



Human Rights Council - 40th Session
Delivered by: Defence for Children International (DCI)

Item 7: Interactive Dialogue with Commission of Inquiry on the civilian protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem - Interactive Dialogue

Palestinian children killed by Israeli forces while protesting

Defence for Children International (DCI) welcomes the opportunity to speak in this dialogue and welcomes the report of the Commissioners and their team.

In 2018, Israeli forces killed 56 Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), a pace exceeding one child per week. In the first ten weeks of 2019, Israeli forces have killed an additional eight children, according to documentation collected by Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P).

The majority of these killings occurred in the context of “March of Return” protests along the Gaza perimeter fence. Since the start of the mass civilian protests on 30 March 2018, Israeli forces have killed 42 children in the Gaza Strip with live ammunition and crowd control weapons.

In the overwhelming majority of these cases, Israeli forces targeted and killed children who did not pose a direct, mortal threat at the time of their death, according to evidence collected by DCI-P.

Although Israeli authorities have selectively opened their own investigations into several incidents occurring since 30 March 2018, previous experience shows that Israeli authorities have persistently failed to impartially investigate alleged violations in accordance with international standards.

Israeli forces’ targeting of Palestinian child protestors with intentional lethal force where they pose no direct, mortal threat amounts to war crimes and likely the crime against humanity of persecution.

We commend the Commissioners and the Commission of Inquiry (COI) team for their efforts to document war crimes and crimes against humanity against protestors in the OPT.

In an effort to challenge systemic and seemingly perpetual impunity and increase protections for children, Defence for Children International strongly urges all UN member states to:

- Demand Israeli forces refrain from using lethal force against civilians, including children, who pose no imminent threat to life;
- Take urgent action to ensure accountability for violations by supporting efforts by the International Criminal Court to hold perpetrators accountable and by carrying out obligations under the Geneva Conventions or Rome Statute to exercise criminal jurisdiction and arrest persons alleged to have committed, or who ordered to have committed, the international crimes described in the Commission’s report; and
- Employ every means to prevent further use of intentional lethal force against civilians at demonstrations, including by ensuring protective monitoring of the demonstrations through the deployment of UN-mandated armed forces or civilian observers.