

A Scarred Childhood: Israeli Attacks Against Palestinian Children in the Occupied West Bank in 2022

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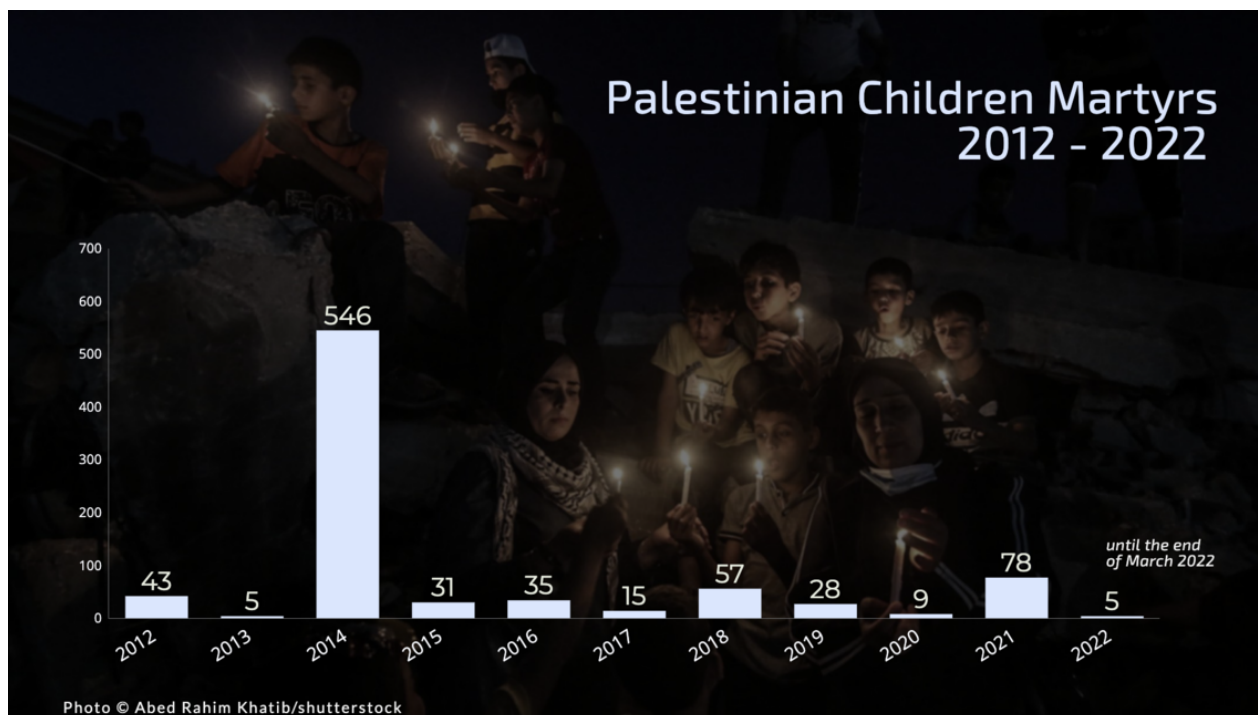
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For over five decades, Palestinian children and their families have experienced the injustices of the Israeli occupation. To our children, this occupation has served as a school of daily experiential learning. This happens at Israeli-monitored checkpoints that fragment our towns and restrict our movement; during clashes where Israeli occupation forces shoot and sometimes kill, unarmed Palestinians; during repressive curfews, closures, home raids and demolitions; through settler violence, and the day-to-day humiliations faced by a people under occupation.

Undoubtedly, the occupying Power has constituted an informal curriculum, whose master teachers have instilled and cultivated existential fear, a profound sense of insecurity, loss, bitterness and anger in the hearts and minds of our children. The impact of Israel’s oppressive policies against our children, in violation of international law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is tremendous and far-reaching since they touch not only the five senses but leave deep physical, mental, psychological, emotional, and spiritual scars that are hard to heal given the continued occupation.



In over twenty years, and based on documentation by Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIP), [more than 2,200 Palestinian children were killed](#) by the Israeli occupying forces and settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory. At the end of 2021, the same organization conducted an investigation and concluded that last year was the “[deadliest year for Palestinian children since 2014](#).”

Since the beginning of the year, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to terrorize the Palestinian people, including women, children, and the elderly. As a result, many Palestinians have been killed, hundreds injured, and more than a thousand detained. This is in addition to over 1,400 military raids into Palestinian villages and cities in the occupied West Bank, and 85 demolition operations documented by UNOCHA, which displaced almost 230 people, half of them were children, and otherwise affected nearly 1,140 Palestinians, nearly half of them are children.

On the occasion of Palestinian Child Day on 5 April and the Palestinian Prisoner Day on 17 April, this report provides an overview of the various Israeli violations committed by Israel’s occupying forces and settlers during the first three months of 2022^[1] in the occupied West Bank against our children, [who represent nearly 44% of the entire Palestinian population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip](#).

I. Killings

The Israeli occupying forces (IOF) killed 24 Palestinians, five of which are under the age of 18: Mohammad Abu Salah (17) from Al-Yamoun town in Jenin, Mohammad Salah (14) from Al- Khadder town in Bethlehem, Shadi Najem (18) from Jenin refugee camp, Nader Rayan (17) from Balata refugee camp in Nablus, and Sanad Abu Attiya (17) from Jenin refugee camp.

The bodies of the following Palestinian children martyrs remain withheld in Israeli custody^[2]:

1. Mohammad Nasser Trereh (17) from Hebron since 30 June 2016
2. Khaled Abdel A'al (17) from Gaza since 2 July 2018

3. Mohammad Dar Yousef (17) from Ramallah since 26 July 2018
4. Mohammad Abu Mandil (17) from Gaza since 22 January 2020
5. Mahmoud Kamil (17) from Jenin since 21 December 2020
6. Atallah Rayyan (17) from Salfit since 26 January 2021
7. Zuhdi Al-Tawil (17) from Jerusalem since 24 May 2021
8. Yousef Subuh (16) from Jenin since 26 September 2021
9. Mohammad Younes (16) from Nablus since 6 December 2021

II. Injuries

Nearly 1,600 Palestinians were injured^[3], including nearly 40 children that were hospitalized according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as well as others who suffocated from tear gas inhalation. Many of these injuries happened during protests (in Hebron, Budrus village, Qalendia refugee camp, Jerusalem, Beita village, Kufr Qaddoum village, and other places throughout the occupied West Bank) against the IOF, who often responded with rubber-coated metal bullets, stun grenades, and tear gas canisters. Among the young wounded Palestinians was Ahmad Thawabteh (13), who was briefly arrested and later released after being severely beaten and breaking his leg. Among the injured were 11-year-old children, including Munawar Burqan (details about the incident later in the report) with special needs from occupied Jerusalem, who was seriously injured after a stun grenade was fired at her face by the IOF. The youngest among the wounded was a 6 months-old baby.

Below are some examples of Palestinian children injured by the IOF and later abused in prison^[4]:

- Ahmad Flanna, from Safa town in Ramallah, turned 17 on 4 April. Ahmad was shot five times and abused by the IOF before being arrested on 26 February 2021. While incarcerated, Ahmad had several surgeries at an Israeli hospital without informing his family. The occupation authorities had also interrogated him while in the hospital without regard to his health condition. Ahmed, a student in the first year of secondary school, is currently detained in “Megiddo” prison. A hearing at an Israeli court is scheduled for today, 12 April.
- Issa Al-Titi (17) from Al-Aroub Refugee Camp was shot by the IOF in September 2020, leaving him with disfiguring injuries to his face, a fractured skull, and severe head injuries. He stayed in an Israeli hospital for eight days before being transferred to the “Megiddo” prison and then to the “Ofer” prison. Today, a permanent headache plagues him due to the Israeli prison administration’s indifference to providing him with necessary medical treatment. They also keep him from meeting his brothers, Jihad and Mohammad, who are also detained in Israeli jails. Issa was sentenced to 13 months in prison and was released in January 2022.
- Mohammad Al-Sheikh (17) from Al-Ezzariya was arrested in August 2019 after shooting him with several bullets in the body. Naseem Abu Rumi, his friend, was killed by the IOF in occupied Jerusalem the same day. Mohammed underwent several surgeries in an Israeli hospital after his arrest. He stayed there for ten days before being transferred to the “Ramle” prison clinic, where he remained for four months. Despite suffering from a bullet near his heart, and shrapnel in his body, Mohammed is currently being held under harsh detention conditions in “Ofer” prison. His health is deteriorating due to Israel’s inhumane policy of

medical negligence.

III. Arrests^[5]

The IOF arrested over 1,300 Palestinian children in 2021, more than 9,000 Palestinian children between 2015 and the end of March 2022, and more than 19,000 Palestinian children since the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000.

Until the end of March 2022, the number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons reached over 4,400 prisoners, including 160 children who continue to suffer additional abuse during their arrest. Currently, [three children are being held under administrative detention](#): Amal Nakhleh (18), arrested on 21 January 2021, who suffers from myasthenia gravis disease and needs regular and careful medical treatment, Mohammad Mansour (18), who was arrested on 9 April 2021, and Sami Al-Harimi who was arrested on 20 September 2021.

There are various examples of Palestinian children who spent their childhood in Israeli prisons, including Nurhan Awwad, who was 16 years old when arrested in 2015, and Malak Suleiman, who was 16 years old in 2016: each girl was sentenced to ten years in prison. Also, Muhannad Jwehan, who was 16 years old when arrested in 2002, and Amjad Abu Rmeileh, who was 15 years old when arrested in 2002: each received a sentence of 25 years in prison.

Noting that not all incidents were documented: during the reporting period, the IOF arrested and briefly detained at least 100 Palestinian children during Israeli military raids into Palestinian cities, towns, and villages, including Ragheb Samhan (10) in Ras Karkar village (Ramallah), Qasim Al-Hamuz (13) in Al-Fawwar refugee camp (Hebron), Mohammad Haddad (10) in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood (occupied Jerusalem), Ahmad Thawabteh (13) near the entrance of Beit Fajjar town (Bethlehem) after severely beating him and breaking his leg, and Ahmed Al-Eis (9) near Al-Jalazon refugee camp (Ramallah).

IV. Israeli Settlers' Terrorism/ Violence

During the reporting period, three incidents of settlers' attacks were documented, per the following:

- On 9 January: a group of settlers attacked the family of Adel Al-Salameen in southeast Tammun town in northern Jordan Valley. They beat his wife and children, stole one of his sheep, and stole a mobile phone.
- On 24 January: As settlers marched from Za'tara junction to Hawara checkpoint, passing through the town of Huwara, they attacked several Palestinian homes and shops; damaging 51 vehicles, destroying the fronts of four shops, and severely beating Al-Muntasir Damidi (17) who sustained bruises and was admitted to Nablus government hospital for treatment.
- On 18 February: while driving a vehicle, a settler ran over Othman Sabra (7), a resident of Jinsafut village in Qalqilya governorate. Othman sustained bruises and was admitted to the hospital.

V. In Focus: Israeli Attacks against Palestinian Children in occupied Jerusalem

During the reporting period, the IOF arrested at least 140 children in the city^[6], in addition to issuing several house arrests orders against many of them, including Omar Abu Mayyaleh (13) and Mohammad Zaytoun (13).

The harshest detention was carried out against Daoud Hijazi (12) and Mohammad Sunnukrot (9), both residents of Issawiya town on 6 March 2022. [B'Tselem](#), an Israeli organization, published a video showing Israeli soldiers holding the children by the hand while they cried and pleaded in vain for their release. The children and their mothers were later taken to the police station. The interrogation lasted half an hour and Daoud was forced to enter the interrogation room alone without his mother. Three hours after his mother signed bail, he was released and put under house arrest for five days. In the case of Mohammad, he was not interrogated but his mother was threatened that if her son was detained again, the police would contact welfare services, who would transfer him to a care centre. In his testimony to B'Tselem, Daoud said: *"I was on the way home with a friend and neighbour of mine, Mohammad Sinuqrut. Suddenly, I saw Border Police officers running towards us. I didn't know where they'd come from. One of them grabbed me by the hand and pressed it. My hand was broken once and has platinum implants in it. I shouted in pain and ask him to let go, and then he grabbed my other hand. They sat me down on a boulder and made Mohammad sit on it, too."*

The case of Ahmad Manasra from occupied Jerusalem represents another stark example of the severity of Palestinian children's suffering in Israeli prisons. Ahmad was 13 years and 9 months old when arrested in 2015. Ahmad was shot and left to bleed on the ground while watching his cousin die in front of his eyes in a horrific scene watched by many throughout the world. He was denied urgent medical help and was later [subjected to psychological torture during interrogation](#). He initially received a 12-year-sentence for allegedly taking part in a "knife attack," which was reduced to nine and a half years. Ahmed suffers from a severe head injury and, according to a recent medical report, needs psychological and personal care. In prison, he was kept in solitary confinement for long periods which further deteriorated his psychological well-being. Ahmad is now 20 years old and is scheduled to appear in front of an Israeli District Court in Bir Saba' for an appeal hearing tomorrow, 13 April, amidst a major international campaign calling for his immediate release. Manasra is expected to be released in June 2024.

Nufuz Hammad (15) is the youngest Palestinian female prisoner, a resident of Sheikh Jarrah whose family is facing the threat of home eviction. Together with her friend Isra', Nufuz was arrested on 8 December 2021; they were both subjected to 10 days of consecutive interrogation in the Israeli police interrogation centre. Two weeks after interrogation, Isra' was released while Nufuz is still detained in "A-Damun" prison without sentence. It wasn't Hammad's first arrest: back in June 2021, she was arrested for painting the Palestinian flag on the faces of her colleagues during an entertainment event for children in the neighbourhood. Hammad was then taken to an Israeli police station for questioning.

Other selected examples of Israeli violations against Palestinian children in occupied Jerusalem^[7]:

- Ali Quneibi (13), a resident of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in occupied Jerusalem, is one of the victims of Israel's house arrest policy. Ali was arrested

more than five months ago on charges of “assaulting a settler’s car.” For days, his detention was extended before his release to house arrest. As Ahmad was unable even to join his friends in playing, the house window was his only escape. Also, he wasn’t allowed to go outside to the yard or to his school without an official permit from the occupation. After four months of his imprisonment, he could go to school accompanied by a family member.

- Munawar Burqan (11) with hearing disability (and uses two cochlear implants) from the Shufat neighbourhood. Munawar was hit by a stun grenade fired by the occupation police in the vicinity of Damascus Gate (Bab Al-Amoud), resulting in severe facial injuries and a broken jaw. Having eaten sweets with her sisters in the Old City, Munawar was on her way back to her home through Damascus gate. Together with her sister, Munawar was among the tens of thousands of Palestinians who were heading to the Al-Aqsa Mosque to celebrate the Muslim holiday of Isra and Mi’raj.
- On 27 Feb, the IOF arrested two children Oday Al- Haddad (10) and Mohammad Al- Haddad (12) from their house in the old city on charges of raising the Palestine flag in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood.

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Notes

^[1] Unless otherwise indicated, this report is based on the documentation of NAD’s Palestinian Monitory Group

^[2] According to the National Campaign for the Retrieval of Palestinian and Arab Victims’ Bodies held by Israel.

^[3] Based on the documentation of NAD’s Palestinian Monitory Group, which also includes non-hospitalized cases.

^[4] The Palestinian Prisoners Club

^[5] The majority of information in this section was provided by the Palestinian Prisoners Club

^[6] The Palestinian Prisoners Club

^[7] Jerusalem Governorate

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