

20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**53<sup>rd</sup> Session Item 2 Interactive dialogue with the ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel**

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

Mr. President,

We welcome the Commission of Inquiry's report as Defence for Children International – Palestine's human rights documentation and evidence-based advocacy exposing Israeli forces' grave violations against Palestinian children has made DCI-P a target of the Israeli government's repressive tactics for years.

When delegitimisation and disinformation campaigns targeting DCI-P failed to silence our work, Israeli authorities escalated repressive tactics by labeling civil society organisations as terrorist organisations and raiding our offices. These unjust actions by Israeli authorities are meant to criminalise and eliminate our lawful human rights and child protection work exposing grave violations against Palestinian children.

We reject the October 2021 Israeli terrorist designation and any repressive tactics aimed at eliminating our work.

We resolve to continue defending Palestinian children and exposing grave violations inherent in Israel's military occupation of Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Our work is more necessary than ever as 27 Palestinian children have been killed in 2023, according to documentation collected by DCI-P. Israeli forces have shot and killed 20 Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank. Six Palestinian children in Gaza were killed in the May 2023 Israeli military offensive on the Gaza Strip, and a 10-year-old Palestinian child in Gaza succumbed to head wounds he sustained during the Israeli military offensive on the Gaza Strip in August 2022.

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;
- Use all available means to hold Israeli authorities accountable for targeted attacks and repression of Palestinian civil society organisations and human rights defenders;
- 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.