

Testimonies Prove Israel Tortures Palestinian Children

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Global Research, September 12, 2013

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

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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On August 22, [B'Tselem](#) headlined “Abuse and torture in interrogations of dozens of Palestinian minors in the Israel Police Etzion Facility.”

More on that below. Previous articles discussed torturing, abusing, and otherwise mistreating Palestinian children young as 10. Sometimes younger. In July, Israel arrested and terrorized a five-year old boy.

Family members are threatened not to intervene. They're beaten if they try. Children are violently abused.

They're blindfolded, shackled and beaten. They're threatened with much worse. Sexual threats and abuse are common. So are electro-shocks and much more.

Nothing's too outrageous to employ. Children are interrogated without counsel. They're treated like adults. They face wrongful charges. It doesn't matter.

They're considered guilty by accusation. It's standard Israeli practice. Police states operate this way. Israel's one of the worst.

Cruel and unusual treatment violates international law. Torture in all forms is absolutely prohibited at all times, under all circumstances with no allowed exceptions.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child mandates they be kept safe from harm.

Article 4 states:

“Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.”

Article 37 states:

“No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly.”

Other provisions mandate State Parties to ensure that “(n)o child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

“Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority,

and to a prompt decision on any such action.”

Israel spurns international law. It violates its own. It ignores its High Court rulings. According to UNICEF:

“In addition to Israel’s obligations under international law, the guiding principles relating to the prohibition against torture in Israel are to be found in a 1999 decision of the Supreme Court, which is also legally binding on the Israeli military courts.”

“The Court concluded that a reasonable interrogation is necessarily one free of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and that this prohibition is absolute.”

Based on interviews UNICEF conducted, abuse and mistreatment persist. It’s consistent during arrest, transfer, detention and interrogation.

B’Tselem’s gotten testimonies about abusive Israeli treatment for years. Dozens of Palestinian minors cite threats, violence, torture and other forms of abuse.

They do so during interrogations at all Israeli facilities. They do it Gush Etzion. The station’s in the SHAI (Judea and Samaria) Israeli police district.

Testimonies describe forced confessions. Usually they relate to stone-throwing. Abuse stops once confessions are gotten.

Children are forced to sign them in Hebrew. Most can’t read what they’re signing. It doesn’t matter. It’s irrelevant if charges are false. Israel wants signatures on the dotted line.

A 14-year old described his ordeal, saying:

“The interrogator made me go into a room. He grabbed my head and started banging it against the wall.”

“Then he punched me, slapped me and kicked my legs. The pain was immense, and I felt like I couldn’t stand any longer.”

“Then he started swearing at me. He said filthy things about me and about my mother. He threatened to rape me, or perform sexual acts on me, if I didn’t confess to throwing stones.”

“His threats really scared me, because he was very cruel and it was just the two of us in the room. I remembered what I’d seen on the news, when British and American soldiers raped and took photos of naked Iraqis.”

From November 2009 until July 2013, B’Tselem took 64 testimonies. Fifty-six were minors when interrogated.

They describe “severe physical violence during the interrogation or preliminary questioning, which, in some cases, amounted to torture.”

“The violence included slaps, punches and kicks to all parts of the body, and blows with objects, such as a gun or a stick.”

“Some of the former interrogatees also reported threats: in twelve cases, they claimed that

the interrogator had threatened them or female relatives with sexual assault, such as rape and genital injury.”

“In six cases, the interrogatees claimed that the interrogators had threatened to execute them; in eight cases, the interrogators allegedly threatened to harm family members; and in five other cases, they allegedly threatened to electrocute the interrogatees, including in a way that would damage their fertility.”

After they confessed, they were taken to another room. They were asked to repeat their confession. It was recorded.

Documents signed were in Hebrew. It’s a language most don’t understand. They had no idea what what they agreed to. It might have been murder for all they knew.

A 15-year old said the following:

“The interrogator ‘Daud’ took me outside with a soldier. They blindfolded me. The plastic cable ties were still on my hands.”

“They put me in a car and started driving. I don’t know where they took me. We reached some place outside Etzion and they forced me out of the car.”

My hands really hurt because of the cable ties. They took off my blindfold. I didn’t know where I was. They tied me to a tree, and then they raised my cuffed hands and tied them to the tree, too. It hurt a lot.”

“ ‘Daud’ started punching me. After a few minutes, he took out a gun and said: ‘I’ll murder you if you don’t confess! Out here, no one will find you. We’ll kill you and leave you here.’ ”

B’Tselem complained 31 times. It did so to the Department for Investigation of Police (DIP). It did it on behalf of abuses to children and youths at Etzion.

In other cases, victims and families chose not to complain. They feared retribution. They feared they, their children and relatives would be harmed. It’s common Israeli practice.

Families also mistrust Israeli justice. They do so for good reason. For Palestinians there’s none. There’s never been any. Under Netanyahu, things are worse than ever.

Of the 31 complaints B’Tselem filed, 20 withdrew. They did so to file separate ones. They did it to give testimonies to DIP investigators.

DIP refused to investigate cases where complainants hadn’t personally testified before them.

It doesn’t matter. Investigations when conducted are whitewashed. Abusive police are free to terrorize again.

Information B’Tselem submitted wasn’t checked. It made sending it a waste of time.

DIP examined only 11 cases. Three were summarily closed. Others began in June 2012. They’re still ongoing. Dragging out the process assures whitewash.

It shows Israel treats Palestinians like subhumans. Abusing them is standard practice.

Justice is systematically denied.

It's more evidence of futile peace talks. They mock the notion of equitable conflict resolution. They assure continued occupation harshness. It includes torture and other forms of abuse.

B'Tselem demanded DIP investigate violent interrogations responsibly.

B'Tselem made the same demands of Israeli police and Justice Ministry officials. Doing so falls on deaf ears.

Israel does what it wants. Rule of law principles don't matter. Justice is systematically denied.

B'Tselem repeatedly confronts Israeli police with these accusations. No "official answer" follows. No steps are taken to address abusive practices.

All B'Tselem communications don't matter. They're ignored or denied.

"The high number of reports B'Tselem has received regarding violent interrogations at the Etzion station, and the fact that they span several years, gives rise to heavy suspicion that this is not a case of a single interrogator who chose to use illegal interrogation methods, but rather an entire apparatus that backs him up and allows such conduct to take place," said B'Tselem.

"Yet, to the best of B'Tselem's knowledge, no real effort has been made to date to discontinue the abuse, and no systemic investigation has taken place."

"Law enforcement agencies (let) this reality continue, despite the fact that all the relevant officials know that the claims relate to violence against minors under interrogation, and that, in some cases, the violence has amounted to torture."

Torture and abuse accusations are credible. They require responsible investigations. They demand remedial action. They oblige what's not gotten.

Responsible parties remain unaccountable. They torture and abuse with impunity. It's longstanding Israeli practice. Young children are treated like adults.

It bears repeating. Police states operate this way. Israel's one of the worst.

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Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network.

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