

3rd March 2023

52nd Session Agenda Item 2 Interactive Dialogue on the report on the High Commissioner on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

On behalf of Defence for Children International (DCI) - Palestine

Mr. President/Madam Vice-President,

Last year, Israeli forces and settlers shot and killed 36 Palestinian children with live ammunition in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In the first two months of 2023, Israeli forces have already shot dead 12 Palestinian children.

Under international law, intentional lethal force is only justified in circumstances where a direct threat to life or of serious injury is present. However, investigations and evidence collected by DCI-P regularly suggest that Israeli forces use intentional lethal force against Palestinian children in circumstances that are unjustified and amount to extrajudicial or wilful killings.

Israeli forces intensified arrest operations and incursions into Palestinian cities in the occupied West Bank in 2022, leading to an increase in the number of Palestinian children killed by Israeli forces and making 2022 the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since 2005.

One of the latest victims to be unlawfully killed by Israeli forces is 16-year-old Mohammad Farid Mohammad Haj Ahmad. He was shot in the head by an Israeli soldier passing by in an armoured Israeli military vehicle during a daytime incursion on February 22 in Nablus, according to documentation collected by Defence for Children International - Palestine. Mohammad sustained a gunshot wound below his right ear from about three meters (10 feet) away as he stood in front of a clinic entrance near the roadside as Israeli forces drove past.

We strongly urge all member states to:

- Demand Israeli authorities immediately end permissive rules of engagement that amount to an apparent shoot-to-kill policy and implement and enforce live fire rules of engagement that are in accordance with international norms;
- End complicity and financial and diplomatic support to the Israeli apartheid system; and
- 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, international crimes.