

Crimes against Humanity: Arrested Palestinian Children Imprisoned, Tortured

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Global Research, November 06, 2015

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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Longstanding Israeli policy brutalizes Palestinian children solely for political reasons.

Palestinian Detainees Committee head Issa Qaraqe reported shocking information. In October, Israeli soldiers and police kidnapped over 800 Palestinian children, some too young to understand what happened or why – subjecting them to severe torture and abuse.

“This is a systematic Israeli policy targeting the children, the future of Palestine,” Qaraqe explained. “The large number of abductions in (a single month) shows a deliberate policy, and a serious level of military escalation.”

A large number of abducted children have been assaulted and beaten by the soldiers. They have also been tortured by the Israeli interrogators and jailers.

Brutal measures used include:

- beatings, punching, kicking and striking children with rifle butts and batons;
- terrorizing them with vicious dogs;
- subjecting them to sleep, food and water deprivation;
- using them as human shields during neighborhood raids;
- humiliating them and their family members;
- threatening them with more severe violence;
- denying wounded children medical care for extended periods;
- interrogating them brutally with their wounds untreated;
- forcing them to sign confessions in Hebrew they don't understand, admitting alleged crimes they didn't commit;
- isolating them in solitary confinement without access to counsel or family

members; and

- painfully shackling them to hospital beds when finally permitted treatment.

They're targeted with live fire, potentially lethal rubber/plastic-coated steel bullets, stun grenades and toxic tear gas. They face prison terms for alleged stone-throwing. Their families face large fines and possible loss of their homes, bulldozed for exclusive development.

Many children are imprisoned administratively – uncharged and untried for indefinite periods, with no chance for appeal.

Qaraqe said Israel turned Palestinian children into targets – 17 murdered in cold blood since October 1, another 495 wounded from live fire and rubber bullets, scores of others beaten and/or harmed by toxic tear gas.

Israel is the world's only country subjecting young children to military tribunal injustice – guilt by accusation automatic, no right of appeal.

On average, up to 700 Palestinians are tried in military courts annually. October's total exceeds this number. Since 2000, over 10,000 Palestinian children were lawlessly kidnapped, separated from family and legal counsel, brutalized in captivity.

Imprisonment is hugely hard to handle for anyone, near impossible for young children to cope, denied virtually everything needed to sustain normal life. The experience leaves many scared for life.

Israel is a flagrant human rights abuser, getting away with murder and daily atrocities with impunity. UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov said "(a) complete generation has lost hope in peace and a two-state solution..."

In Hebron where he visited, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said 77% of the residents are impoverished.

The Hebron district accounts for around a third of the West Bank's economy, the Old City now a ghost town. Over 1,800 Palestinian shops closed since the Second Intifada erupted in September 2000.

Movement restrictions alone prevent normal living. Violating draconian rules risks getting lethally shot. Hebron Mayor Kamil Hmeid said 30,000 Palestinian residents face daily violence from 700 heavily protected settlers, living where they don't belong.

Settlers, soldiers and police aren't held accountable for crimes committed against Palestinians. Israeli instigated violent clashes occur daily across the Territories. Death, serious injury or arrest haunts an entire population, victimized by state-sponsored terrorism.

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His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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