

Since 2007, a UNICEF-led working group has consolidated efforts to report on the impacts of armed conflict on children in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). 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 edition covers the year 2011.

Photo: A Palestinian girl leaves school and walks towards the Beit Yatir checkpoint which lies between her school and her home in the hamlet of A Seefer, south of Hebron, in the "Seam Zone".

UNICEF oPt / Ennaimi



Grave violations against Israeli and Palestinian children in 2011

In 2011, children were significantly affected by the situation of conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. Of significant concern is the increased number of Palestinian children killed and injured during Israeli military operations and as a result of violence by Israeli Settlers in the West Bank. There was also a sharp increase in the number of children forcibly displaced, more than double the number of children displaced in 2010, as a result of demolitions of Palestinian structures, in particular homes. Palestinian children were killed and injured during Israeli military operations in Gaza, including in the Access Restricted Areas (ARA)¹.

A number of Israeli children were killed and injured by Palestinian armed groups, including in the context of attacks on schools. Access to education for Israeli children was hampered several times in southern Israel due to school closure to ensure the students safety due to rockets fired from Gaza. All parties to the conflict have an obligation to prevent violations, protect civilians and provide effective remedy for victims of violations of the law. This includes ensuring that any and all reported violations are subject to timely, independent, impartial and thorough investigations that meet international standards and ensure accountability.

KILLINGS AND INJURIES

During 2011, **twenty Palestinian children** (19 boys and one girl) **were killed and 448 injured** (393 boys and 55 girls) in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and **five Israeli children** (four boys and one girl) **were killed and two boys injured** in Israel, marking a significant increase compared to last year when 11 Palestinian children were killed and 360 injured, and two Israeli children were reported injured.

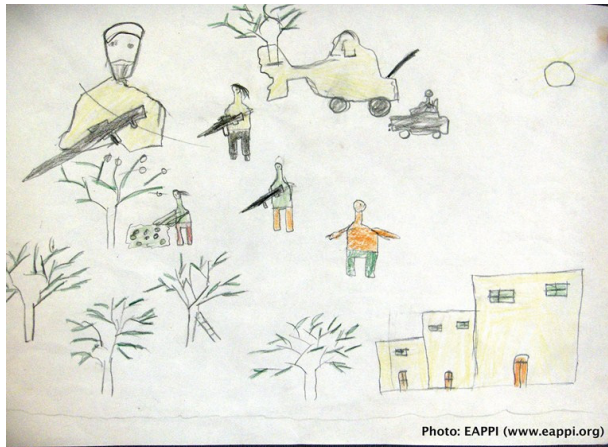
¹ When first created in 1995 as part of the Palestinian-Israeli Interim Agreement, the area of restricted access (an area of land on the Gaza side of the 1949 Green Line) was 50 metres wide. Since that time, the Government of Israel has gradually and unilaterally expanded the restricted land area. At current, Palestinians in Gaza are either totally or partially prohibited to enter the area 1000-1500 meters from the Green Line, which makes up about one third of arable lands

Among the 448 Palestinian children injured, 89 were under the age of 12. Sixty-nine per cent of the injuries occurred in the West Bank, including 20 per cent in East Jerusalem. Thirty-one per cent of the injuries occurred in Gaza, including 15 per cent in the ARA. Among the 20 Palestinian children killed, 13 boys were killed by **Israeli Security forces (ISF)**, two boys by **Israeli settlers**, two boys and one girl by **Palestinian armed groups** and two boys by **unexploded ordnances**. Among the 448 children injured, 384 were injured directly by Israeli Security forces, 41 by Israeli settlers, 15 by unknown perpetrators due to the detonation of an explosive device, and eight by Palestinian armed groups.

In the West Bank, there are **serious concerns regarding the increased number of incidents in which Palestinian children were killed or injured by Israeli settlers**.

In 2011, two boys were killed as a result of shooting by settlers: a 17-year old boy was killed in Silwan (East Jerusalem) while walking on the street and a 15-year old boy was killed in Hebron while working on his family land. 35 Palestinian boys and six girls were injured by Israeli settlers, compared to one boy killed and 29 children injured in 2010. Eighteen Palestinian children were injured as a result of Israeli settlers

throwing stones at the vehicles in which they were travelling, or during attacks against Palestinian houses or farm land. Twenty-one children were physically assaulted by Israeli settlers and two 17-year-old children were shot and killed by settlers in the West Bank.



A drawing done by a Palestinian child who saw armed settlers enter his village in the West Bank. Photo EAPPI

In 2011, eight unarmed Palestinian children were shot and killed by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) in the **Access Restricted Areas (ARA) in Gaza**. The ARA, formally known as the “Buffer Zone”, was established by the ISF, citing security concerns over militant activity in the zone. Declared by the ISF to cover up to 300 metres from the Gaza perimeter fence, the exact boundaries of the zone are unclear because there is no physical demarcation; in practice, people have been shot up to 1000-1500 meters from the Green Line. In May 2009, Israeli Security Forces stated that any individual entering the zone would be endangering his or her life.

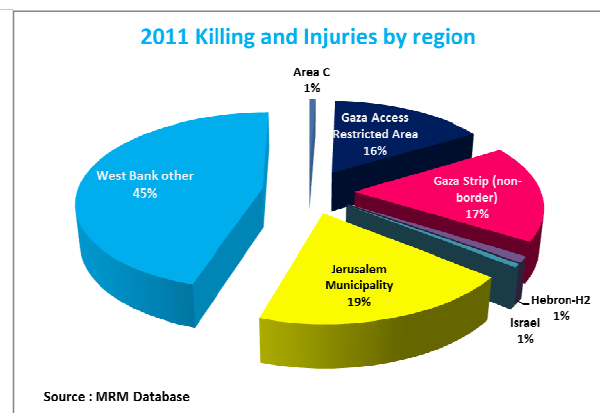
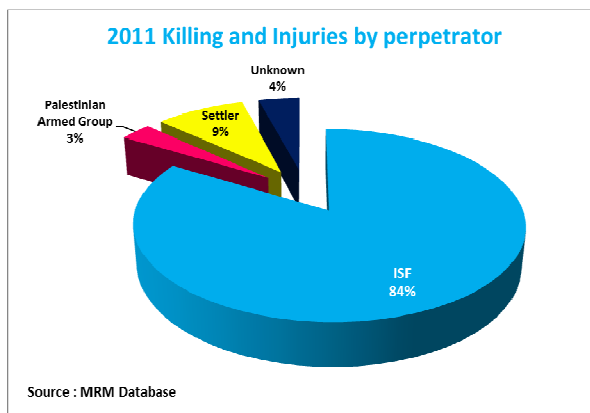
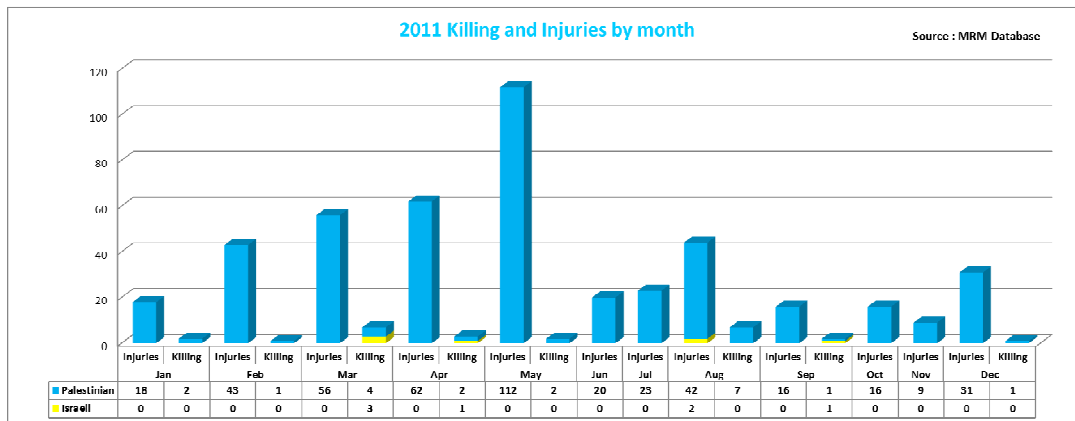
In 2011, eight boys were killed, two of whom were mentally disabled, and 65 boys and 2 girls were injured by Israeli fire in or near the ARA, compared to 44 children injured in 2010. Children were killed or injured in the ARA as a result of air strikes, shelling from ISF tanks penetrating into the Gaza Strip or by direct shooting. On 15 May, 33 boys were injured during a demonstration organized by Islamist and Nationalist Parties to mark “Al Nakba” Day.² Israeli Security Forces positioned at the Erez checkpoint in observation towers shot with live ammunition and fired teargas to dispel the demonstrators who had gathered near the fence. Other children were injured in the ARA while inside their homes (15 children), while collecting gravel and scrap metal (6 children), and while fishing (1 child); some of them were present in the ARA for other reasons, including playing (12 children).

Eight Palestinian children were injured as a result of rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza that fell short and landed inside Gaza, or by explosives that detonated while preparing for an attack or being stored in populated areas.

² Palestinians call ‘Al Nakba’ (the catastrophe) the day of the creation of the state of Israel, when the majority of the Palestinian population became refugees.

In 2011, five Israeli children, four boys and one girl, were killed and two boys were injured in conflict related incidents. A one-year-old boy was killed in a car accident near Hebron caused by Palestinian stone throwing. Two boys and a 3-month old baby girl were killed in an attack on an Israeli family living in the Itamar settlement near Nablus, perpetrated by two Palestinian youth, age 18 and 19. In southern Israel, a 16-year-old boy was killed when a rocket fired by Palestinian armed groups hit the school bus he was travelling in near the fence with Gaza. Two boys, aged one and nine, were injured when a rocket fired by Palestinian armed groups from the Gaza Strip hit the town of Ashkelon.

The number of children injured as a result of inter-factional fighting and activities by Palestinian armed groups is assumed to be higher than reported in both Gaza and the West Bank, as few of these incidents are reported due to the risks involved for the Palestinians who would provide evidence.



RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN BY ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

One case of child recruitment was documented after a 17-year-old Palestinian boy was killed because the explosives he was carrying for the Hamas military wing, Izz al-Din Al Qassam Brigades, detonated while he was performing surveillance tasks in Rafah, south Gaza on 11 August.

Six cases of attempted child recruitment by the ISF were reported in 2011, involving five boys aged 17 and one 15-year-old who were arrested and, during the interrogation, were offered money, entry to Israel and a car or mobile phone, in exchange for providing information on stone throwing in their villages. There were also reports in the Israeli media that about 36 Israelis aged 16 and 17 year old

participated in a program run by the Border Police in which they were allowed to carry weapons and to arrest Palestinian illegal workers near Modiin.³ A spokesperson for the Israeli Ministry of Public Security said the program was run by a private contractor who had allowed children to carry out arrests without the knowledge of the Ministry and in contravention of the rules of the program.

ARREST AND DETENTION

At the end of December 2011, 135 Palestinian children remained in detention in Israeli prisons for alleged security violations. This included 134 boys and one girl between the ages of 12 to 17 years, including 19 children between the ages of 12 and 15 years. A steady decrease in the number of children in detention has been observed since March 2011, though the number started increasing again in November and December 2011. On 18 December 2011, 55 children were released as part of the second stage of the prisoner swap for ISF soldier Gilad Shalit – this constitutes the highest number of children released in one month over the past four years (since 2008).

In 2011, two cases of administrative detention were reported. In the first case, the boy was released in February 2011 after 11 months in administrative detention. Another child was arrested and put in administrative detention in December 2011.

In 2011, 59 children from the West Bank were reported as transferred to prisons inside Israel in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

On 27 September 2011, the Israeli Military Commander in the West Bank issued Military Order 1676 raising the age of majority in the military courts from 16 to 18 years. Under this new order, requirements were also introduced for the police to notify parents when their children are arrested.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010	318	343	342	335	305	291	284	286	269	256	228	213
2011	222	221	226	220	211	209	202	180	164	150	161	135

Source: DCI Palestine, *Detention Bulletin*, December 2011.

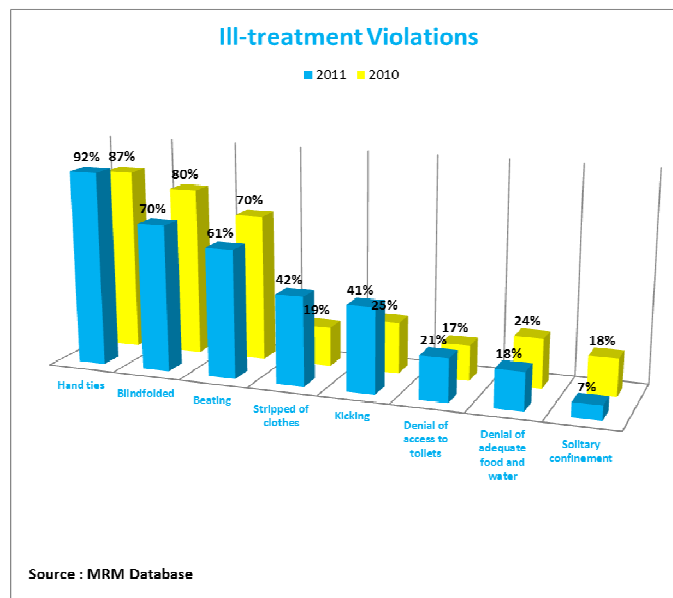
ILL-TREATMENT AND TORTURE

In relation to the cases of detention mentioned above, a sample of 116 cases of ill-treatment, some of them amounting to torture, were documented through sworn affidavits. All of the 116 Palestinian boys reported being subjected to ill-treatment by the Israeli Security Forces or police. Sixty-two of these boys were below the age of 16, including two 10-year olds and one 9-year-old. In 92 per cent of the cases (107 boys) the use of hand-ties was reported, while 70 per cent (81 children) reported being blindfolded and 61 per cent reported being beaten. Compared to 2010, this marks an increase in the percentage of the use of hand-ties (87 per cent in 2010) and a decrease in the percentage of reported cases of blindfolding (82 per cent) and beating (68 per cent).

In 2011, allegations of solitary confinement were reported by 7 per cent of the cases (8 boys), this marks a 11 point reduction in the percentage of cases reported last year. Denial of access to toilets was reported by 21 per cent of the children (an increase compared to 15 per cent of 2010), while denial of access to food and water was reported by 18 per cent of the children (a decrease compared to the reported 23 per cent of 2010).

³ www.haaretz.com/news/national/border-police-train-israeli-teens-to-detain-illegal-palestinian-workers-1.405091

The number of reported cases of sexual violence decreased compared to last year, with two cases involving threats of sexual violence and one case of actual sexual assault by inappropriate touching in 2011, compared to 14 cases including one reported case of actual sexual assault in 2010. The majority of the boys reporting ill-treatment are from the Jerusalem municipality (43 boys), Qalqiliya Governorate (21 boys), and Hebron Governorate (18 boys) in the West Bank. The high number of instances of such treatment reported and documented suggests a systematic pattern of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of Palestinian children in the custody of the Israeli Military detention system. Some children mentioned that they did not report incidents of ill treatment while in custody, due to fear of repercussions for making such complaints and because they doubt the effectiveness of the complaints process.



EDUCATION-RELATED VIOLATIONS

Attacks on schools

A significant number of attacks on Palestinian schools and education facilities were reported in 2011 (46 cases) in oPt, compared to 20 cases reported in 2010. Five attacks were reported against Israeli schools, compared to one case reported in 2010. These attacks resulted in damage to schools or interruption of education, and in some instances in direct injury of children.

Thirty-two cases were reported in the West Bank. In five instances the ISF fired tear gas at Palestinian schools during search operations in the villages, or in the context of demonstrations, resulting in students suffering from tear gas inhalation. Direct attacks on schools were also reported: in seven instances the ISF entered the school premises. These incidents included one instance where a school was converted into a military outpost for a several hours in Nablus, and one where the Awarta Secondary School for was used as a detention and interrogation centre, resulting in the school being closed and classes cancelled for two weeks. School books, computers, furniture and personal belongings were damaged and sometimes confiscated by soldiers. Israeli Security Forces (ISF) had surrounded the village of Awarta and declared it a closed military zone in March in order to conduct a search operation for suspects following the murder of three young Israeli children and their parents in the nearby Itamar settlement.

In eight instances, attacks against schools were perpetrated by Israeli settlers. Israeli settlers, including children, physically assaulted Palestinian children on their way to school, attacked schools by throwing rocks and empty bottles, or raided and vandalized schools, including a case when a school prayer room was set on fire in Huwwara (Nablus) and another case when a school was flooded with raw sewage from a nearby settlement causing disruption in Azzun Atma (Qalqiliya).

Ten schools located in Area C of the West Bank⁴ received demolition or stop work orders issued by the Israeli authorities. In addition, one classroom of the Gayya Primary School in South Hebron was demolished and the playground of the Al Ibrahimieh School and College was leveled by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority in Jerusalem.

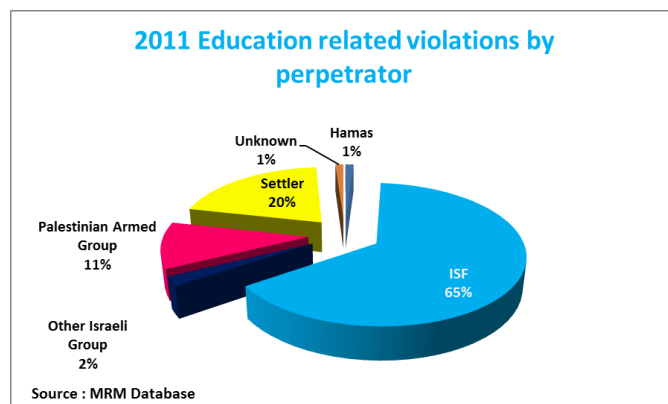
In Gaza, fourteen schools were hit, 11 by Israeli Security Forces, two by Palestinian armed groups and one by unknown armed Palestinians. Eleven schools were damaged by Israeli air strikes targeting Palestinian armed groups, or as a result of shooting near or around schools, including two schools, located in the Access Restricted Areas, that were evacuated due to heavy firing in close proximity of the schools. One of the schools was the UNRWA Khalifa Ben Zayed School in Beit Lahiya, where on 25 August, the school was damaged by an ISF strike on a nearby sporting club. This school had previously been severely damaged during Operation Cast Lead after being hit by ISF shells containing white phosphorus on 17 January 2009.⁵

Palestinian armed groups were responsible for damage caused to two schools in Gaza, the Al Qastina School in Jabaliya and the UNRWA Beit Hanoun Preparatory "A and B" Girls School, when rockets fired at southern Israel fell short. In addition, unknown Palestinian armed men attacked and vandalized an UNRWA Summer Games facility in Beit Lahiya, which was supposed to host a world record attempt for the largest number of children flying kites later on that day.

Palestinian armed groups were also responsible for five attacks on schools in southern Israel, as a result of guided anti-tank missiles and home-made rockets launched from Gaza. As noted above, a Grad rocket hit a school bus, which resulted in the death of a 16-year-old boy who was on board. In addition, three schools and one kindergarten were damaged.

Denial of access to education

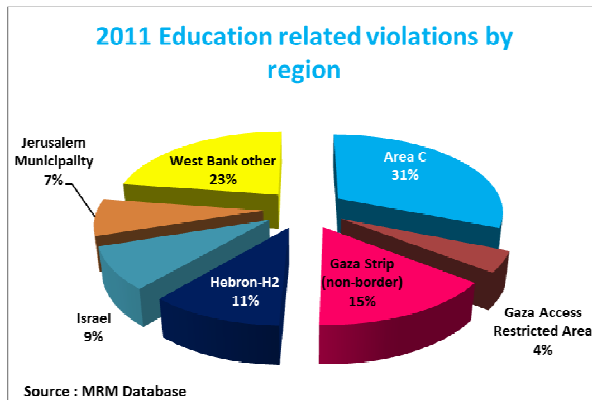
In 2011, 39 cases of denial of access to education for Palestinian children were reported, affecting 30,900 students, including 26 cases perpetrated by the ISF, 11 cases by Israeli settlers, one case by the Jerusalem Education Administration and one case by the de facto authorities in Gaza. In the latter case, the de facto education authorities prevented eight students, age 15 to 17 who had received scholarships to study in the USA, from travelling abroad owing to "social and cultural reasons".



Three cases of denial of access to education for Israeli children were reported, when three schools in southern Israel were closed and 323,000 students kept at home for up to three days at a time to ensure their safety due to rockets fired from Gaza by Palestinian armed groups.

⁴ In the West Bank, over 60% of the land (designated as Area C under the Oslo Agreements) is under full Israeli control.

⁵ The school was known in 2009 as the Beit Lahia Elem Co-Ed School.



DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO HEALTH

As a result of the Israeli closure regime on Gaza that continues despite some easing since June 2010, the health-care system suffers from a severe lack of adequate equipment and instruments, leading patients to seek treatment outside of Gaza. In 2011, some children in need of specialized medical care outside of Gaza continued to face delays and denials of access to health services. Both delays and denials in processing applications can be life-threatening to child patients who are waiting for urgent medical treatment. In 2011, two girls and one boy below the age of 10 died while waiting to receive permits to exit Gaza for urgent medical treatment. While 95 percent (3,775 out of 3,949) applications for children who sought medical assistance outside of Gaza were approved, 171 applications, 90 boys and 81 girls, were delayed, including 45 children below the age of three years, and three applications were denied, one boy and two girls.

In the West Bank, one case of denial of humanitarian access for children was reported in 2011. After the village of Awarta was declared a closed military zone on 12 March, during the ISF search operation for the suspects of the murder of the Israeli settler family in Itamar, its inhabitants, including children, were confined at home for several days, unable to access medical and educational services.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT

A sharp increase in demolition of Palestinian structures was reported in 2011, resulting in hundreds of Palestinian families being forcibly displaced in the West Bank. Almost 1,100 Palestinians, including 618 children, were forcibly displaced as a result of demolitions of over 620 Palestinian structures by Israeli Security Forces in the West Bank in 2011. This is more than double the number of children displaced in 2010 (299 children).

There were reports of an Israeli Civil Administration plan to displace Palestinian Bedouins, more than half of which are children, currently living in the East Jerusalem periphery in the vicinity of settlements that are reportedly planning to expand. The ICA's proposed relocation site, near Jerusalem's main garbage landfill, raises health and security concerns for children, and was rejected by the Bedouins who refuse to leave their land. This raises 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. Monitoring of this plan and its impact on children's access to medical and educational services will continue.

Contact: UNICEF oPt - Catherine Weibel - cweibel@unicef.org - Monica Awad - mawad@unicef.org