

Grave violations against Israeli and Palestinian children in 2018

Major developments and Context

Palestinian and Israeli children continued to be severely affected by the prevailing situation of military occupation, conflict and closure during 2018. The highest numbers of Palestinian children killed (59) and injured (3,472) since 2014 were verified, while six Israeli children were verified to have been injured in conflict-related incidents. In the Gaza Strip, children were killed by Israeli forces (IF) in every month of the reporting year.

On 30 March 2018, a broad-based coordinating committee including civil society organizations and Palestinian political factions initiated a six-week 'Great Return March' at the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip to claim the right of return of Palestinian refugees. Demonstrations continued on a weekly basis through the reporting period. At least 1,992 children¹ were injured and 34 killed in the context of demonstrations in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israeli forces' response with live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets and tear gas, in many cases resulting in serious injuries, such as amputation, loss of vision, and paralysis. The number of children injured by live ammunition (952), and the number of deaths (30) resulting from live ammunition fired at the head or upper body of children were of particular concern. On 14 May 2018, demonstrations coinciding with the move of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and ahead of what Palestinians commemorate as the 'Nakba' or "catastrophe" Day, resulted in seven Palestinian children killed in a single day.

Incidents were also documented of individuals or small groups approaching and attempting to breach the fence to enter Israel from the Gaza Strip, launching incendiary kites, or laying explosive devices, often at night when demonstrations were not occurring. Such activities heightened risks for children and other civilians demonstrating or living close to the fence. At least 11 children were killed by IF along the Gaza Strip fence outside the context of demonstrations. The UN continued to call upon all actors to avoid targeting children, putting children at risk, or encouraging children to participate in violence.

In the Gaza Strip, the UN verified three incidents of recruitment and use of children by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades, Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades, and an unidentified Palestinian Armed Group, including one incident in which a child was killed.

The reporting period also witnessed the most serious escalations in the Gaza Strip since the 2014 conflict, with Israeli forces strikes on the Gaza Strip and rockets fired indiscriminately towards Israel by Palestinian armed groups. These escalations also resulted in grave violations against children.

- On 29 May, IF carried out 90 strikes in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian armed groups launched 200 rockets and mortars toward Israel, including a mortar which landed in a schoolyard in Sderot in southern Israel.
- On 14 and 15 July, Palestinian armed groups including Hamas fired more than 200 rockets and mortars toward Israel, and IF carried out airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. Two Israeli girls aged 14 and 15 were injured, and two Palestinian boys aged 14 were killed, while two health facilities in the Gaza Strip were damaged by IF strikes.
- On 26 and 27 October, Palestinian armed groups fired 34 rockets toward Israel, and IF carried out 95 strikes, one of which damaged a health facility in the Gaza Strip.
- Between 11 and 13 November, following discovery of an IF operation inside the Gaza Strip, IF and Hamas clashed on the ground. IF attacked 160 locations in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian armed groups fired approximately 450 rockets and mortars toward Israel. The escalation resulted in mass precautionary school closures in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel.

¹ Including 1,276 injuries verified within 2018 and reported in the Secretary General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, and 665 injuries that occurred in 2018 and were late-verified by the UN through ongoing monitoring in 2019.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the situation was tense particularly at the beginning and end of 2018. Detention of children by Israeli forces², including verified ill-treatment of at least 169 children during their detention³, and education related violations by Israeli settlers and IF remained a concern throughout the reporting period. The situation in the West Bank deteriorated in the last quarter of 2018. In October, a Palestinian woman was killed by a stone thrown at her vehicle by Israeli settlers near Nablus. A 16-year-old Israeli boy was subsequently charged with manslaughter in connection with the incident and released on bail to house arrest. A shooting attack by a Palestinian near Ofra settlement on 9 December injured seven Israeli civilians, including four children, and three adults including a pregnant woman whose child was delivered prematurely and subsequently died. A 17-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by IF after driving into the Beit El settlement, apparently by mistake. IF claimed that the car was shot after avoiding a checkpoint without stopping. IF carried out mass raids and arrests, including in PA-administered areas, allegedly in search of perpetrators, while other alleged or confirmed shooting, stabbing and vehicular attacks on settlers or IF were reported.

Recruitment and use of children

The UN verified three incidents of recruitment and use of three 17-year-old boys by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades, Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades, and an unidentified Palestinian Armed Group (one each), which took place in the Gaza Strip (2) and the West Bank (1). For example, in April a 17-year-old boy affiliated with Al-Quds Brigades was killed in an explosion while travelling in a rickshaw with three adult members of the group, reportedly to carry out an operation in the Gaza Strip. Another 17-year-old boy was confirmed to be a member of Hamas al-Qassam Brigades. Another 17-year-old boy was used by an unidentified Palestinian Armed Group to transport weapons in the West Bank.

Additional allegations of recruitment and use were received in the reporting period which the UN investigated and did not verify, either because they did not meet the definition of recruitment or due to access reasons and the security of witnesses. The UN received reports of alleged recruitment of children which were based on social media posts or on allegations about relatives' affiliations or display of factions' flags at their funerals, but there were insufficient verifiable details about the specific cases. For example, a 15-year-old boy was reported to have been a member of the 'scouts' program of Islamic Jihad, though not an enlisted member of the group's armed wing. Another child was confirmed by the UN to have been occasionally paid to make Molotov cocktails and transport weapons in the Gaza Strip, placing him at grave risk of physical injury, however it could not be verified if this activity was organized by a party to the conflict.

The UN also verified three cases of Palestinian boys (aged 15-16) who reported that IF attempted to recruit them as informants while they were detained and under interrogation.

Killing and maiming

Killing

The United Nations verified a total of 59 Palestinian children between 18 months and 17 years old (57 boys and two girls) who were killed in the West Bank including East Jerusalem (8), and the Gaza Strip (51). This is nearly a four-fold increase compared to the 15 Palestinian children killed in 2017 (13 boys and two girls). The killings were attributed to Israeli forces (56), an Israeli settler (1), the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades (1), and one boy was killed by an accidental explosion.

Of these 59 children, 34 children (33 boys and one girl) aged 4 to 17 were killed in the Gaza Strip by IF in the context of demonstrations at the fence, including the "Great March of Return" demonstrations which began on 30 March.

² The total number of children detained during the reporting period is not known to the UN, which only has access to monthly headcount data from the Israeli Prison Services.

³ Ill-treatment during arrest, transfer and detention includes, inter alia, blindfolds, painful hand ties, physical violence and verbal abuse, solitary confinement, and deprivation of water and food, as well as breaches of due process such as being informed of rights, access to a lawyer or parents). Refer to section on Detention of children for further details.

This represents 67% of all children killed in the Gaza Strip in 2018. Of these, 30 children (88%) died as a result of being shot with live ammunition in the upper body (i.e. head, neck, chest, neck, back, stomach or abdomen) by IF. Another two boys died after being struck in the head by tear gas canisters. Additionally, one boy died after being shot in the knee with live ammunition; and one four-year-old boy died from multiple injuries caused by shrapnel to his right eye, neck, and abdomen, apparently caused by a fragmented bullet shot by the IF as he was standing with his father approximately 150 meters from the fence. Of concern was the high number of children against whom lethal force was used while unarmed and not appearing to pose an imminent threat of death or risk of serious injury to Israeli forces' soldiers on the other side of the fence.

A further 11 children (all boys) were killed by IF near the fence outside the context of demonstrations, in several cases at night. This includes boys killed while crossing or allegedly attempting to cross the fence, as well as children killed inside the Gaza Strip in proximity to the fence. The UN could not in every circumstance verify the intentions of children killed near the fence.

Three other children (two 14-year-old boys and one 18-month-old girl) were killed during IF airstrikes on Gaza City on 14 July and on Deir El-Balah on 9 August. A 13-year old boy who was severely injured in an IF drone strike on the Gaza Strip in 2014 died from these wounds in November 2018.

One 17-year-old boy, who was a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades, died in an explosion reportedly while carrying out an operation with three adult members of the group. In addition, an 11-year-old boy was killed by an improvised explosive device accidentally detonated at his home by his father, an Al-Aqsa Brigade member.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, seven boys were killed by IF and one by an Israeli settler in 2018, five of whom were shot during demonstrations and clashes erupting during IF operations. Another 17-year-old boy was shot and killed when IF opened fire on a car that entered the Beit El settlement apparently by mistake. Another 17-year-old boy was killed by IF in the context of an alleged stabbing attack. The boy was critically injured inside a police station in East Jerusalem and subsequently died in hospital; the UN was unable to confirm his cause of death. Another 17-year-old boy was shot and killed by an Israeli settler, after carrying out a stabbing attack which killed one and injured two settlers in the Adam settlement on 26 July.

Maiming and Injuries

In 2018, the UN verified a total of 3,472 conflict related injuries of Palestinian children of which 716 were verified in detail in 2019, after the issuance of the Annual Report of the Secretary General. The 2,756 injuries to Palestinian children (242 girls and 2,514 boys) reported in the SG's Annual Report include 1,335 children injured in the Gaza Strip (73 girls and 1,262 boys) and 1,421 children injured in the West Bank (169 girls and 1,252 boys, including at least 90 refugees).⁴ The total number of injuries is three times the total number verified in 2017 (1,160). In the Gaza Strip, half of all verified injuries to children were the result of use of live ammunition by IF, compared to the West Bank where nearly 70 per cent of verified child injuries were a result of tear gas inhalation.

The UN also verified six injuries to Israeli children (four girls and two boys) — in the West Bank (two girls and two boys) and southern Israel (two girls).

In the West Bank, of the 1,421 Palestinian children injured, 1,398 were attributed to IF, including 988 children seriously injured as a result of inhaling tear gas, and subsequently requiring medical treatment. Children were also injured by live ammunition (85), ammunition shrapnel (10), rubber-coated metal bullets (271), tear gas canisters (14), sound grenades (6), physical assault (21), pepper spray (2), and one child was hit by an IF vehicle. Most incidents occurred in the context of demonstrations, clashes and IF operations. A further 23 Palestinian children were injured by Israeli settlers in Hebron, Nablus, Salfit and East Jerusalem in attacks with pepper spray, stones, and physical assault. Of these cases, three Palestinian boys aged between 14 and 17 years-old were injured while committing or allegedly attempting to commit stabbing attempts against IF.

⁴ Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General, 20 June 2019, S/2019/50.

In December, four Israeli children (two girls and two boys aged 15-16) were verified to have been injured in a drive-by shooting attack by a Palestinian on Road 60 outside the Ofra settlement in the West Bank.

Of the 1,335 verified injuries to children in the Gaza Strip reported in the SG's Annual Report, 59 occurred prior to 30 March, while 1,276 children were injured between 30 March and 31 December during demonstrations at the fence. These 1,276 verified incidents affected 73 girls and 1,203 boys, of whom 629 were injured by live ammunition (49%), 167 by shrapnel (13%), 21 by rubber-coated bullets (2%), 16 by tear gas canisters (1%), and 443 seriously injured by tear gas inhalation (35%). Several of these children have suffered life changing injuries and are still undertaking treatment, including 20 children who have had limbs amputated. The Gaza Ministry of Health reported that 5,647 children were injured during demonstrations in the same period from 30 March to 31 December, of which 2,636 were referred to hospitals in the Gaza Strip for further medical care. The UN could not verify all reported injuries nor the circumstances due to the magnitude of the caseload and the immediate response needs. Through ongoing monitoring in 2019, an additional 716 child injuries that occurred in the Gaza Strip in 2018 and attributed to IF have been late-verified.⁵

In southern Israel, two girls aged 14 and 15 years were injured by shrapnel when a rocket fired indiscriminately from the Gaza Strip by a Palestinian armed group landed on the roof of their home on 14 July 2018.

Detention of children

A high number of Palestinian children were arrested and detained by IF for alleged security related offences.⁶ Most children who provided affidavits were accused of throwing stones and some for throwing Molotov cocktails, offences which can carry a penalty of up to 20 years' imprisonment. According to Israel Prison Services (IPS) data, between January and December there was a monthly average of 271 Palestinian children in detention from the West Bank including East Jerusalem, with a total 203 children detained at the end of December, including 114 children held in pre-trial detention and/or during trial, and 87 serving a sentence.

According to information provided by the Government of Israel, the maximum periods of military detention for Palestinian children in the West Bank who were suspected or charged with a crime or security offence by the IDF Prosecutor were reduced in 2018 for all phases of detention, due to amendments to military orders introduced on 1 May.⁷ The UN could not independently confirm this trend.

⁵ Including the 716 late-verified injuries, the UN has verified a total of 1,992 children (88 girls and 1,904 boys) injured by IF and hospitalized in the context of the GMR in 2018. These were injured by live ammunition (952); shrapnel (312); rubber-coated bullets (57); tear gas canisters (325); and tear gas inhalation (344). Most children who are hit by tear gas canisters also suffer from tear gas inhalation, while the CAAC database only records one weapon type to avoid double-counting. Through follow-up visits with injured children in 2019, some cases previously recorded as 'tear gas inhalation' were re-classified as 'hit by tear gas canister' for greater accuracy and to reflect another pattern of serious injuries affecting Palestinian children. Children hit by tear gas canisters may suffer fractures, concussions or internal bleeding, while four children in The Gaza Strip (two in 2018 and two in 2019) have been killed after being shot in the head with tear gas canisters during the GMR.

⁶ Palestinian children are also detained by forces of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and de facto authorities (Hamas) in The Gaza Strip, primarily for alleged criminal offences. Those detentions are not covered in the Children and Armed Conflict Bulletin since they do not occur in the context of armed conflict, but in a context of domestic law enforcement. No reports of Palestinian forces detaining children alleged to be associated with armed groups were received in 2018. Regardless of the scope of the CAAC Bulletin, juvenile justice and the detention of children is a core part of UNICEF's global mandate as defined in the CRC. UNICEF advocates with all parties for respect of the CRC, whereby detention of children should be only as a measure of last resort. UNICEF has supported the development of legislation in Palestine which commits the state to alternatives to detention and specialized services for children in contact with the law, while working with partners to document issues around detention of children and provide services to detained children.

⁷ See: "Re: Palestinian Minors in Military Juvenile Justice System – June 2018", Ministry of Justice, 13 June 2018, paragraph 15. At: <https://www.justice.gov.il/Units/YeutzVehakika/InternationalLaw/MainDocs1/PalestinianMinors2018.pdf>. The amendments outline maximum detention durations of children before first appearance before a judge (15.1); before submission of an indictment (15.2); during filing of indictment (15.3); between submission of an indictment and beginning of a trial (15.4); and until conclusion of legal proceedings (15.5).

The total number of children arrested and detained in the West Bank could not be confirmed. The UN supported the provision of legal assistance to 397 children (including three girls) aged between 12 and 17 years-old who were arrested in East Jerusalem. At least 65 pupils were detained/arrested while commuting to/from school in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. The UN also documented four cases of administrative detention (i.e. detention without charges) in 2018, compared to five cases in 2017 in the West Bank, as well as 13 cases of children aged between 14 and 17 years from East Jerusalem under open-ended house arrest.

Palestinian Children in Israeli Detention Facilities (Source: IPS)

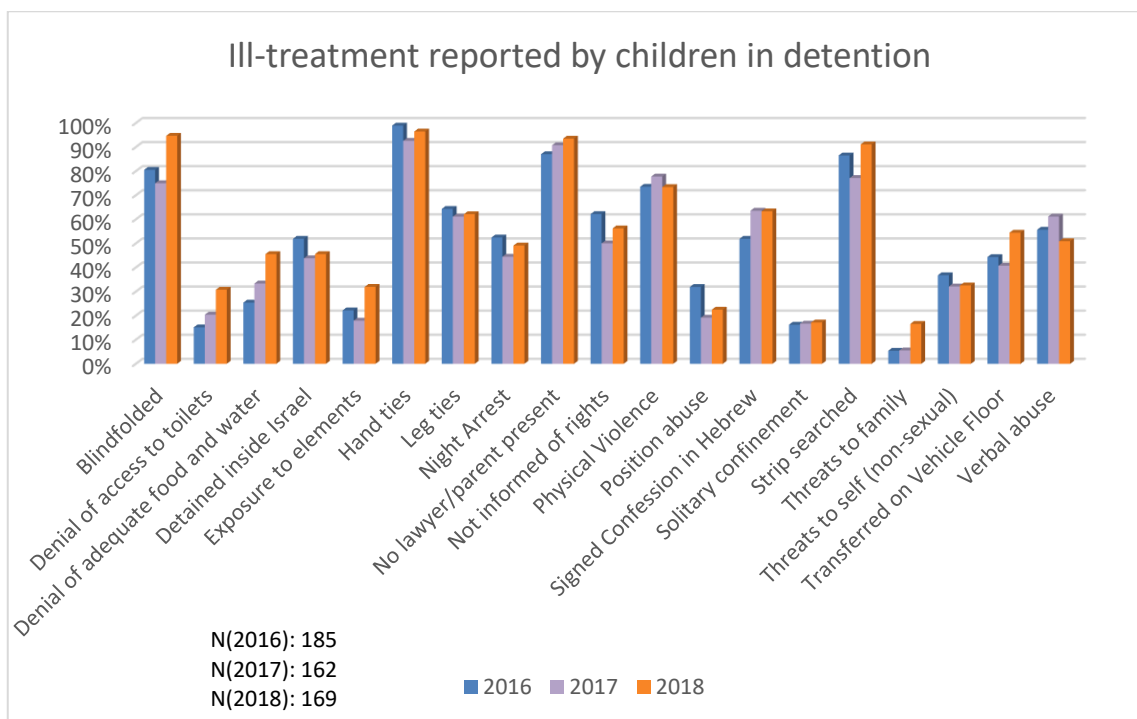
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2010	314	338	337	328	300	287	281	280	264	251	226	210	285
2011	221	216	224	217	211	207	201	176	162	150	159	132	190
2012	166	183	203	218	231	220	210	194	189	164	177	193	196
2013	219	234	236	236	223	193	195	180	179	159	173	154	215
2014	183	210	202	196	215	202	192	201	182	163	156	151	188
2015	163	182	182	164	163	160	153	156	171	307	407	422	219
2016	406	438	444	414	332	300	343	319	271	285	284	275	343
2017	301	297	289	303	331	318	304	297	325	318	313	352	312
2018	351	356	304	315	291	273	251	239	230	220	217	203	271

Ill-treatment during arrest, transfer and detention, including breaches of due process, by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Israeli Police, the Israeli Security Agency, and the IPS continued to be reported by a substantial proportion of interviewed children. The UN documented 169 cases of boys aged between 12 and 17 years old in the West Bank (163) and East Jerusalem (6), of which 131 (78%) reported being subject to at least ten different forms of ill-treatment and breaches of due process, including the following:

- 83 children (49% of those who provided testimonies) were arrested from home at night during planned arrest operations.
- 107 children (63% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they had to sign a document in Hebrew, a language that they do not understand.
- 160 children (95% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they had been blindfolded during transfer from the place of arrest and that they remained blindfolded sometimes even during interrogation.
- 163 children (96% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they were handtied upon arrest, including 115 children (68%) who reported that a painful method of hand-tying was used, 105 children (62%) reported being leg-tied, and 92 (54%) that they were transferred on the floor of a vehicle.
- 124 children (73% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they endured physical violence, including slapping, punching and kicking during arrest, transfer, interrogation and/or detention.
- 86 children (51% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they were verbally abused and intimidated during arrest, transfer, interrogation and/or detention.
- 95 children (56% of those who provided testimonies) reported not being adequately notified of their legal rights, in particular the right to counsel and the right to remain silent.
- 29 children (17% of those who provided testimonies), between 15 and 17 years, reported that they had been held in solitary confinement during interrogations, i.e. held in a cell alone for periods ranging between three

and 40 days, without daylight, and no access to other children simultaneously held in detention, family or lawyer.⁸

- 158 children (93% of those who provided testimonies) reported that neither a parent nor a lawyer was present during their interrogation.
- 77 children (46% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they were not provided with adequate food or water and 52 children (31% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they were not given access to toilets during the initial stages of detention, particularly at stages of arrest, transfer and interrogation.
- 54 children (32% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they were exposed to outside elements during the initial stages of detention, particularly at stages of arrest, transfer and while being held prior to interrogation This includes children being arrested and forced to stay outside during cold or hot weather for prolonged periods of time, including sometimes on their knees and/or hand-tied.
- 55 children (33% of those who provided testimonies) reported that they had been threatened in order to confess, during transfer and /or interrogation.
- 28 children (17% of those who provided testimonies) reported threats of harm to their family members during interrogation.



⁸ This includes cases in which children were held in solitary confinement while undergoing an interrogation by the Israel Security Agency (ISA, or Shabak)

Education-related violations

In 2018, 121 education-related incidents⁹ were documented by the UN in the West Bank (114) including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip (6), and one (1) incident in Israel. In particular, children's access to education was significantly hampered by clashes in and around schools, search and arrest operations, restrictions of access to schools, settler violence related incidents against schools, arrest and intimidation of school children and teachers, as well as a climate of fear and tension in and around some schools due to military presence. Indiscriminate rocket fire also hampered access to education for children in southern Israel during the reporting period.

Three incidents of attacks on schools in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel were verified. These include two attacks by IF affecting nearly 2,700 children. For example, on 14 September, an UNRWA-run co-ed school in Khan Younis was damaged by an IF tank shell that struck a nearby location and the double-shift school closed for one school day, affecting 2,500 children aged 6-15. In another verified attack in southern Israel, a mortar launched by Palestinian armed groups from The Gaza Strip exploded in the yard of a kindergarten in Kibutz Ein HaShlosa near S'derot on 29 May, causing some damage to playground equipment and the exterior of the school, and no injuries. The mortar was one of 25 reported as fired indiscriminately from the Gaza Strip at 7am, when students would normally start arriving at school.

In addition, 118 incidents of other interferences with education by IF (113 violations) and Israeli settlers (5 violations), affecting 23,188 children, were verified in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This included two verified incidents of military use of a school by IF. For example, on 11 November IF raided a school in Bethlehem governorate and used the school classrooms as a position to fire tear gas, stun grenades and rubber-coated bullets at people who were holding a ceremony in the area to mark the anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death. In the Gaza Strip, four schools sustained minor damage in IF airstrikes on Khan Younis, indirectly affecting 2,469 children.

In the West Bank, 53 incidents (46%) took place in the Hebron governorate, 21 of which took place in a single school in the Hebron H2 area. More than half of the verified interferences in the West Bank involved IF firing live ammunition, tear gas, or sound grenades in and around schools, mostly in the context of clashes or military operations (62 incidents). In addition, the United Nations verified 16 incidents in which students lost school time as a result of military closures, mainly in Nablus and Hebron Governorates. The UN also documented two IF threats to school personnel, followed by a military order to close a school for allegations of students throwing stones from the school premises towards a main road - Route 60. The school was closed for a day and allowed to re-open when the school administration agreed with IF that students would not throw stones from inside the school. The school administration maintains that students have never been permitted to throw stones from inside the school and the allegations are untrue, and that regular IF presence outside the school and along students' commuting routes to school result in intimidation of students and the undermining of a secure learning environment.

Five verified incidents were attributed to Israeli settlers, though other incidents attributed to Israeli forces were linked to settler-related violence. The Urif secondary school in Nablus Governorate, for example, continues to be impacted by incidents involving residents of Yitzhar settlement. On 18 October masked Israeli settlers from Yitzhar carrying axes and stones entered Urif and threw stones, including at the school, while IF did not intervene. IF then fired tear gas at students who attempted to leave the school, with 20 tear gas canisters fired into the school compound, resulting in 15 students and 21 school personnel affected by tear gas inhalation. A further seven students and one teacher were injured by rubber-coated bullets fired by the IF during clashes that ensued outside the school. The same school was evacuated on two earlier occasions in October in anticipation of attacks, and similar incidents affecting the school in Urif have been verified since 2012.¹⁰

Israeli authorities have reported steps taken to regulate the presence of military in and around schools and to regulate the use of weapons in these areas. The UN welcomes the chance to continue dialogue on this issue to

⁹ Education-related violations are reported here in accordance with UNSCR 1998 and subsequent guidance note (2014) available under: <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/AttacksonSchoolsHospitals.pdf>

¹⁰ See for example, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General, S/2013/245, 15 May 2013, paragraph 118.

reduce the negative impact on children's education.

Schools in the West Bank continued to face threats of demolition and/or confiscation by Israeli forces. During the reporting period, the UN verified five (5) incidents of schools receiving demolition orders and/or stop-work orders, and three schools were partially or totally demolished in Tubas, Hebron and Jerusalem governorates. One school serving 15 children in the Bedouin community of Tubas was demolished twice during the fourth quarter of 2018.

Conflict escalations also caused mass disruptions to children's education in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel when schools were closed for the safety of students and educators due to air strikes by Israeli forces and indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups.¹¹ For example, on 12 and 13 November, school closures affected an estimated 63,000 children in Beersheva, Sderot and Shaar HaNegev in southern Israel; and 637,195 children (319,991 boys and 257,204 girls) in 737 schools and 707 kindergartens in the Gaza Strip. Precautionary closures were also reported to have affected 3,000 students in Shaar HaNegev during escalations on 9 August and 17 October. Incidents were also reported in 2018 where incendiary balloons or kites launched from the Gaza Strip landed in or near schools in southern Israel.

Palestinian children injured in Gaza Strip demonstrations also frequently missed school days due to recovering from their injuries. For example, at least 205 UNRWA students¹² 6 injured in GMR demonstrations were documented to have missed a total of 2,330 school days while injured, an average of 11 days per student.

On 24 November, the social media of the Gaza Strip National Security Forces (Hamas) published photos of uniformed personnel giving classroom presentations on use of weapons and conducting physical exercises which included students holding wooden mock rifles and standing in formations, in schools in Khan Younis. The UN could not confirm the veracity of the posts, nor further details of the activities or their impact on the affected schools. The UN reiterated its call for children not to be exposed to violence and for schools in particular to be always protected from entry of military personnel.

Health-related violations

In 2018, the UN verified three incidents in which health facilities in The Gaza Strip were damaged by IF airstrikes. In all three incidents the affected facilities were not directly struck. For example, on 26 October, the Indonesian Hospital was damaged by IF airstrikes. Several rooms of the hospital were lightly damaged in the incident, and vital health services were disrupted and seriously ill patients evacuated.

Three medical personnel were killed and a further 553 injured by IF whilst providing medical services during the Gaza Strip demonstrations. For example, an adult volunteer paramedic was shot and killed by IF on 10 August while providing medical care to demonstrators. The 553 personnel were injured by live ammunition (39), shrapnel (32), rubber bullets (18), tear gas canisters (89), and tear gas inhalation (375).

The UN also verified seven other interferences with health in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by IF (4) and Israeli settlers (3). This included incidents of incursions or clashes in or around health facilities affecting children, and stoning attacks on medical vehicles and personnel by Israeli settlers. In one instance, 25 IF members entered the emergency room of a hospital in East Jerusalem to arrest a boy who had been injured and was accused of throwing a Molotov cocktail. In another example, the UNRWA health center in Am'ari refugee camp was closed and medical staff evacuated after tear gas was fired into the facility by IF when clashes occurred following an IF demolition in the camp. Four children (3 girls and 1 boy aged 5-12) at the center for consultation could not be attended to due to the closure, and an undetermined number of other adults and children could not access medical services during

¹¹ In Israel-SOP Situation of Concern, precautionary closures of education facilities by relevant authorities have been widely reported but not counted as education-related violations in past reporting cycles. The above examples are included here for context on how armed conflict impacts education of children in The Gaza Strip and southern Israel, however these figures are not included in overall count of education related violations or affected children.

¹² Note, some UNRWA students are over 18 years old; the figure of 205 includes only students under 18.

the closure.

Denial of humanitarian access for children

The Gaza Strip's health sector struggled to respond to the overwhelming number of people injured in the weekly demonstrations at the fence. The limited capacities of hospitals and medical personnel, as well as the severity of injuries sustained, resulted in drastic consequences for the injured, including children. Many had to be discharged early or not operated on time, for lack of space, beds, or operation rooms. Critically injured children could not receive required (specialized) or proper treatment, and some suffered serious consequences, including 20 children who had limbs amputated. This also had a significant impact on access to routine health services, including neonatal and maternal health care.

Children in need of specialized medical care outside of the Gaza Strip continued to face delays and denials when accessing health services. The main reasons include the Israeli authorities' delay or denial of permits for accompanying adult relatives to cross into or through Israel and the non-approval of financial support from the Palestinian Authority. In one instance, a 2-year-old Palestinian boy from the Gaza Strip died after delays in receiving Palestinian approval of financial coverage for health care in Israel. Available data indicates that children injured in demonstrations were approved for to access critical medical services outside of the Gaza Strip at a far lower rate (22%) than average (75%). In one verified example, a 14-year old boy died from live-ammunition injuries after Israeli authorities denied him a permit to cross through Israel for a medical appointment in a hospital in East Jerusalem.

- **Erez:** In 2018, the Israeli District Liaison Office approved without delay 5,732 out of 7,604 applications (75%) for children to cross through the Erez terminal for medical treatment outside of the Gaza Strip (compared to 4,999 out of 7,463 applications (67%) in 2017). 1,768 (24%) applications were delayed (affecting 1,079 boys and 689 girls) and 104 (1%) were denied (affecting 69 boys and 35 girls). However, of the 45 children injured during demonstrations and referred for specialized medical care outside of the Gaza Strip between 30 March and 31 December, only ten applications (22%) to cross Erez were approved; while nine applications were denied (20%) and 26 applications were delayed (58%) by receiving no definitive response from authorities by the time of their hospital appointment.
- **Rafah:** Between January and December 2018, the Egyptian side of the Rafah border with the Gaza Strip was open in both directions for 188 days, allowing a total of 1,510 patients to cross into Egypt for health care (no disaggregated data available). This is compared to 21 days in 2017.

Demolition and displacement

In 2018, 428 structures (79 residential structures and 349 other structures) were demolished and /or confiscated by the Israeli authorities affecting 6,644 people, including 3,404 children and displacing an additional 403 people including 194 children. In addition, two Palestinian families were evicted from their houses in East Jerusalem displacing 18 people including nine children. For example, on 11 April, the community in Jabal Al-Baba in Jerusalem governorate self-dismantled a donor-funded kindergarten, which served 25 children, following a demolition order by Israeli civil administration. The kindergarten building was also used for providing primary health care services to the community. In addition to the 428 demolished structures by the Israeli authorities, two structures were demolished by Israeli settlers and another 36 residential structures were self-demolished by Palestinian owners due mainly to the threat of extremely high fines and cost of demolition imposed on Palestinians, affecting 207 children and displacing an additional 31 children. Most demolitions occurred on the grounds of lack of building permits, which Palestinians are denied in almost all cases and as a result are often not requested.

Contact: Damian Rance, Chief of Communications

UNICEF State of Palestine: + 972 2 58 40 400