

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Ninth Session
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Defence for Children International, NGO with special ECOSOC status

Accountability for all grave violations of children's rights in conflict

Thank you Mr. President

This statement is presented on behalf of Defence for Children International's Palestine Section.

We welcome the latest report of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict to the Council highlighting the plight of child victims of conflict in Palestine and elsewhere. However, despite the significant developments and government commitments described in part II of the report, grave violations of Palestinian children's rights continue to be committed with impunity, including violations that are not listed in UN Security Council Resolution 1612.

For example, Paragraph 28 of the report recalls the pledge made by the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, to investigate and take action on attacks perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinian children attending the primary school in at-Tuwani village, near Hebron. Unfortunately, violent assaults have notably increased since the SRSG met the children last year, and perpetrators are still rarely apprehended. This summer, the Israeli military escort assigned to protect the children has systematically refused to accompany them; as a result, settlers have chased and thrown rocks at children attempting to walk to at-Tuwani and prevented them from attending the summer camp.

DCI is concerned at the persistence of settlers' attacks and asks members of the Council to urge the government for a report on the concrete follow-up actions it has taken to achieve its commitments.

As an active member of the Israel/oPt 1612 Working Group, DCI supports the SRSG's call for the Council to make use of information produced by this monitoring and reporting mechanism. We also strongly support the SRSG's recommendation that "equal weight should be given to all categories of grave violations against children".

However, we regret the fact that the 1612 mechanism, as well as the work of the SRSG, remain strongly focused on child recruitment. This focus prevents the Security Council Working Group of Children and Armed Conflict from addressing Palestinian children's rights as a priority, and taking concrete measures. In addition, non-1612 violations such as detention, displacement and torture or abuse, which are prevailing in Palestine and other conflicts, do not get the attention that they merit.

There is sufficient data collected by UN agencies, and local and international NGOs based in Palestine to provide accurate, reputable and comprehensive information on child rights violations emanating from the conflict. Despite this, and despite commitments made by Israel, violations continue, and accountability for perpetrators is not improved.

We therefore ask members of the Council and the SRSG to pay equal attention to all forms of violence perpetrated against children in situations of conflict; to advocate for the promotion of accountability mechanisms which address these violations equally and efficiently; to follow-up on actions taken thereof; and to share information on these initiatives with 1612 partners in the field.

Thank you

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