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Am I Not a Human ?

Edited by

Dr. Mohsen Saleh
Yasser 'Ali

Translated by

Iman Itani

The Suffering of the **Palestinian Child**

under the Israeli Occupation



By

Ahmad el-Helah

Mariam Itani



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

Am I not a Human?

(3)

Book series discussing
the sufferance of the
Palestinian people
under the Israeli
occupation

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Salma al-Houry



Al-Zaytouna Centre
For Studies & Consultations
Beirut - Lebanon

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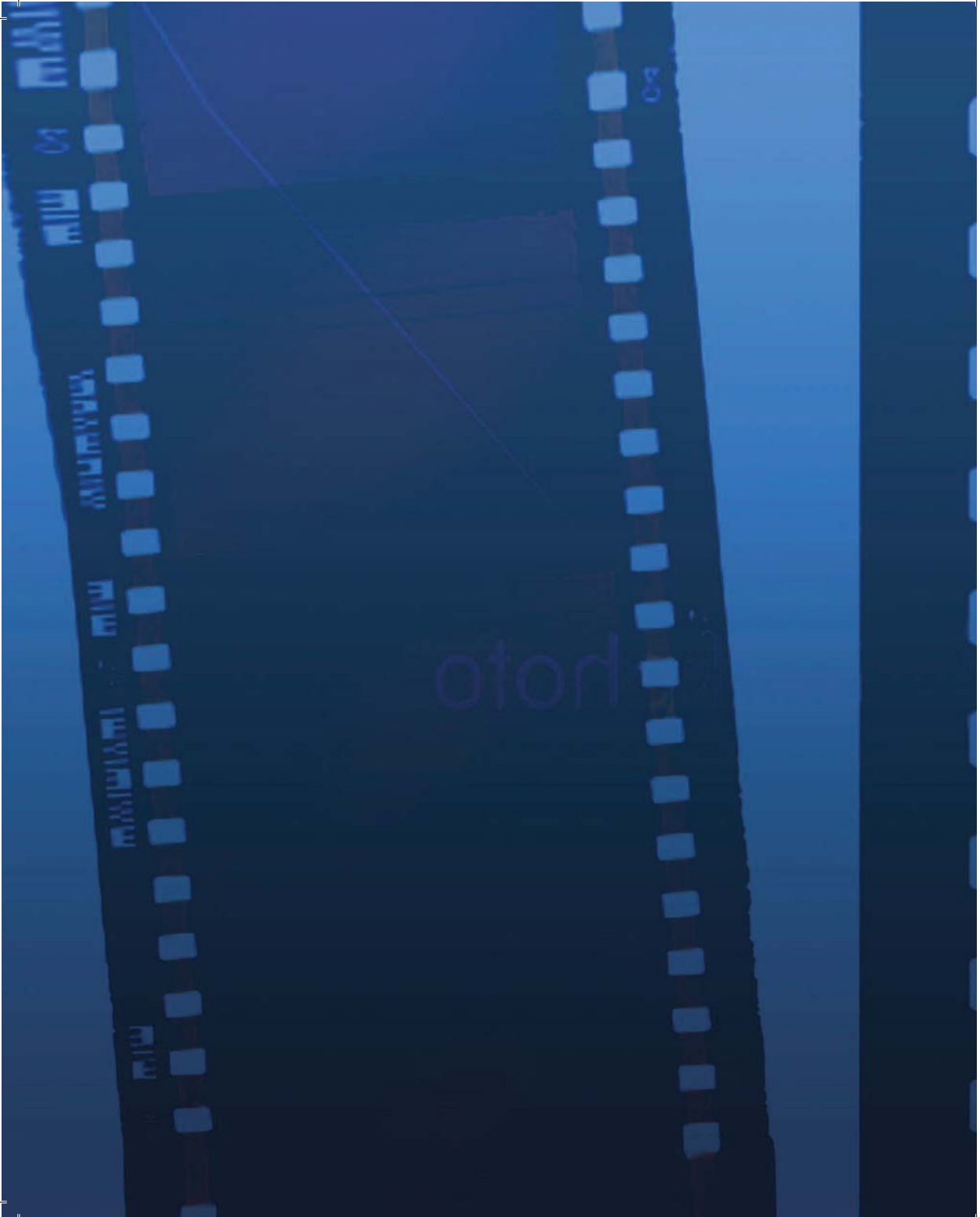
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Foreword

This is the third book of the *Am I Not a Human?* series. This series focuses on the different aspects of the suffering of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian child grows up, under the Israeli occupation, surrounded by cruelty, oppression, killing, starvation and destruction. Like any other child, he dreams of playing, eating sweets and even eating healthy meals!! Instead, he may find either his father in prison, his mother giving birth at an Israeli checkpoint, his brother killed, or his home destroyed, while trying in vain to find his school bag or his toys, etc.

The Palestinian child lives a life unlike that of any other child. His childhood is distorted by an occupation that kills his innocence and his dreams. He lives in constant fear and anxiety, where worries force him to be a “grown-up” while still a child. Actually, he is a grown-up, for he challenges the toughest circumstances, helps his family, and stands up to the Israeli tanks. Amazingly, the Palestinian child sets the example to mature people, even before he goes to school.

This book is part of a series that tries to give the full picture of the suffering of Palestinians. This happens at a time, while we think that the world has become civilized and no cruel colonization could ever still exist. All this occurs at a time when the whole world claims to defend the human being’s rights, dignity, and freedom to live in peace in his homeland; but it is, nevertheless, almost indifferent towards what is happening to the dispossessed and oppressed Palestinians.

Chief Editor
Dr. Mohsen M. Saleh





Introduction

The killing shots of twelve years old Palestinian child Muhammad al-Durrah were among the most striking shots that drew world sympathy with the Palestinian cause, especially with the Palestinian children. Muhammad, however, was not the first child, nor the only one, to be killed by the Israeli soldiers in such a brutal cold-hearted way. His tragic last moments, trying desperately to shelter in his helpless father's lap, are not more brutal than the many ways the Palestinian children, women and the elderly are killed by the Israeli occupation army. Due to the fact that the scenes of Muhammad's killing were broadcasted internationally (by France 2 TV Channel), he became a symbol of the suffering of the Palestinian children under Israeli occupation.





A Gaza Diary

I sit in the shade of a palm-roofed hut on the edge of the dunes, momentarily defeated by the heat, the grit, the jostling crowds, the stench of the open sewers and rotting garbage. A friend of Azmi's brings me, on a tray, a cold glass of tart, red carcade juice.

Barefoot boys, clutching kites made out of scraps of paper and ragged soccer balls, squat a few feet away under scrub trees... It is still. The camp waits, as if holding its breath. And then, out of the dry furnace air, a disembodied voice crackles over a loudspeaker.

"Come on, dogs," the voice booms in Arabic. "Where are all the dogs of Khan Younis? Come! Come!"

I stand up. I walk outside the hut. The invective continues to spew: "Son of...!" "Your mother's...!"

The boys dart in small packs up the sloping dunes to the electric fence that separates the camp from the Jewish settlement. They lob rocks toward two armored jeeps parked on top of the dune and mounted with loudspeakers. Three ambulances line the road below the dunes in anticipation of what is to come.

A percussion grenade explodes. The boys, most no more than ten or eleven years old, scatter, running clumsily across the heavy sand. They descend out of sight behind a sandbank in front of me. There are no sounds of gunfire. The soldiers shoot with silencers. The bullets from the M-16 rifles tumble end over end through the children's slight bodies. Later, in the hospital, I will see the destruction: the stomachs ripped out, the gaping holes in limbs and torsos.

Yesterday at this spot the Israelis shot eight young men, six of whom were under the age of eighteen. One was twelve. This afternoon they kill an eleven years old boy, Ali Murad, and seriously wound four more, three of whom are under eighteen. Children have been shot in other conflicts I have covered—death squads gunned them down in El Salvador and Guatemala, mothers with infants were lined up and massacred in Algeria, and Serb snipers put children in their sights and watched them crumple onto the pavement in Sarajevo—but I have never before watched soldiers entice children like mice into a trap and murder them for sport.

► Chris Hedges, "A Gaza Diary," *Harper's* magazine, New York, Issue 10, October 2001.





But Muhammad was only one Palestinian child victim of the brutality of Israeli occupation; only one child in a death toll that grew to 1,400 children between the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 2000 and the end of 2007. According to one of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports, 230 of these killed children were under 12 years of age.¹

But what about the more than one million other Palestinian children who continue to live and suffer every moment of their lives under the painful reality of occupation? What about the injured and handicapped children? What about the children in the Israeli jails? What about the hungry and poor children? What about those who have lost their parents, friends, brothers and sisters due to the Israeli's continuous aggressions? What about the children who live in fear and who suffer distress or cannot sleep, who feel unprotected in face of a ruthless and arrogant Israeli occupation? These are the children of Palestine to whom this study is dedicated. However, a single study cannot cover the suffering of the Palestinian children, especially since childhood has a sanctity and particularity that makes it extremely difficult to describe its suffering. Exactly as the inhumane and various Israeli occupation measures against children are "unique," which makes it difficult to describe them or even to count them. In this regard, this study might be a mere symbolic image of what we can document of this suffering, or of some of it at least.

Despite the fact that millions of children in our world have suffered from the effects of natural disasters, such as those of drought, desertification and floods, in which the international efforts were, in





Three... for Whom the Whole World Cried



Iman Hijjo (4 mos)



Huda Ghalia (12 yrs)



Muhammad al-Durrah
(12 yrs)

It was the broadcast of the scene that was so heartrending. Brutality and murder are nothing new to Israelis. Muhammad was killed by occupation army bullets when his father was helplessly trying to shelter him; Iman was killed by an Israeli shell in her mother's lap; Huda might be thought to be luckier because she is still living. Yet, in one moment and in front of her very eyes, she lost her mother, father and five siblings on Gaza's shores. The family of Huda was murdered in June 2006 when Israeli navy patrols fired on picnickers fleeing to the sea from the sweltering heat. Tens of women and children were killed in those attacks.

Besides the family of Huda Ghalia, the Palestinians suffered three more massacres in less than two weeks. The Moghrabi family lost the father and two of the children as well as four First Aid workers. Also, there was the assassination of Imad Abu Hamad, a commander in *al-Aqsa* Brigades, in which three children, Mohammad Rawqa, Bilal al-Hesi and Samia Sherif, were also killed. Then there was the killing of nine members of the "Ahmad" family by a rocket attack on their home while they gathered at the dining table, which killed the mother Fatima and her doctor brother Zakariyah and injured five children, two of whom sustained very serious injuries. As always, the Israeli excuse was, "It was a mistake and we will investigate the incident."

- Four Massacres in Two weeks: The Enemy Murders Childhood in Gaza, *al-Intiqad* magazine, Beirut, no. 1167, 23/6/2006.



most cases, able to intervene effectively and lessen their impacts on children, the catastrophe experienced by the children of Palestine, although similar in consequences, is different from those experienced by world children in three main features:

1. The catastrophe of children in Palestine is man-made (the Israeli occupation).
2. This catastrophe has been occurring unceasingly for a period of more than sixty years.
3. The level of international intervention to save the Palestinian childhood is at best weak, which leaves the Palestinian child to suffer alone from the brutality of the occupation and its extreme violence.

This study reveals the magnitude of the suffering of Palestinian children under the occupation. It sheds light on the catastrophic consequences of the occupation upon the children: physically, psychologically, healthily, emotionally, economically and educationally.

Before speaking of the rights of Palestinian children under the occupation, it is noteworthy to remind of the fact that the occupation itself is an unethical, illegal, inhumane and unjustified act that denies a nation its right to self-determination, which is a basic right of all nations.





Chapter 1: Children in Palestinian Society

As children constitute a majority in the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS), the Palestinian society is a young one. In its June 2007 annual report, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) mentioned that around 2.1 million persons were below 18 years of age, which represents 52.2% of the inhabitants of the WB and GS. This percentage is distributed as follows: 17% below 5 years old, 15.4% from 5 to 9 years old, 13% from 10 to 14 years old, and 6.8% from 15 to 17 years old.² This shows that children still fills up the largest part of the demographic chart. Thus, the future of the Palestinian people is bound to the future of the Palestinian child; this makes the present status of Palestinian childhood of particular importance. This also means that the physical, psychological and educational structure of the





new generation is the core of the entire Palestinian people's future and is what will determine the fate of the long-term struggle against the Israeli occupation.

The Israeli occupation has always made efforts to aggravate the emotional and psychological suffering of the Palestinian child and break his spirit through its arbitrary measures such as physical maltreatment and road movement restrictions forced daily upon children, besides what his family and friends are subject to, such as murder, injury and destruction of property. Moreover, the Palestinian child suffers from poverty and suppression due to severe closures and curfews. In other words, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is costing the Palestinian children much, so that many of them are paying the price with their lives.³

During the period 29/9/2000-31/12/2008, Palestinian children in the WB and GS were witnesses to the killing of around 5,864,⁴ the injuring of about 35,099.⁵ While, the Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees report issued at the end of 2009, stated that 7,500 of their parents and relatives are detainees in Israeli prisons.⁶ Moreover, the Palestinian Children have been witnesses to the destruction of 77,759 buildings in the WB and GS during the period 28/9/2000-30/4/2007.⁷ Children living under such harsh conditions lose their childhood and their innocence, just as they lose hope and joy in their lives. The extreme burden that the occupation places on them resulted in physical as well as psychological problems, through which the Israeli occupation seeks to diminish the children's spirit. However, severe brutality has proved to further ignite the spirit of resistance and deepen hatred for the occupation.



Let the Photos Express

“*Atfal al-Hijara*” (lit. Children of the Stones: A term used to describe the Palestinian children who used to throw stones on the Israeli soldiers during the first *Intifadah* that broke out in 1987) are “the generation of suffering” whose schools and homes have been turned into battlefields because of Israeli practices and measures. However, the cruelty of the occupation did not succeed in setting children aside of the conflict. Instead, it increased their awareness of its nature and their urge to stand and resist even if they have nothing but stones with which to do so to rehabilitate their denied childhood. Additionally, the harsh and unbalanced Israeli response, through the use of bombs and live bullets, is not actually a mere response, but it is an additional assault against the Palestinian children.



Here is my home,



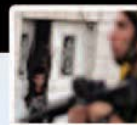
my school,



and my playground...



A British study about Palestinian children during the *Intifadah* noted that children who grew up under the occupation display higher levels of political awareness. For example, all refugee children memorize the names of the villages from which their parents or grandparents were originally expelled; and they know a lot about the facts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hence, the life of such children is characterized by two factors: the first is the Israeli assaults and measures taken against them represented by: blockades, curfews, arrests and insults. The second is their commitment to resistance and refusal to abandon any of their rights.⁸



Palestinian Refugee Children in Lebanon

Yet another facet of the suffering of Palestinian children

The third report on the rights of Palestinian children in Lebanon indicates that 53% of children under five years of age suffer severe physical problems as a result of the bad living conditions in refugee camps, where no air, clean water, playgrounds for children, electricity, or job opportunities for their parents exist. Despite these circumstances, the Lebanese Baccalaureate passing rate among Palestinian refugees has risen to 73.9%.

The report shows serious increase in birth defects and respiratory diseases which cause the death of children before the age of two or three years old. In the refugee camps in Northern Lebanon, this rate goes up to 44.5%, while 14% of children less than three years old suffer severe diarrhea resulting from dirty air, crowded homes, bad ventilation and the absence of clean water.

According to a recent report by the United Medical Group, 63% of families don't get clean drinking and household water allotted to them by UNRWA.

And when children express the misery of their lives in their own childish words,



they say: "I don't think that play is a basic right," "We miss clean air and water in the camp"; and they wish to "learn more than five vocations so I can find a job," "live on my own as I like," "have my own shop and purchase a car," "provide every child with what he needs," "become a history teacher so that I can teach other generations about Palestine." They miss having: "a computer," "a recorder," "a big house," "chocolate," "music," and "health care."

- The Third Report on the Rights of the Palestinian Child in Lebanon, *Assafir* newspaper, Beirut, 20/6/2006.





Chapter 2: The Palestinian Child: The Rights and the Violations

A child's rights are defined as applying to any person below the age of 18. Despite the fact that some people find this age span somewhat wide, or argue about the essence of these rights, no one denies the basic rights of the child, at least the one under 12 or 13 years of age, which are designated to him by virtue of his being human first, of his being young and incapable of protecting himself or securing his basic needs second, of his need to feel safe and comfortable third, and last by virtue of his being innocent. However, none of the above meant anything to the Israeli occupation, whose practices are indifferent and merciless to Palestinians, young and old alike. Exactly as all the declarations and conventions regarding children's rights played no role in stopping Israel's violations of these rights.





The two most important international conventions and declarations on children's rights are: first, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1386 (D-14) on 20/11/1959. And second the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20/11/1989, entry into force on 2/9/1990.

The first Article of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that:

... Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family....⁹

Among these rights is that the child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. The other Articles emphasize the child's right to be entitled from birth to a name and a nationality and to receive good education. Also, children must have priority in receiving aid and protection in time of war. The latter is given more attention in the Fourth Geneva Convention that asserted the protection of civilians in time of war, with emphasis, always and definitely on the illegality of the occupation.

Among the most important of these basic rights guaranteed in the CRC are the following seven:

- 1. The right to life**, assured in Article 6 (Paragraphs 1 and 2) and Article 38 (Paragraph 4) of the CRC. Nevertheless, Israeli



occupation forces violate this right by intentionally targeting children. This is confirmed by the statistics related to the locations where children had been shot and their numbers.

- 2. The right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.** However, the bad economic situation, especially in the GS, makes enjoying this right impossible. Accordingly, the Palestinian child lacks basic goods and food substances, and suffers of malnutrition and anemia. The main causes of this suffering are roadblocks, checkpoints and curfew enforced by the occupation forces. These measures lead to poverty and unemployment. The right to an adequate standard of living includes, in addition, the right to adequate housing (Article 4 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, Article 27 (Paragraph 3 of the CRC)). This right is also constantly violated by the Israeli occupation army operations of shelling and destroying houses and civilian infrastructure such as water and drainage networks, electricity, telephones, roads and communications. These offensive operations entail physical and psychological damage affecting children in particular.
- 3. The right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.** This right is mainly violated by the siege. Furthermore, several associations for human and child rights reported that children in Israeli prisons suffer deteriorating health conditions, receive no treatment but tranquilizers, do not get enough nutrition, and most of them wait months or years to be checked by a specialist doctor or to have a necessary x-ray scan.





Two Palestinian girls participate in painting a mural in Gaza, as a way to express their rejection of Israeli crimes against them. The mural shows two Palestinian women scattering flowers on graves of killed Palestinian children.



➤ AFP, 19/3/2008.



- 4. The right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.** This right is stated in Article 31 of the CRC. In contrast to this, Palestinian children live in an atmosphere of stress and panic and suffer disturbance in behavior and nightmares due to the extreme violence they witness against themselves, their families, their neighbors, their schools and their houses.
- 5. The right to psychological safety and peace.** Palestinian children are denied this right too because of occupation measures. They suffer extreme psychological pressures and are subject to physical torture, mental intimidation and repeated humiliation, especially those who are arrested or used as human shields by the occupation forces during their incursions into Palestinian cities, districts and homes.
- 6. The right to education,** guaranteed by Article 28 of the CRC, and violated, like other child's rights, by occupation practices, namely the shutting down of schools and bombarding them. Schools are shut down either by direct military orders or by prolonged periods of curfew and closure that prevent both students and teachers from reaching their schools. Moreover, the occupation army has turned many Palestinian schools into military barracks and temporary detention centers. Although it is a significant violation of Human International Law and of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the occupation army bombards schools indiscriminately with various kinds of arms. Due to





these conditions many Palestinian children do not go to school, and some of them go to work instead, which causes the problem of “child labor”; because most children turn to working in the streets as peddlers.

7. The right to freedom. Yet, Israeli authorities have arrested thousands of children since the beginning of the *Intifadah*. To date, hundreds of them are still held as prisoners, and most of them are detained without trial. In addition to losing their education and future, imprisoned children are exposed to various kinds of torture and assault that affect them physically and psychologically. Even after being released from jail, children face significant problems such as the fear of re-detention, neuropathy, health problems, inability to pursue education, unemployment and the absence of psychological and social stability.

According to Article 44 of the CRC, the states parties to the convention, including Israel, undertake to submit to the Committee, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, reports on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights within two years of the entry into force of the Convention for the State Party concerned.

This means that Israel should have submitted a report on 23/11/1993. But Israel did not submit any report until the end of 2000. Despite the fact that the Convention states explicitly the responsibility of every state party to implement the Convention over the territories under its authority; whether legitimate or not, Israel



Crossing Israeli Checkpoints on the Wings of Words

Ziad Khaddash, a teacher at a school in Ramallah, asked his pupils to write an essay on the possible ways to visit a classmate unknown to them called Bilal who lives in Majdel Shams in the Golan Heights. Going there requires passing through Israeli checkpoints. Here are two samples of what the students wrote:

A Journey over the Clouds

Rami Saleh Barakat, Grade 6

I left my city Ramallah heading to the Golan area. I was going to visit a friend of mine, Bilal al-Safadi. As I approached my destination, I was surprised by an Israeli checkpoint ahead. When it was my turn to cross, the soldiers didn't let me pass. So, I moved back a few steps thinking of a way to enter the Golan. I was so desperate that I wept and wept. The sun evaporated my tears, so I held tight to the vapor and it lifted me up to the clouds. I climbed over the clouds. They asked me: "What do you want?" I told them my story, and they decided to help me and take me to the Golan. When we were in the sky above the Golan, I asked the clouds: "How can I go down?" They told me not to worry, and that I would go down. I waited patiently, the clouds slowly turned grey and started to rain. They made me a flying carpet from raindrops to take me down. Then I went to Bilal's house and played with him.

The One Thousand Miles Journey

Hamam Jamal, Grade 6

I traveled thousands of meters on my way to see my friend Bilal, until I arrived at the checkpoint at the entrance of Majdel Shams, I said to myself: "How can I go to Bilal al-Safadi while I am stuck here and I can't pass through the checkpoint?" Then, I remembered that I had a magic wand, so I turned myself into the Israeli chief of staff Dan Halutz. I crossed the checkpoint and told the soldier to let all the people pass, so he did. Then, I asked him to remove the barriers and the checkpoint. Finally I went to Bilal happy and relaxed; I told him my story and thanked God for it.



The Palestinian childhood is trying desperately to let the world hear its voice, yet the world neglects its suffering. The above photo (30/5/2006) is of a Palestinian girl putting on a band on which is written, "I want milk." The picture below (Reuters, 14/5/2006) is of a Palestinian kid wearing the traditional Palestinian costume and holding a big key that symbolizes the right of return. The last photo was taken during the commemoration of the Catastrophe (*Nakbah*) anniversary.



completely neglected in its report to address the rights of children in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).¹⁰ Although the international law regards the Israeli presence in the oPt as "illegitimate occupation," Israel has always sought to disclaim its responsibility towards the oPt and justify its violations of Palestinians rights, including children's, by claiming that the legal status of oPt is still controversial.



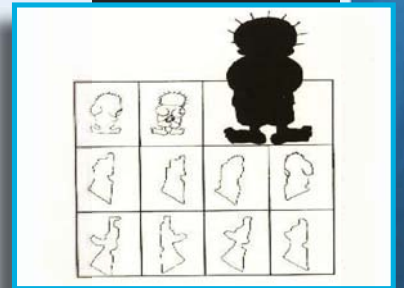
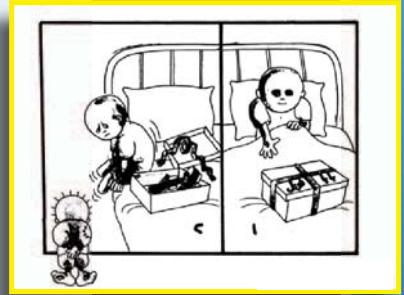
Hanthala: A Palestinian Child... A Witness to the Era... Never Ages, Never Dies

He's always presenting his back to the reader with his hands tied behind it. Thus Hanthala was born. A Palestinian child who never grows up, and one of the most famous caricature characters.

Naji al-Ali, the Palestinian artist who created Hanthala was only ten years old when he was forced out of his country. Till now, Hanthala is still nominally ten years old. According to Naji al-Ali, Hanthala does not and will not grow up until he becomes able to return to his homeland "ordinary laws of nature don't apply to him, he is an exception because losing one's country is an exception... I presented him to the readers and called him Hanthala as a symbol of bitterness." (Hanthala is an Arabic synonym for bitterness).

Since 1969, Hanthala appeared frequently in Naji al-Ali's caricatures. He became the collective conscience; the witness and reporter of the daily suffering of the Palestinians. He shares with them their worries and problems, and he lives with them the events and the stands: He throws stones, demonstrates, demands his right of return, disputes, cries, and sometimes gives roses and sings traditional Palestinian songs.

Naji al-Ali was assassinated, but Hanthala lives on. He is still as al-Ali wanted him to be: "Hanthala" an immortal witness to the era... a myth born to live and defies to persist.





Chapter 3: Wounded and Killed Children

“I panicked and felt that something bad had happened to Aya because the sound of tank shells was so close and thunderous. I was in a daze, not knowing where I was. I could not imagine that I have lost my nine years old girl, my lovely little girl,” this is what Fatima told about the loss of her daughter Aya Fayyad on Saturday 31/8/2003, the eve of Aya’s new school year. Aya had no time to enjoy her new school costume or to meet her classmates!

On that day, Aya went out to play with some of her peers in al-Namsawi neighborhood, west of the city of Khan Yunis. Minutes after riding her little bike, the place was bombed and fragments scattered all over the locality.





‘Arafat, a 13 years old boy, was playing with Aya at that time. He said that they were playing with other kids of the neighborhood when tank shells began falling on them. Everyone found a way to escape except Aya, who stayed there and was hit by a bomb splinter in her belly. Her blood spilled on the ground and her bike flew away. With a tear in his eyes, ‘Arafat continues, “I swear that there was no shooting. Suddenly a tank bombed us. We did nothing to them. I cannot believe it. Aya was playing with us a while ago, but she will not come to play again. Why did they kill her?”¹¹

Back at Aya’s home, her sisters still try to soothe themselves with her photo; while her eldest sister still cannot believe what had happened, as she brings out Aya’s school costume to make it ready for the next morning.

In another incident, Iman al-Hams, a 13 years old girl, joined her two classmates on their way to school early on 6/10/2004. As they approached the Girit military outpost and came within fifty meters of it, they heard shooting, so Iman threw her schoolbag and started running home, but the Israeli soldiers shot her dead with twenty machine gun bullets that settled in her tiny body. And if killing her from afar wasn’t enough, three soldiers including the company commander approached her, and the commander shot from a distance of one step two bullets into Iman’s head and several others into her body. At first, the occupation soldiers claimed that Iman’s bag was full of explosives; later, they admitted that there was nothing in the bag but school books.¹²

In such bloody events, hundreds of children were killed and thousands got hurt or became handicapped. The 2008 annual report of the PCBS, published in April 2008, unveiled that the number of killed children below the age of 18 totaled 959, from the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah*



and until 29/2/2008, which represents 18.2% of the total count of Palestinians killed during the same period. There were 384 killed in the WB, 573 in GS, and 2 in Israel. On the other hand, the number of wounded children between the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* and 28/9/2005 came to 28,822. Whereas the number of handicapped children who became so due to Israeli attacks totaled during the same period around 2,660 according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.¹³

To support the claim that the occupation forces kill children on purpose, we note that up to 30/4/2004, 186 children were killed, shot in the head, chest, or belly. This is 59.2% of the total count of children killed, which are 314. As for the remaining 118 killed children, representing 39.2% of the total, they were shot in other parts of their bodies. While there are 5 children, 1.6%, who died on checkpoints when the Israeli forces prevented them from going through to reach hospitals.¹⁴

According to the reports of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 31.4% of killed children were shot in the head and the neck, 32.5% were shot in the chest. The combined total adds up to 54.9% of the total count of children killed.¹⁵ These injuries are considered among the fatal ones, the fact that asserts the Israeli intent to kill directly, maim, or paralyze, which contradicts all international conventions and proper humane behavior; in addition, this expresses the severe hostility, hatred and discrimination that fill the hearts of the occupiers.

CRC

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.





*The Murderer of 13 Years Old Iman al-Hams:
Were the clock to be turned back, he wouldn't
hesitate to kill her again even if she were only three
years old!*

The Israeli commander responsible for killing Iman al-Hams (13 years old) on 5/10/2004 replied that he doesn't regret killing the girl in Rafah with twenty bullets in her body. He said in an interview for *Maariv* newspaper that he didn't disobey orders when he killed Iman al-Hams, and that if he could turn the clock back, he wouldn't hesitate to kill her again even if she were only three years old.

The 25 years old commander admitted to the Israeli court that he knew that the girl had already died by the two bullets he first shot her with, yet this did not stop him from emptying twenty more bullets into her prostrate body, as proved by the medical report.

Another soldier told the newspaper that Iman was 300 meters away when they started shooting her, but they kept on shooting. He added, "We all shot her till she fell down. Each one of us claimed that he is the one who hit her. Briefly, this is not important right now, she was behind a pile of sand and it was clear to us that she fell to the ground."

The court sentenced the commanding officer to two months suspension from duty, but the military court of appeal cleared him of all charges and compensated him with 80 thousand shekels, justifying his excessive use of gunfire as being "for protection and deterrence"!

- *Al-Hayat al-Jadidah* newspaper, Ramallah, 10/12/2005; and site of Arabs48, 23/3/2006.



Killing Palestinian children was largely present in the Amnesty International testimony that was published in its 165th press release:

The majority of Palestinian children have been killed in the Occupied Territories when members of the IDF responded to demonstrations and stone throwing incidents with unlawful and excessive use of lethal force. Eighty Palestinian children were killed by the IDF in the first three months of the Intifadah alone.

Also in its report, Amnesty International tells the story of:

Sami Fathi Abu Jassar died on the eve of his 12th birthday after being shot in the head by a live bullet fired by Israeli soldiers into a crowd of mostly primary school children. The shooting took place in the aftermath of a stone throwing demonstration. Six other children were injured by live fire in the same incident.

Palestinian children gather around the dead body of Rahmah Abu Shammās (three years old) during the latter's funeral in the village of Deir al-Balah in GS. The girl was shot by Israeli soldiers near her house.



► AFP, 26/1/2005.





Amnesty International delegates were present in the crowd at the time and concluded that the lives of the soldiers were not in danger.¹⁶

In the same vein, the International organization reported that in 2001:

Palestinian children have been killed when the IDF randomly opened fire, shelled or bombarded residential neighborhoods at times when there was no exchange of fire and in circumstances in which the lives of the IDF soldiers were not at risk. Others were killed during Israeli state assassinations, when the IDF destroyed Palestinian houses without warning, and by flechette shells and booby traps used by the IDF in densely populated areas. The large numbers of children killed and injured and the circumstances in which they were killed indicates that little or no care was taken by the IDF to avoid causing harm to children. A number of Palestinian children have also died after being held up at IDF checkpoints, and delayed or even prevented from passing through to reach hospital. At least three children have been killed by Israeli settlers. In most cases the IDF does not intervene to protect Palestinians from Israeli settlers, who literally get away with murder.¹⁷



A Palestinian child jumps to escape an Israeli military vehicle during an Israeli incursion into Jenin in WB.

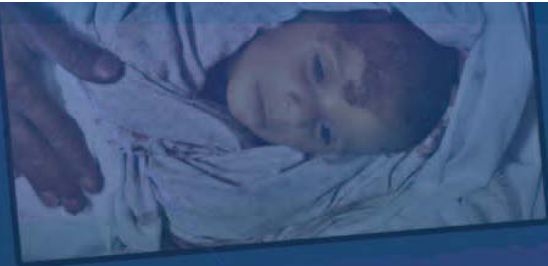
► AFP, 30/12/2005.



An Israeli soldier chases a Palestinian kid after a demonstration in the city of Qalqilya in WB against the separation wall which isolates thousands of Palestinians from their relatives, lands, working places and schools, as well as from social and medical services.

► Reuters, 23/2/2004.





Chapter 4: Children in Detention and Custody

The Palestinian Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees Affairs pointed out in its April 2008 report that more than seven thousand children have been arrested since the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* on 28/9/2000. Of those, 360 are still in detention, representing 3% of Palestinians in Israeli prisons. Fifteen of these children are still under administrative detention without charge, 200 are awaiting trial, and 145 are serving a variety of sentences. The report also mentioned that around 500 other prisoners were arrested when they were children, and reached 18 years of age in jail. Moreover, the available data confirmed that there are around 75 children in custody who are ill but are prevented from





receiving medical treatment. The Israeli government does not comply with international laws, and in particular with the CRC, when dealing with Palestinian children; 99% of detained children were tortured harshly by being hooded, beaten and deprived of sleep continuously for several days while sitting on a small chair in a painful position (*shabeh*).¹⁸

The majority of children were arrested at their homes. The Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees Affairs pointed out that 77% of imprisoned children were taken from their homes, and that ten cases were documented in which children had to wait more than 24 months before being brought to trial. It also mentioned that 83% of imprisoned children are students, and 40% of the illnesses from which the children suffer in jails are due to bad nutritional and hygienic conditions.¹⁹

Moreover, the 2007 report prepared by the Director of the Bureau of Statistics at the Palestinian Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees Affairs ‘Abdul Nasser Ferwana, revealed a significant increase in the rate of detention during 2007, with the resumption of severe violations of the rights of prisoners, and in the presence of an unprecedented international failure to respond. Regarding child prisoners, Farawana made clear that the Israeli occupation army detained around 220 children during 2007. Though many of them were freed, others are still in custody. He noted that, by the end of 2007, there were 350 detained Palestinian children distributed among several Israeli prisons and held under very bad conditions, receiving harsh treatment and



prevented from pursuing their education or having any prospect of a prosperous future.²⁰

The Palestinian kid “A,” a 16 years old, tells the story of his arrest. He is from the village of Housan near Bethlehem. While on his way to school, he was stopped by Israeli soldiers who were looking for his 23 years old cousin. Since his identification card was not with him, the soldiers arrested him claiming that he was the one wanted. Upon his arrest, the soldiers started beating him harshly and shouting, “Why are you throwing stones at us?” Then he was accompanied to a military base where he was received by other soldiers and he received from these some more beating. After they became sure that he wasn’t the wanted guy, the Israeli soldier responsible for the Bethlehem area did not bother to call the boy’s mother to tell her of his arrest, and he ordered him sent to Etzion detention camp, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, handcuffed and blindfolded. Just as he arrived there, some soldiers started beating him brutally again, urging him to confess that he had participated in throwing stones at the Israeli soldiers and to reveal the names of other stone throwers. During the interrogation, “A” had his head immersed in cold water then in hot water then in the toilet. Later he was moved to Adorim camp, known among Palestinians as “the crazy woman’s detention camp.” There “A” got beaten and tortured again.

In Adurayim detention camp, “A” spent 34 days in solitary confinement. Then he was sent to court that ordered him held on “restrictive order,” and then he was transferred to Telmond Prison in Israel.





CRC

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
- (b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;
- (c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;
- (d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.



*Shall I Wait for Them...
Or
Shall They Wait for Me...*





On 2/2/2001, Beit Eil Military Court pronounced its decision confirming all the charges against the kid, claiming that during the period of September, October and November 2000, “A” threw “something like a stone” on a military vehicle and hurt the driver; in addition, he carried out 25 “attacks” on different occasions, and participated in targeting, with stones, civil and military automobiles passing on the road to Beit Hanoun. The Israeli court asserted that “A” threw eight stones in each of the 25 “attacks.” Upon hearing the sentence, one of the Palestinian lawyers commented that:

We must admit that the Israeli military detective must have his own special counting machine of his making, with which he was able to register accurately the exact number of stones that the Palestinian kid threw, along with the exact date and time of throwing the stones in day, hour, minute and second!

“A” was sentenced to eight months in jail and a 1,500 shekel fine (about \$350).²¹

Despite the emphasis on protecting children in all international human rights agreements, particularly the CRC, and although they considered child detention a restrictive measure and a last resort and only for a short term, the Israeli occupation acts as if killing children and imprisoning them is a first resort and an exemplary policy.

Furthermore, children are stopped and interrogated then arrested in degrading ways. The Palestinian Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees Affairs wrote a report that exposed the inhumane manner of interrogating and arresting Palestinian children:



They are usually arrested after midnight or in the early morning, and accompanied directly to be interrogated, a measure not allowed against Israeli children. The Israeli occupation forces often storm into homes, knocking viciously on doors, and sometimes breaking them down; then they go in with a large number of troops, shouting and swearing to terrify parents and children alike.²²

Another report by the ministry tells that, in Israeli prisons, the children suffer from insufficient and bad food, lack of hygiene, the existence of large number of insects, crowded detention rooms and tents, being held in rooms without enough air or light, prevented from receiving medical treatment, insufficient clothing, no means of play and entertainment, cut from the outside world, prevented from receiving visits from their parents, absence of psychological counselors and specialists, detention with adults or with criminal Israeli children, verbal, physical and sexual abuse, solitary confinement, collective punishment, spread of diseases and denial of education.²³

The Israeli authorities legalized the policy of abuse decades ago; then when some Human Rights organizations complained loudly, the Israeli courts, in September 1999, had to issue a resolution which banned only four methods of physical torture: which included violent shaking, sitting or standing in extremely painful positions, squatting, and sleep deprivation for long periods of time. The “torture policy” was thus still considered to be legitimate and permissible; as the Middle East and North Africa Regional Director of the Human Rights Watch puts it, “The Israeli High Court did not ban torture unconditionally.”²⁴





Israeli Soldiers Use Palestinian Children as Human Shields in Military Incursions

B'Tselem Center reported that the Israeli occupation army uses civilians, among them children, as human shields during military incursions.

Amid Qmeira (15 years old) gave a testimony to the effect that the Israeli soldiers forced him to accompany them in their search of three Palestinian houses in his neighborhood. He added that his cousin Sameh was also used for such a task. In another incident, the Israeli occupation army attacked the Da'dosh family at their home in Nablus and forced one of their daughters 11 years old Jihan to accompany them to one of their neighbours and to enter that house before them.

- ▶ Israeli Soldiers Use Civilians as Human Shields in Beit Hanoun, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), 20/7/2006.







In a report prepared by The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), it is mentioned that, during their investigation and interrogation of Palestinian prisoners, Shabak interrogators use more than 105 methods of torture.²⁵ The 15 years old Palestinian kid Radi 'Uraiqtat described what was done to him in the Ma'ale Adumim detention center east of Jerusalem, when the interrogators forced him to stand in an extremely painful and harmful position, and pressed tips of burning cigarettes against his naked body to make him confess.²⁶

'Uraiqtat added that the interrogators and guards of the camp beat him brutally and prevented him from sleep, from moving about, or going to the toilet. He was then accompanied to the town of Abu Deis, where they took very degrading photos of him. And when he asked them for a drink of water, they poured a bucket of water on his head without letting him drink. Radi says that the guards used him as a target for their stones; and whenever his head got hit, they'd clap. This left many scars on his head and face. The lawyer of the Palestinian Prisoners Club declared that he saw the marks of stones on the kid's head and face. He also asserted that the prisoners of Ma'ale Adumim complain of their abuse during interrogation.²⁷

UNICEF reports the story of Ali Ayyad 'Awwad, ten years old, who was arrested by Israeli soldiers, quoting his own words: "They beat me up on various parts of my body with plastic hoses. I had to have a surgical operation to have a platinum transplant in my arm. They kept me naked for a whole night, handcuffed and blindfolded; and I was not allowed to go to the toilet for two days"!!



The UNICEF representative in GS and WB, Pierre Poupard, said, “some children are mistreated in Israel... They spend five days in police custody under harsh living conditions, then they are imprisoned for several months in Israel awaiting trial without allowing their families to visit them.”²⁸ The Palestinian Prisoners Club reported that 95% of the children are subjected to torture, adding that 85% of them make confessions under duress and sign Hebrew documents that they know nothing about.²⁹





Chapter 5: Health Status

As a result of the harsh living conditions and bad circumstances of the Palestinians, children suffer several health problems. The most significant are the psychological problems that arise from witnessing severe violence, mostly against their loved ones, parents, family members, or friends, in addition to malnutrition—a consequence of poverty and siege. These conditions raise the death rate among children. In many cases, Israeli soldiers prevent Palestinian ambulances and medical teams from reaching casualties; and they don't allow necessary equipments and materials, such as oxygen, to get where they are needed, especially to GS. And with the intensification of the siege of the GS in the last half of the year 2007, the situation worsened, because many children, even those in serious medical conditions,





were not permitted to travel abroad for medical treatment. A case in point is that of Salem Masri, a Palestinian kid who has a hole in his heart.³⁰ Palestinian specialists warned of the danger of further deterioration in the health situation of the children in GS by the end of 2007. They pointed to food shortage and the fact that 64% of children in GS are anemic; adding that the scarcity of necessary vitamins

and minerals, like vitamin A and iodine, affects the learning and linguistic abilities of children and their hearing, and decreases their body immunity. Anemia and iron deficiency have a negative effect on the growth of children and on their school performance, which reportedly went down to 14% in GS and 9% in WB.³¹ Moreover, Israeli authorities prevented the introduction of special nutritional meals to GS, which were sent to around 20 thousand children under the age of five years. Twelve thousands of these had never had the nutritional elements of those meals earlier in their lives. They suffer now from severe anemia, stunted growth, and general body weakness due to malnutrition and extreme poverty.³²

CRC

Article 24

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. 2. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.



1. Mental Health Status

The mental health of Palestinian children has deteriorated to its worst levels due to various Israeli actions and daily measures that affect them in their growing years. The PCBS made a survey of the psycho-social health of children between the ages of 5 and 17 during 2004. The report showed that 8.8% of those children have experienced horrible incidents first hand, causing subsequent psychological problems.³³ UNICEF says that the psycho-social health of Palestinian children has been affected negatively by continuous bombings and attacks, sound bombs and air raids; and that children are increasingly threatened by what the Israeli occupation army leaves behind, like the incident that happened on 6/3/2006, when two kids were killed by an explosive device in GS. Added to all this, there is the continuous violence and the painful events of the *Intifadah* that kept the children under constant danger, when their rights to education, leisure and nutrition were violated daily. According to UNICEF, more than half a million boys and girls in WB and GS are in need of leisure and recreation in a safe place. Instead, the majority of them spend their time at home, are subject to violence and abuse in the streets, or fight the Israeli occupation army directly.³⁴

The UNICEF points out that one fifth of the children who participated in a study about psycho-social safety are exposed to family violence due to daily pressure on Palestinians, such as economic problems, unemployment, and unavailability of services and support networks. Palestinian families face great difficulty in dealing with stress problems among children, which definitely raise the general level of stress inside homes.³⁵





Another study, done by the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, found that 94.6% of Palestinian children have witnessed shocking incidents like bombing and murder.³⁶ A study by Adler Research Center in Israel, about the influence of violence on Palestinian children, stated that 70% of Palestinian children in WB have suffered Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).³⁷

In this context, the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children asserted that, as a result of continued murder and invasion by the Israelis, 93% of Palestinian children now feel insecure and live in fear of being attacked, and 52% feel that their parents are no longer capable of providing them with enough care and protection.³⁸

The Palestinian National Information Center reports that Palestinian children survived hard experiences during *al-Aqsa Intifadah* such as:³⁹

1. Watching violent acts, such as threats, intimidation or murder of relatives.
2. Being shot and becoming handicapped.
3. Losing one parent, either through murder or arrest.
4. Losing homes (destroyed by the Israeli occupation army) and lack of shelter: the UNICEF reports the destruction of more than 2,500 houses and displacement of more than six thousand children since the beginning of the *Intifadah* on 29/9/2000 till mid 2004.⁴⁰
5. Witnessing continuous bombing all day and night.
6. Inhaling tear-gas frequently and fainting.
7. Enduring harsh economic conditions.



Would I Find a Safe Place?

According to the UNICEF, the social and psychological health of Palestinian children has deteriorated due to recurrent explosions, raids and bombings. Children are increasingly exposed to dangerous Israeli leftovers. The UNICEF adds that at least 500 thousand children in GS and WB suffer from lack of safe play-havens. Instead, these children spend most of their time at home, get exposed to violence in the streets, or end up in some direct confrontation with the Israeli soldiers.

- UNICEF Humanitarian Action—Occupied Palestinian Territory, Donor Update: 8/3/2006.





The report tells that 67.6% of the children suffer psychological disorders because of the above-mentioned circumstances.⁴¹

A Palestinian woman carrying her child, whose leg is broken, crosses the Qalandiya checkpoint in WB. The Israeli occupation army follow strict orders at checkpoints and border crossings, forcing Palestinians to wait long hours, even ambulances and seriously urgent cases.



► Photo dated 4/1/2004.

Some psychological symptoms among Palestinian children are:

1. Excess panic, fear and stress.
2. Attention deficiency and lack of concentration.
3. Anxiety, sadness and depression.
4. Forgetfulness and poor memory.
5. Hyperactivity and violence.
6. Fainting.
7. Digestive disorders and loss of appetite.
8. Insomnia or excessive sleep.
9. Disturbed sleep and nightmares.
10. Clinging to adults in order to feel safe.
11. Rebellion and disobedience.
12. Involuntary urination: Dr. Samir Quota of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program noted that 36% of the children who live in frequently attacked areas have involuntary urination.⁴²



Another negative effect on the children's mental health is their lack of confidence in the protection that their parents can provide them with against the brutality of the Israelis, having seen children around them get killed or injured in the presence of their helpless parents.

In her study about the suffering of Palestinian children during the *Intifadah*, Maria Holt discusses the psychological effects of violence and occupation on children, which is clear in their drawings and games. For instance, the drawings of small children between four and five years of age have become darker and more melancholy, and most often they depict soldiers, flags, fences and burning tires; whereas children at this age should be coloring bright paintings of houses, trees, flowers and families. Furthermore, their play always involves "kids vs. soldiers" or "Arabs vs. border police" and what accompany this of terms and words. The fear and helplessness that dominate them have made them prefer to be the stronger Israelis in the "Palestinians vs. Israeli occupation army" game.⁴³



The Palestinian girl Maha Shawwal mourns her brother Ahmad who was killed in an Israeli operation in Beit Hanoun in GS. About fifty others were killed in that operation, and the Israeli occupation army prohibited their burial till the end of the military operation.

► AP, 7/11/2006.



Holt adds that 78% of Palestinian children see “political dreams” in their sleep, while 15% dream that they have been killed. A refugee child in GS tells his dream saying, “I dreamt that a military airplane bombed all the houses in the camp; and I heard that the Israelis want to shoot the children, so I ran and the plane chased me until it bombed my home. All the children were killed.”⁴⁴

‘Issa, another refugee child, suffers from having permanent headaches, nightmares, involuntary urination during sleep, and hostility to his brothers. His mother attributes that to the Israeli attack on their home where they beat up the father and the eldest son. ‘Issa says, “I am always afraid of the soldiers, they often beat my teachers and friends at school. I run away whenever I see them coming. I wish I could beat them but they are very strong and have machine guns. They are murderers.”⁴⁵

2. Malnutrition

A statistical report on the health of Palestinian families in 2006 showed that 10.2% of children are stunted (short for their age), 2.9% are underweight, and 1.4% suffer from chronic malnutrition (they are wasted). The percentage of stunted children in GS alone is higher (13.2% in GS and 7.9% in WB).⁴⁶ This was also confirmed by UNICEF in its March 2006 report, where it pointed out that chronic malnutrition and the resulting retarded growth widespread among Palestinian children have increased to around 10%. This makes 350 thousand stunted children in WB and GS, in particular younger children between 12 and 23 months old; for 15% of them suffer from malnutrition during this crucial period of their lives, and that affects negatively their future growth and makes them more prone to danger in later years.⁴⁷



Earlier, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) published a report about malnutrition in GS and WB. It says that the WB and GS are in a humanitarian emergency situation, malnutrition and anemia are increasing, as well as the number of families that are incapable of acquiring basic food needs, especially high protein foods. The researchers who conducted this survey found that 22.5% of children in the occupied territories suffer from malnutrition, emphasizing that baby dairy products are very scarce in Palestinian markets. While 52% of this deficiency results from restrictions at Israeli military checkpoints and 34% is due to military blockade of areas. In addition to protein and nutrient deficiency, 65% of Palestinians who participated in the survey said that they cannot afford their basic food needs.⁴⁸

Israeli soldiers arrest a Palestinian kid during clashes between Palestinian citizens and Israeli settlers in the city of Hebron (*al-Khalil*). Hebron residents, especially children, suffer a lot of harassments from settlers; often under the protection, rather with the assistance of the Israeli occupation army.



► Reuters, 25/4/2001.





The USAID also announced that 22% of Palestinian children have severe vitamin A deficiency which places their health at constant risk. The survey conducted revealed that 54% of children have vitamin A deficiency.⁴⁹

Health indicators during 2004 showed that 10% of the children have delayed growth, this goes up to 11% in GS and down to 9% in WB.⁵⁰

In this context, a study conducted by the American Johns Hopkins University and the Palestinian *Al-Quds* University, in collaboration with the USAID, warned about the deteriorating health of Palestinian children and women due to being prevented from reaching hospitals or medical centers, in addition to food shortage resulting from various Israeli measures, including blockades, and the high rates of unemployment due to preventing workers from getting to their workplaces.⁵¹

Catherine Cook from Defence for Children International said that the number of Palestinians who suffer malnutrition is related directly to the paralysis of movement that the Israelis force on Palestinians and the harsh economic situation in the Palestinian territories.⁵²

3. Deaths

It is true that death is death regardless of the cause. And although the causes of death in Palestine might be similar to others around the world, what we have described above reveals how children are killed in cold blood by the hands and bullets of the occupation forces. Yet, how about the deaths that are classified as “normal,” the deaths of infants, those due to malnutrition or to being born at checkpoints without access to medical aid or midwives? What about the many abortion cases resulting from continuous mock raids on GS?



Damien Personnaz, spokesman for UNICEF, warns that one baby in three is at risk of dying in GS Hospitals because of medical shortage.⁵³

In fact, 20% of child deaths in WB are due to the separation wall and the checkpoints.⁵⁴

Another fact is that 61 births between 2000 and 2004 took place at Israeli military checkpoints, according to World Health Organization (WHO), in 36 of which—around 60%—the newborn died immediately.⁵⁵

All of these “abnormal” deaths are not counted among the occupation’s intentional and arranged murders. The only point concluded is that the number of those killed and injured is only one side of the suffering of Palestinian children. They get ill, die and suffer, every day and every moment so that it becomes difficult to put their suffering into numbers or statistics.

The Palestinian girl Rawan Abu Zaid (three and a half years old) died after being shot two bullets in her head. Rawan was at her home in Rafah in GS, when an Israeli soldier shot her during an Israeli occupation army military operation.



► Photo dated 22/5/2004.



News Pieces: *This is How They Heal Injured Childhood*

They Cried, “Death to the Child and to All Arabs”!

The Israeli occupation army prevented a Palestinian ambulance from taking a seriously injured child... Dr. Maher Abu Lawha, who works in Beit Jala Government Hospital, was with the injured child in the Red Crescent ambulance when the Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint told them to go back to where they came from. When he approached them, they pushed him, uttering obscene and racist remarks, “Death to the child and to all Arabs.”

- *Al-Ayyam* newspaper, Ramallah, 25/5/2005.

The Ambulance Was Permitted to Cross... after the Child Had Died

Baby Khaled (six months old) died in the arms of his mother Sana’ Ahmad Sheilah, due to lack of oxygen in his tiny lungs, after the Israeli occupation army prevented the ambulance from crossing the Atara military checkpoint.

- *Al-Khaleej* newspaper, Sharja (United Arab Emirates), 9/3/2007.

The Occupation Prevents a Baby with a Hole in His Heart from Traveling for Treatment

The Palestinian infant Salem Masri (13 days old) lies in the nursery of Gaza European hospital with a hole in his heart. The Israeli authorities refuse to give him permission to leave GS for treatment abroad, as part of the Israeli blockade of the Strip since the Hamas electoral win; the siege has resulted in the death of 33 patients [up to the end of 2007].

- *Alittihad* newspaper, Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), 11/12/2007.

News Pieces: the Health Status of Palestinian Children... in Numbers



20% of children's deaths are due to checkpoints and the Separation Wall.

► Media and Information Center, 14/3/2004..

55% of Palestinian children suffer from anemia.

► *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 8/8/2005.

60% of children who were born at checkpoints died soon after birth, as reported by WHO.

► *Arabs48*, 23/9/2005.

98.8% of children suffer the consequences of mock bombardment and the breaking of the sound barrier.

► *Al-Bayader al-Siyasi* magazine, Jerusalem, 19/11/2005.

350 thousand children suffer malnutrition, as reported by UNICEF.

► *Alghad* newspaper, Amman, 20/3/2006.

One out of every three sick infants dies in GS, as reported by UNICEF.

► Media and Information Center, 14/6/2006.

838 thousand children live under terrible conditions in GS, as reported by UNICEF.

► Palestine News Agency (Wafa), 1/8/2006.

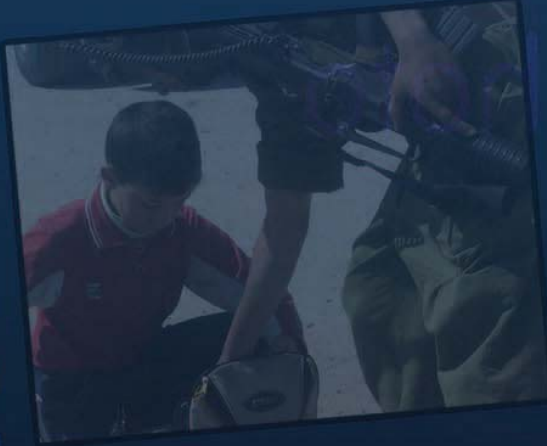
Children of Gaza [Strip] suffer **four times** the normal post-war traumas.

► *Asharq Alawsat* newspaper, London, 3/8/2006.

75% of "special needs" children are denied adequate treatment, as reported by a study.

► Wafa, 30/11/2006.





Chapter 6: The Socio-economic Situation

Child rights agreements state that each child has a right to special care and assistance, and a right to a proper environment that fosters his growth, well-being, self-respect and dignity in a good family environment.

Palestinian children, however, have their special environment, shaped especially for them by the Israelis. These children are deprived of the father who was killed within their sight, of a safe haven to protect them from fear and terror, and of the friend killed by the Israeli occupation army. Their life is a miserable present and a vague future; and this reality imposed on them denies them the joy of living an innocent childhood.





Many are those who get locked in their homes days at a time because of curfews or haven't left their towns for months or years because of the siege. The majority also suffer from the effects of malnutrition, anemia and psychological disorders. They are exposed to death daily.

They are children with no playgrounds, clubs, theaters, or pools. Born as refugees under occupation and living in a tent that doesn't protect them from the heat of summer or the cold of winter, hoping to return one day to their homes and lands from which the occupation drove them out. This is the life that these innocent children have known since birth. Is this the "special right" designated to Palestinian children to deprive them of their human rights?

1. Family Life

Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in the time of war, of which Israel is a signatory, stipulates respect for the family rights of protected civilian

persons; and that requires respect for the family structure, keeping family members together and not separate them, respect for the home in which they live, and seeking to unite family members as much as possible.⁵⁶

Of course, Israel never complied with these terms, just as it disregarded all other international laws and conventions. Israel was and still is engaging in the practice of deporting and breaking up Palestinian families.

CRC

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.



Furthermore, Israeli military authorities in WB issued new decrees regarding children registered in their mothers' identification cards. Most prominent among these decrees is refraining from registering children older than four years of age whose parents hold an Israeli citizenship, and who were born outside WB. Consequently such children are denied their right to be with their parents. This is what has happened to five years old Nour, who was only two months older than permitted when her parents decided to go back to live in Toubas permanently. However, Israeli authorities did not allow her to enter WB, so her family went in, whereas her father took her to Jordan. He left her there alone and went back to Nablus to work on bringing her back. Nour became the new refugee in Jordan, suffering serious psychological problems, a consequence of being away from her family. At the same time, her family lives in constant worry about her.⁵⁷

The preceding story does not mean that children don't get separated from their families when there are no decrees or conventions to that effect. Samaher, a ten years old girl, was stuck in Gaza with her grandfather, unable to go to Bethlehem to see her father on the day of his release from jail. Samaher was four years old when he was taken into custody, but she doesn't know when she could see him again.⁵⁸ During the six long years he spent in detention, she couldn't talk to him, except for one time, in secret, on a mobile phone smuggled in by one of the prisoners. And she visited him only three times. The letters she wrote to him never reached him, and his letters were smuggled to her.





A son of the killed Nasser Mabrouk caresses his father's forehead, seconds after the latter's death during clashes with the Israeli occupation army in Ein Beit al-Ma' refugee camp near Nablus in WB.

► Photo by 'Alaa Badarnah, 21/8/2007.



A Palestinian child finds his bike under the wreckage of his home which was demolished by an Israeli airstrike on Rafah refugee camp south of GS.

► Reuters, 25/10/2005.



In spite of the fact that Article 25 of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates that:

Persons in occupied territories shall be enabled to give news of a strictly personal nature to members of their families, wherever they may be, and to receive news from them. This correspondence shall be forwarded speedily and without undue delay.⁵⁹

Yet Palestinian children's letters never arrive, nor those sent by Samaher to her father. She wrote in one of them: "Dear dad, I love you so much with all my heart, and I miss you very much. You are my life; I love you as much as the bird loves the tree branches."⁶⁰

Article 82 of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates that:

Internees may request that their children who are left at liberty without parental care shall be interned with them. Wherever possible, interned members of the same family shall be housed in the same premises and given separate accommodation from other internees, together with facilities for leading a proper family life.

This seems impossible in view of the procedures practiced by Israel that doesn't recognize the minimum rights of individuals and children of life, liberty and dignity. Aisha, for example, was six months old when she entered prison with her mother. As soon as she became two years old, she was detached from her mother and sent to live with her father who in turn was soon arrested when he asked permission to visit his wife. Aisha, who was only three years old, became the orphan of Israeli oppressive practices, captive of her longing and need for a mother and a father detained by the occupation.⁶¹





A typical Israeli crime in this context is a message from the Israeli court to seven years old Farah, whose father was assassinated five years earlier. The message asks the girl to pay a fine of 1,850 shekels within one month, without giving any explanation of that; and with the added warning that appropriate legal measures would be taken if she didn't comply with the court's demand.⁶² Another crime was preventing the parents of Ahmad (two and a half years old) and Sawsan (nine and a half years old) from accompanying their children across the Erez crossing for two urgent heart operations; so Ahmad and Sawsan had to go all the way walking alone by themselves. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* admitted that the scene of these two kids is "one of the most horrible and cruel scenes broadcast lately," and "a shameful stigma to Israel."⁶³

Other negative effects of the Israeli measures against Palestinian families are reflected in the deterioration of the home environment. Housing surveys during 2006 show that 29,300 families have lost their homes (partially or completely destroyed), during the period between 29/9/2000 and 15/6/2006; and distributed as follows: 15,267 families in WB and 14,047 in GS. The reasons for home destruction varied; it was either because the house is close to Israeli settlements/Israeli locations, because of security or political reasons, or for being close to the path of the separation wall. The housing density indicator (the average number of persons per room) is 1.8 individuals per room; while 18.7% of the families live in houses with a high density (3 or more persons per room) and an average of 3.3 individuals per room (3.3 in WB and 3.4 in GS);⁶⁴ all of this reflects negatively on the psychological, social and educational status of the Palestinian children.



2. The Economic Situation

Article 32 of the CRC stipulates that:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Nevertheless, Palestinian children today are not enjoying these rights like other children around the world, or the right to live free from hunger and homelessness.

a. Poverty

The Israeli siege of Palestinian territories in WB and GS resulted in raising poverty levels significantly. The annual report of the PCBS mentioned that the ratio of children whose families live below the poverty line was 64.1% (56.1% in WB and 82% in GS); while the rate of children living in abject poverty was 24% (16.9% in WB and 39.7% in GS). Poor children represented around 52.9% of the total number of poor people. The average poverty rate among children was 38.1% (i.e., two out of every five children are poor), 29.9% in WB and 56.1% in GS, which means that more than half the children of GS live in poverty.⁶⁵

A previous survey conducted in March 2002 by the PCBS reported that 56.5% of Palestinian families have lost more than half their income since the Israeli military sweep into WB and GS on 29/9/2000. This means that, due to the siege and other Israeli measures, around 66.5% of Palestinian families are now living below the poverty line, compared to 25% before 28/9/2000. The survey concludes that about 2.24 million persons of the 3.2 million in GS and WB live below the poverty line.⁶⁶





The Palestinian sisters Dima and Malak al-Athamneh, (two years old and three years old, respectively) lie in a Hospital in Beit Lahia in GS after being injured in Israeli attacks against residential areas north of the Strip on Wednesday 8/11/2006. More than 18 Palestinians were killed in that raid, including eight children and the mother of Dima and Malak.

► Photo by 'Adil Hana, 8/11/2006.





Poor Palestinian children in the city of Hebron await their turn to take soup at Iftar time during the month of Ramadan in a charitable soup kitchen where free meals are offered.

► AFP, 10/10/2007.



A Palestinian girl holds a toy in an UNRWA school in Jabalia camp north of GS, after her family, along with other families, was driven out from Beit Hanoun because of the siege of the town by Israeli tanks.

► AFP, 16/17/2006.





More and more burdens are added to those that children already carry, and that after each Israeli attack on electricity or water stations. They have to get water from public taps or gather wood for fire, or sometimes pack and leave to go to another place if they can find one. The first photo shows a Palestinian child carrying two buckets of water in the south of GS. The second is of a Palestinian child carrying his belongings after he was forced to leave with his family for the aforementioned reasons.





b. Child Labor

Children, as young as blossoms, had to leave school to earn some money. They left games and playing to go sell facial tissues, gum and water, while walking between cars on city streets. This is because their parents are not allowed to work or because they were killed by a bullet or a shell that hit their home in some Israeli operation. These children embody the tragedy lived by an entire people under occupation. For, because of the occupation and its suppressive practices, closures and siege, and the killing of thousands of Palestinians and the detainment of others, the children had to step forward and assume the role of adults. The psychologist Dr. Rawiyah Hamam, a doctor from the Gaza Community Mental Health Program asserted that poverty and the need to earn a living are the main reasons for child labor, in addition to the unavailability of job opportunities for adults and the high rate of unemployment which reached 50% in GS. Dr. Hamam made clear that the loss of the main provider of the family, like the assassination or detention of the father, forces children to take on the responsibility of looking after their families at an early age. She added that child labor has significant negative effects on the Palestinian child's physical development, such as being exposed to pollutants and illnesses that hinder his normal physical growth. In addition, the child becomes unable to make good decisions and properly plan his future. Furthermore, he is more likely to learn bad habits such as smoking, slyness and deception without being aware of the effects of this behavior on his personality and future.⁶⁷





A Palestinian child who works in selling watermelons takes a little nap. Israeli harassments and harsh measures result in poverty and unemployment being widespread among Palestinians and compel many of their children to go to work.

► Reuters, 27/6/2001.



A Palestinian kid gathers his belongings from the ruins of his house in Nablus after the Israeli occupation army destroyed it during a night military incursion into the city.

► AFP, 19/1/2005.



From 2005 to 2006, the rate of working children between the ages of 10 and 17 went up from 3.8% to 5.3%, where it increased from 4.8% to 7.4% in WB and remained the same (2.1%) in GS. The number of working children in this age group is estimated at 22 thousand children, whereas the total number of working children (of all age groups) is around 30 thousands, which means that there are around eight thousand children younger than ten years old in the job market.⁶⁸

The data of the 2004 child labor survey shows that 71% of working children between the ages of 5 and 17 are working because of economic reasons (51.4% to help in a family project and 19.6% to help raise the family's income). Moreover, the data showed that 57.7% of working children had quit school, while the other 42.3% try to reconcile education and work. This reveals the extent of the hardship they endure and the responsibility they bear early in their lives. Among working children between 10 and 17 in 2006 in WB and GS, only 21.5% were employed by others, 5% were self-employed, and 73.4% were classified as working for the family without pay. This proves how bad the economic situation is, and how desperately families need additional sources of income. Due to these compelling circumstances, their only alternative is to send their children to work.⁶⁹





Regarding the children work environment, the 2004 survey of child labor regarding work benefits stated that working children between 5 and 17 years old “enjoyed” the following:

The Ratio of Children Ages 5 to 17 Relative to the Job Benefits Offered and the Area, 2004⁷⁰

Work benefits	Area (percentage %)		
	Palestinian territories	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Paid vacation	9.3	7.6	12.4
Paid sick leave	15	13.2	18.1
Health insurance	10.3	10.7	9.8
Gifts and bonuses	16.3	12.2	23.6
Clothing allowance	5.9	6.6	4.5
Free meals	37.5	38.5	35.6
Meal allowance	12.4	9.2	17.9
Rest breaks	54.2	57.2	49
Free transportation	22.3	22.4	22.1
Transportation allowance	9.5	8.5	11.1
Free housing	8.2	9.7	5.6
No benefits	23.7	17.3	34.9



The above table shows that the children's working environment is often inappropriate even for adults, i.e., no breaks, medical benefits, vacations, transportation or transportation allowance, etc. It is the more so for children at the start of their growth and development in life. The numbers also show that 23.7% of working children have no benefits at all.

Statistical reports showed that weekly working hours of children are too long for their age. Moreover, 7.6% of working children have had work-related injuries or became victims of chronic diseases (7.5% in WB and 8.3% in GS).⁷¹

Concerning attitudes of working children about pursuing their education versus focusing on their work, results showed that 47.4% of working children prefer to focus on their education only, 24.9% prefer to focus on work only, 18.3% want to work and study at the same time, and 7.9% like to pursue education and work summers only.⁷²





Chapter 7: Education

Israel works on hindering the education of Palestinians. Besides being a violation of a basic right of children, it is a bigger crime because it aims at putting an end to the future of a whole nation and a new generation. The commissioner-general of UNRWA, Peter Hansen, summarized the reality of the Palestinian student under Israeli occupation and the violations to which the Palestinian educational sector is subjected as follows:

Imagine the political fall-out if every schoolchild in London had missed a month's schooling last year because teachers could not get to their classes. Think of the parental anguish and outrage if the Paris school system saw its pass rates in French language exams fall from 71 per cent to 38 per cent in a year. Now picture your own child, traumatised by fear because every





CRC

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
 - (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
 - (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
 - (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
 - (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
 - (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

day her journey to school means a trip past tanks, checkpoints and soldiers.

This nightmare is the reality facing Palestinian parents, teachers and around one million pupils... in the West Bank and Gaza Strip after two years of the Intifada.

The main causes of this educational crisis are the curfews and closures imposed by the Israeli authorities.... These have crippled the education programme of the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations.... But closed schools are only one part of the story. Military operations... have violated the sanctity of schools across the occupied territory.... It is not uncommon for children to be searched and abused by Israeli troops on their way to and from school or to be subject to teargas and warning shots near checkpoints.

Already they have paid with the loss of their security, their innocence and their education. But they will also pay with their futures. They will pay with the loss of opportunity, development and hope that a sound education brings.



This is a tragedy for the Palestinian people, who, with so many disadvantages to cope with, have traditionally put great stock in education. Palestinian literacy rates were among the highest in the region. Palestinian girls were the first in the Arab world to achieve educational parity with boys.

Israel of course has security concerns... but I cannot believe that those security concerns are being served by depriving a generation of Palestinians of their right to a future.⁷³

Article 50 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, stipulates that:

The occupying power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children... the Occupying Power shall make arrangements for the maintenance and education (of children)... separated from their parents as a result of the war.⁷⁴

Although Israel is a signatory of the Fourth Geneva Convention, it went far in paralyzing the Palestinian Educational Sector.

The Quarterly Report of the UNICEF laid stress on the big part played by movement restriction in preventing Palestinians from getting to their schools, especially in the WB. Moreover, there are signs of deterioration in the quality of education as well as in the levels of learning of students living in the most affected areas. The cumulative impact of suspending classes had a negative effect on the quality of teaching, and limited the learning abilities and skills of students. These difficulties lead students to become two or three academic years behind and cause them to drop out of school and join the labor force without acquiring any good skills.⁷⁵





Memoirs of a Palestinian Girl

The blood of ten years old “Raghd” tainted her copybook



The Palestinian pupil Raghd al-‘Assar, ten years old, was at school, listening attentively to her English teacher, early on Tuesday 7/9/2004, at Khan Yunis Girls School, when she fell on her desk, blood splashed over her books and her desk after an Israeli bullet entered the right side of her head. Raghd’s desk will stay empty for ever, as a reminder of the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation that considers every Palestinian a fair target.

Down in the playground which looked like a mourning tent, every three children huddle together holding one another, overcome with fright after watching their friend’s blood spattered on her book and pen.

► *Addustour* newspaper, Amman, 5/10/2005.





A Palestinian child tries to take cover after hearing the sound of gunfire in the city of *Nablus* in the WB.

► Photo by 'Alaa Badarnah, 3/11/2007.



An Israeli soldier stops a group of school children while trying to pass to their school across a street blocked by the Israeli occupation army during one of their incursions in *Nablus*.

► Photo by 'Alaa Badarnah, 16/10/2005.





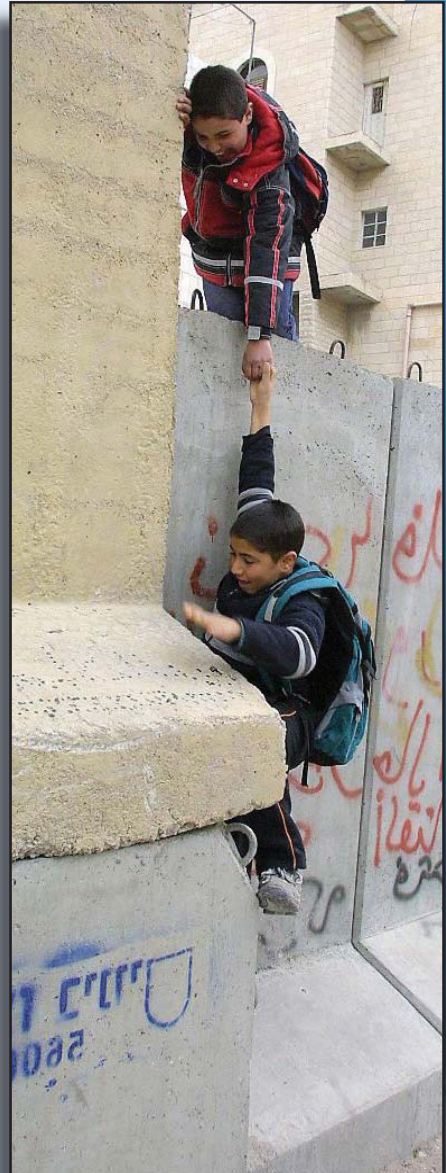
Very few Palestinian children get a chance to learn in an environment friendly to children or attend physical education or entertainment classes. Students need educational materials and good teaching tools. Most schools in WB and GS lack heating systems (only 12% of public school students and 3% of UNRWA school students have heating systems).⁷⁶ In addition to the inability of reaching schools, movement restrictions delay the transfer of educational materials between WB and GS and affects teacher training programs.

As a result of Israeli daily measures, the Palestinian educational sector has sustained huge losses in terms of education and abuse of Palestinian students, children in particular, since the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, such as Israelis occupying schools and turning them into detention centers or military camps, and arresting and humiliating faculty members, students and employees. The annual report of the PCBS showed that 498 schools were shut down at the start of the academic year 2002/2003 and 1,289 schools have shut down since the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah*; that adds up to 1,787 schools. Moreover, 297 schools were destroyed due to bombardment with rockets and tanks. Losses are estimated at \$2.3 million and students have lost 7,825 school days.⁷⁷ The report also tells that from 29/9/2000 to 12/5/2007, 623 students were killed and 3,535 were injured.

In spite of all of that, the Palestinian people still consider the battle for education one of their main battles against the occupation. The 2007/2008 UN Development Program Report states that the Education Index in the oPt is 0.891, which is the highest among all Arab states, followed by 0.875 in Libya, then 0.871 in Lebanon and Kuwait,



then 0.868 in Jordan. Education Index is an indicator that joins together the level of education and the rate of children who go to school; its average in the Arab states combined is 0.687.⁷⁸ This proves that despite Israeli offensive measures, the Palestinians are still the Arab nation most insistent on education and with the lowest rate of illiteracy. The Palestinian people are entirely aware of the importance and difficulty of this challenge and its role in resistance, of preserving their identity, and of perseverance in the face of the occupation.





Conclusion

Nidaa (A name which means a “call”) is the finale. Nidaa here is not an ordinary call like all the other futile calls demanding an end to Israeli violence. Nidaa is a gentle fifteen years old Palestinian girl who was a creative writer. Her life was cut short when a bullet hit her in the back and killed her. She was killed like many others until she appeared in a Norwegian poem listed as part of the academic curriculum of that country. She left a trace in the hearts of all the European delegates who met her. So much so that a Spanish volunteer, who was in charge of the Papal delegation





Library in Bethlehem, asked one of her colleagues when Nidaa was killed: “Did you know what has happened to our child?”. Then she decided, “with the continuing senseless death of children” as she described it, to pack up and go to a place “where children don’t get killed.”

Nidaa’s wish, according to an interview with her in an Egyptian magazine, was to become a nurse and a journalist, “a journalist to write about people’s suffering, and a nurse to heal their wounds.” But Nidaa is gone, and when she was mentioned in the Norwegian poem, Israel protested. “They are trying to kill Nidaa twice,” said Nidaa’s mother. But the poem did not die, it remained “a call”... and it goes as follows:

There was something unique about the way she slept,
The gentle pure side
The small beautiful eyebrows
The freckles scattered on her nose
The clean soft skin enjoyed only by children
She reminded me of my child
Nidaa the fourteen years old girl
grew up in a refugee camp.
Her head wrapped with the Palestinian headscarf
Nidaa who was sniped by the Israeli occupation army



impelled me in the end to stand before the scene of violence

She impelled me to take a stand

But does this benefit her now?⁷⁹

The Israeli occupation adopts a terrorist discriminatory policy against Palestinian children, in order to handicap the coming Palestinian generation physically and psychologically. This places a heavy responsibility on all concerned parties to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian children and not to allow children to keep paying the price of regional conflicts. Thus, they should have a protective shield based on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959, the CRC 1989, and the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949. Also, Palestinian official and civil efforts should be doubled to protect children and offer them better home and school environments.

This is in addition to exerting real efforts, aimed at promoting the role of International institutions in the area of care for the affairs of the Palestinian child, and their follow-ups, after providing them with the facts regarding the hard reality of Palestinian children under occupation. Furthermore, parties involved in this cause, including the Palestinian Authority, the media and human rights organizations, should work hard to expose the brutality of the Israeli measures against Palestinian children in international forums, in particular the UN General Assembly, to condemn the Israeli occupation to the world community, to accuse





and prosecute it in international judicial institutions for committing the most horrific and inhumane crimes against Palestinian children.

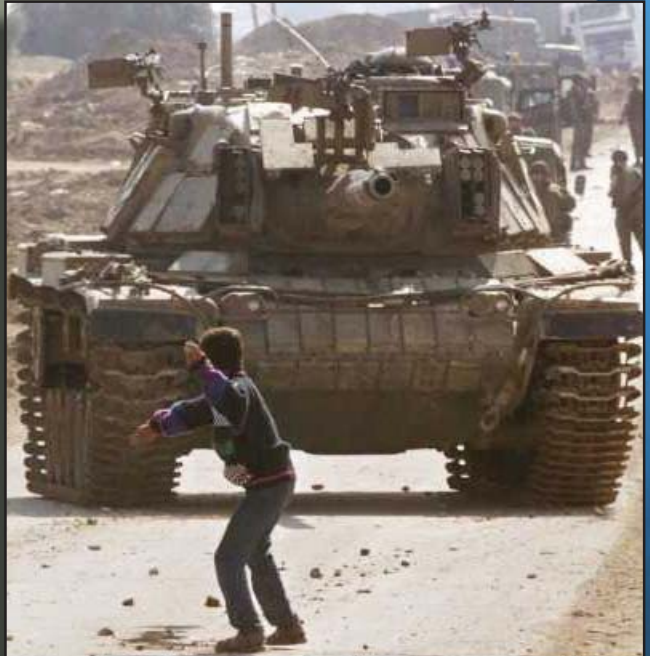




Instead of feeling helpless, the fourteen years old Palestinian child Fares Awdeh chose to defy. He stood on the *Mintar* crossing confronting an Israeli tank with a stone; his resolve astonished the world; for as he stood, he was chanting his favorite song: “If they break my bones I will not be afraid; if they demolish the house I will not be afraid.”

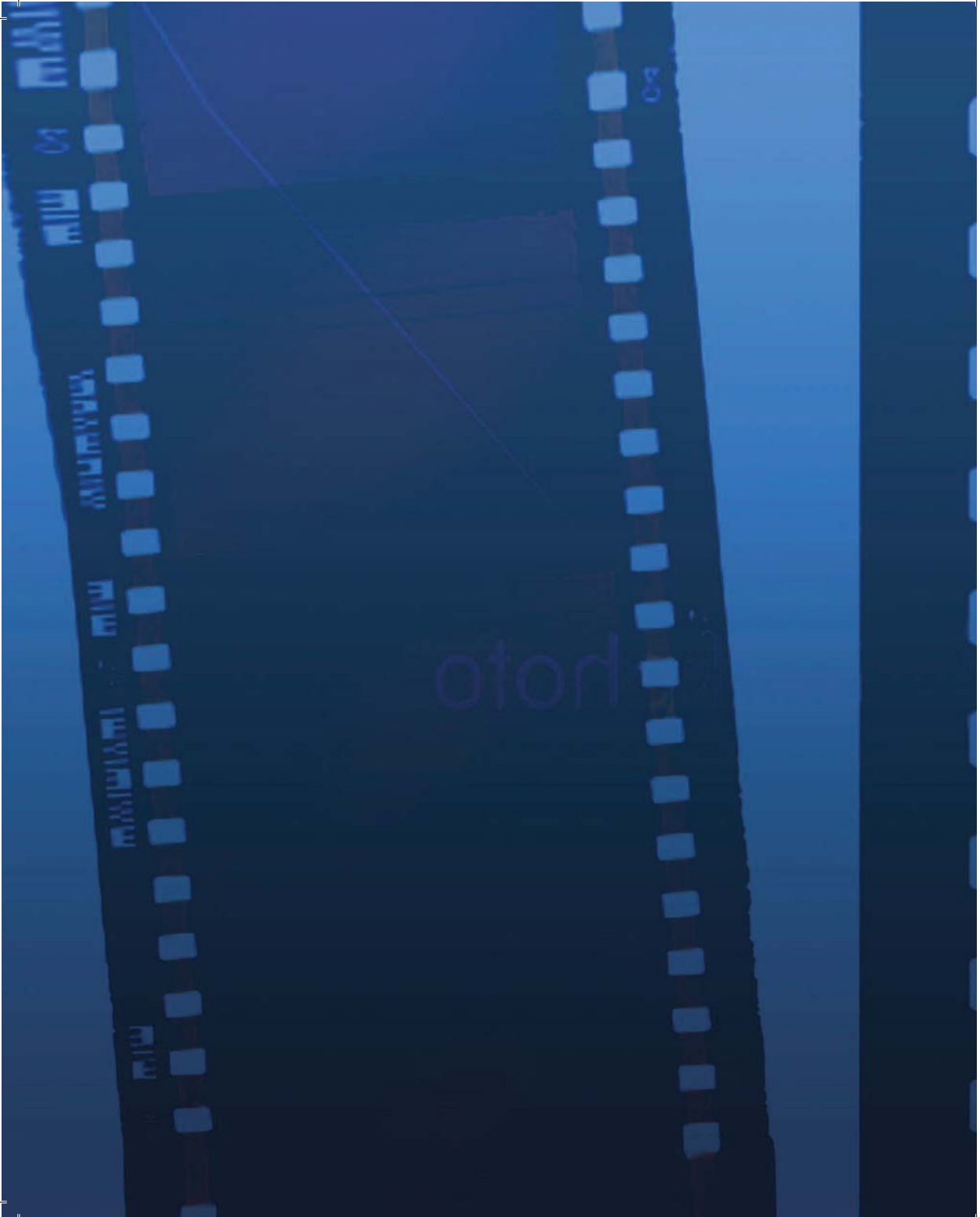
29/10/2000 is the date when the photo was taken.

8/11/2000 is the date when Fares was killed.



As much as his stand was loud and startling, his death was serene. The occupation shot him in his neck while he was on his way to school. Since then, Fares has become an icon of defiance; and his song continues on the tongue of his little brother, five years old 'Issa, sitting by Fares's seat at the dining table; and, with a lump in his throat interrupting his speech, he recites: “If they break my bones I will not be afraid, if they demolish the house I will not be afraid.”

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- ⁶⁹ See *Because of Work, More than 3.1% of the Palestinian Children are Deprived of Their Childhood* (in Arabic); and see also PCBS, Child Statistics Series (no. 10) (in Arabic).
- ⁷⁰ PCBS, Child Statistics Series (no. 10) (in Arabic).
- ⁷¹ *Our Children... Flowers behind Bars and Shattered Dreams in the Streets* (in Arabic), *al-Hayat al-Jadidah* newspaper, Ramallah, 5/4/2006.
- ⁷² *Because of Work, More than 3.1% of the Palestinian Children are Deprived of Their Childhood* (in Arabic).
- ⁷³ Peter Hansen, "Palestinian Children: Frightened and Deprived," *International Herald Tribune* newspaper, Paris, 9/10/2002.
- ⁷⁴ Muhammad Nasir al-Khawaldah, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁵ UNICEF Humanitarian Action - Occupied Palestinian Territory, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁶ PCBS, Child Statistics Series (no. 11) (in Arabic).
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Human Development Report 2007/2008, see: <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/>
- ⁷⁹ The Palestinian Information Center, *Nidaa the Child... Died a Martyr and Came Back in a Norwegian Poem*, 15/6/2005, see: <http://www.palestine-info.com/arabic/palestoday/reports/report2005/neda2.htm>



*The Suffering of the
Palestinian Child
under the Israeli Occupation*
معاناة الطفل الفلسطيني
تحت الاحتلال الإسرائيلي

This Book

Before the eyes of innocent children, the horrible atrocities of the occupation are exposed. Despite the fact that children constitute more than half of Palestinian society, they are deprived from most of their rights; a dignified living, good health, safe environment, education, shelter and good nutrition. Israeli aggression is ruining the children's families and friends, its missiles and bulldozers have been destroying their homes and their schools. Above all, they might find themselves as targets for the occupation's fire; hence, they get killed, injured and detained. All of this happens at a time while we think that the world has become civilized and no cruel colonization could ever still exist.

This book is the third in *Am I Not a Human?* series. Al-Zaytouna Centre seeks to give a full picture of the suffering under the Israeli occupation. This book addresses minds and hearts in an academic, systematic and documented context.



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Am I Not a Human ?



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