



29th March 2023

52nd Session Agenda Item 7

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

Mr. President/Madam Vice-President,

Each year the Israeli military detains and prosecutes between 500 to 700 Palestinian children in Israeli military courts that lack basic safeguards for a fair trial. From the moment of arrest, Palestinian children encounter ill-treatment and torture at the hands of Israeli forces.

Despite the fact that international norms reaffirm that civilians, including children, must never be brought before military courts, Israel persists in being the only country in the world to automatically and systematically prosecute children in military courts.

While just a superficial review of the detention and prosecution of Palestinian children in the Israeli military court system suggests severe risks of arbitrary deprivation of liberty, what emerges from a full view through the experience of Palestinian child detainees is an inherently unjust system of control where arbitrary detention is the default practice.

The deprivation of liberty experienced by Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention and military court system is arbitrary by default primarily because Israeli authorities systematically disregard and deny fundamental protections and guarantees concerning the right to a fair trial to the extent that nearly any deprivation of liberty as part of the military court system is of an arbitrary character.

The most egregious cases involve Israeli authorities' use of administrative detention, or imprisonment without charge or trial, against Palestinian children.

We strongly urge all member states to:

- Demand Israeli authorities immediately end the use of solitary confinement and administrative detention against Palestinian children and enshrine the prohibition in law;
- 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.