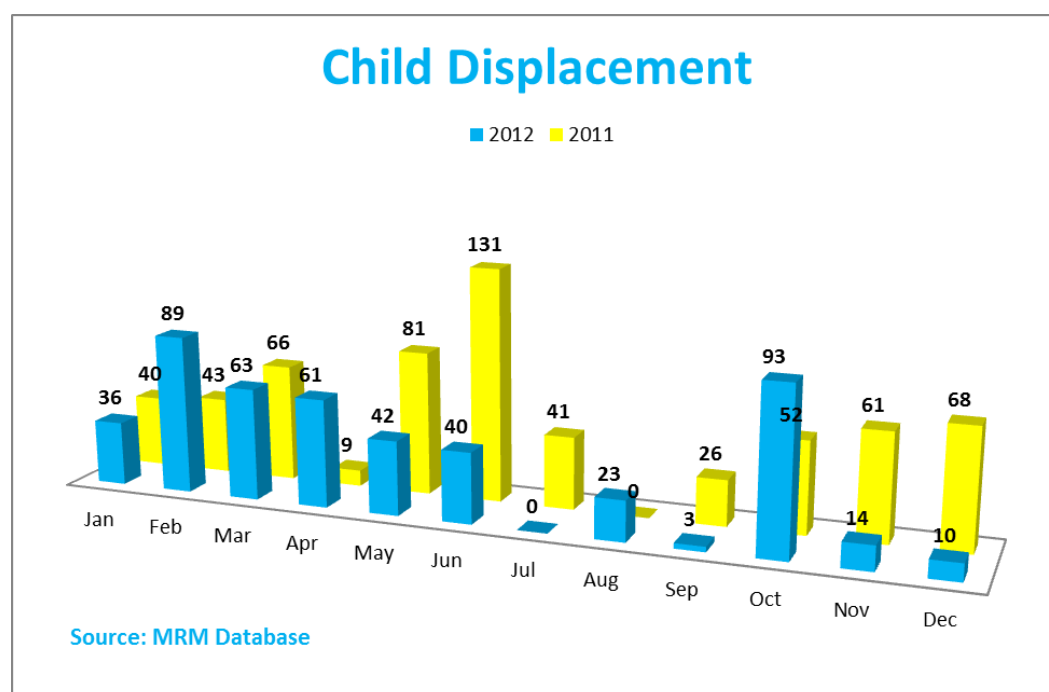
⁵ www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/WHO_Initial_Health_Assessment_Report_Gaza_Strip_-_December_2012.pdf

⁶ Approximately 18% of the West Bank has been designated as a closed military zone for training, or ‘firing zone’: this is roughly the same amount of the West Bank under full Palestinian Authority (Area A, 17.7%). Approximately 5,000 Palestinians reside in the firing zones, mostly Bedouin or herding communities, many of which existed prior to the closing of the area (Source: UN OCHA).

cases, a Palestinian family of five people was displaced in the village of Al Khalayleh (East Jerusalem) when settlers set fire to their home while they were working in nearby fields.

In 2012, the temporary displacement of over 230 Palestinian families was also recorded. The great majority of these families live in the northern Jordan Valley and they were displaced because of military training conducted by Israeli Security Forces in and around their communities. This included over eight separate incidents throughout the year, mostly notably in June, November and December. Most of the families were able to return following the end of training. However, the families report significant fear and distress and, in some cases, damage to fields, cultivated areas and infrastructure in the communities.

Israel's plan to transfer the Bedouin population currently living in the East Jerusalem periphery (mainly Palestine refugees from 1948, more than half of whom are children) continued to be discussed with different alternatives for the relocation being proposed in 2012. Should the plan be implemented, it would vacate an important area that links the northern and southern West Bank and would allow for the expansion of the Ma'ale Adumin settlement. There are serious legal concerns that the implementation of the plan would amount to forcible transfer and forced evictions, contrary to the Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.



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