

CORNERSTONE

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Breaking a Generation



Photo by Maan News

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Children in Israeli Military Detention

by Gerard Horton

Immediately following the end of hostilities in June 1967, an Israeli military commander signed an order imposing military law on all Palestinians living in the recently occupied territory. At the time this order was legal under international law on the basis that it was a temporary measure and Israeli forces would shortly withdraw. Forty-five years later, 2.5 million Palestinian men, women and children continue to live under Israeli military law in the West Bank contrary to the most basic of democratic principles - a situation that can no longer claim any legitimacy in law.



This much is well known. What is perhaps less known is how this military legal system is used to control and dominate generation after generation of Palestinians living under occupation, and suppress the legitimate aspirations of a people seeking self-determination. Indeed, the importance of the military detention system in controlling the civilian population is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that since June 1967, more than 730,000 Palestinians have been detained and prosecuted in the military courts, including 500 to 700 children each year¹.

The journey to imprisonment for many Palestinian children begins at a friction point. These points of friction include: Israeli settlements built in violation of international law and located close to Palestinian villages; roads used by the Israeli army and settlers connecting the settlements; and the Wall, built for the most part, many kilometers on the Palestinian side of the 1967 border². At these points of friction, demonstrations, arrests and stone throwing frequently occur, as people vent their frustration against prolonged military occupation and the wholesale disregard for the rule of law.

Commitment to justice and peace is not an 'optional extra' for Christians. Rather, it is an imperative of the Gospel, and perhaps especially in our time when many of our global structures are permeated with almost unimaginable injustices. The theologian Ronald Sider once expressed this commitment succinctly when he wrote: 'Christian churches should not be comfortable clubs of conformity but communities of loving defiance.'

*From "This Is the Day",
Iona Community
(ed) Neil Paynter*



«Any request to use the toilet or for a drink of water is usually met with a slap or verbal insult ...»

The Israeli army's response to unrest at the friction points is to ensure that no incident of resistance, regardless of its seriousness, remains unpunished. The thinking behind this policy is that the Palestinian civilian population must be made to understand that all forms of resistance are futile, in the belief that this is the best way to ensure a life of calm and normalcy for the 500,000 Israeli civilians living in the illegal settlements. But what options does an army have when a stone is thrown at a vehicle in occupied territory and the perpetrator cannot be identified? If the incident goes unpunished, surely more stones will be thrown the following day leading quickly to a breakdown in military authority? The solution to this dilemma developed over the past 45 years is simple, if not legal³.

The first stage in the response involves an assumption that the person throwing the stone came from the nearest Palestinian village. The next step involves compiling a list of young men and boys from the village who have either been arrested before, or whose names are given up by others during interrogation, or are obtained from informants. Several days later, and with a list of names compiled, a convoy of military vehicles will leave their bases, usually in the middle of the night, and converge on the unsuspecting village. Now the retaliatory arrests will begin. The description that follows is based on hundreds of sworn testimonies collected from children over the course of the past five years⁴.

In most cases, the child will wake to the sound of soldiers shouting and

ordering the family outside. In a few cases, children report waking to a disturbance inside their bedroom to see soldiers in full battle dress with assault rifles poised at the ready. Most children report being "scared" or "terrified" by these experiences. The family will be ordered to gather in one room, or outside, regardless of weather conditions. The commanding officer will compare the family's I.D. cards against the list of names he has been given by a superior. Once a child on the list has been identified, his hands will be tied painfully behind his back with a single plastic tie and his eyes blindfolded – even if he is 12. Very few parents or children are told why they are being arrested, or where they are being taken, before being marched outside and taken away into the night. Anyone who tries to follow is turned back at gunpoint.

Once outside the children are led to a waiting military vehicle and in one-third of cases, are forced to sit, bound and blindfolded, on the metal floor, where they can remain for hours. Many children report being verbally abused and/or physically assaulted whilst being transferred in the back of these military vehicles. Their journey is frequently punctuated by multiple stops throughout the night at unknown destinations, where they are pulled out of the vehicle and made to sit, still tied and blindfolded, outside on the ground, even in winter. Any request to use the toilet or for a drink of water is usually met with a slap or verbal insult at this stage in the system. Sometime after dawn, the child, now terrified, bruised and sleep deprived, will arrive



Photo by Husam Abu Allan

at a police station inside one of the settlements - and so the interrogation phase will begin.

On arrival at the police station, the child is usually led straight in for interrogation. He will be taken to a room and placed on a seat. His blindfold will be removed, although his now swollen hands will generally remain tied behind his back. Although there is provision in the military orders for the child to consult with a lawyer, this generally does not occur until long after the interrogation is over – and no one tells the child about his right to silence. Unlike an Israeli child, including children living in the settlements, a Palestinian child has no right to be accompanied by a parent – a practical safeguard against

improper interrogation techniques. The interrogator will then begin by asking the child why he throws stones at Israelis - an allegation which the child will invariably deny. The interrogator will then approach the bound child until their faces are close, and begin shouting, typically a mixture of threats and obscenities, aimed at breaking the child's spirit. If the interrogation is anything like most interrogations, the child may also be slapped across the face and sometimes knocked off his chair. In some cases the treatment is worse⁵.

In a sample of over 300 sworn testimonies collected during the past four years, children reported being subjected to physical violence in 75 percent of cases; threatened in 57 percent of cases; and

verbally abused in 54 percent of cases⁶. In 12 percent of cases children also report being held in solitary confinement, usually in small, dirty, windowless cells where the light is left on 24 hours a day⁷. This practice continues to occur in spite of demands by a number of UN agencies calling for its total prohibition in the case of children. The reason the UN has called for a total prohibition on the use of solitary confinement for children, is because the psychological impact can be severe, and in some cases catastrophic.

The result of all this, is that most children confess to whatever they are accused of, and almost unbelievably, 29 percent of children are either shown, or forced to sign, documentation written in Hebrew, a language they do not understand.

From the interrogation centres the children are brought before a military court judge within four days of their arrest⁸. It is in the military court where most children meet their lawyers for the first time, long after their interrogation is over and a confession has been signed. The lawyer will almost certainly advise the child to plead guilty, whether or not the offence was committed, as this is the quickest way out of a system which denies children bail in 87 percent of cases⁹. According to figures recently released by the military courts, the conviction rate in 2010 was a staggering 99.74 percent, of which around 98 percent receive custodial sentences¹⁰.

Once convicted, a child accused of throwing stones can expect to be imprisoned for around three months inside Israel, in violation of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits their transfer out of occupied territory. Imprisoning Palestinian children inside Israel is not only illegal,

but makes family visits difficult, and sometimes, impossible. Once inside prison, only some children receive an education which is limited in nature, due to “security” considerations.

This is the day to day reality of Israel’s prolonged military occupation and illegal settlement construction. In the pages that follow, the human cost of these policies are explored in greater detail.

Gerard Horton, lawyer, International Advocacy Officer for Defence for Children International.

1 In 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion which held that it is illegal for Israel to build the Wall on the Palestinian side of the 1967 border. Essentially, any nation is entitled to build a wall if it so chooses, but must do so on its own territory, not that of its neighbours – ICJ Advisory Opinion of the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

2 A report by UK lawyers, “Children in military custody,” (June 2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/EM6lmu>

3 DCI-Palestine, “Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention,” (April 2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/cFBSgP>

4 DCI-Palestine, case study: Ahmad F. – Dogs used to terrify a 15-year-old boy. Available at: <http://is.gd/2USpYg>

5 DCI-Palestine, “Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention,” (April 2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/cFBSgP>

6 The Guardian, “The Palestinian children – alone and bewildered – in Israel’s Al Jalame jail.” Available at: <http://is.gd/gGDV3E>

7 By amendment introduced by Military Order 1685, the time within which a child must be brought before a military judge was reduced in August 2012, from eight to four days. By way of contrast, Israeli children must be brought before a judge within 12-24 hours, depending on age.

8 DCI-Palestine, “Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention,” (April 2012), page 41 – Available at: <http://is.gd/cFBSgP>

9 Haaretz (29 November 2011) – Available at: <http://is.gd/U7rMTk>; and No Legal Frontiers, All Guilty! Observations in the Military Juvenile Court (2011) – Available at: <http://is.gd/RuWZW8>

10 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Professor John Dugard, “Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories” (21 January 2008, A/HRC/7/17 – paragraph 45; B’Tselem – Statistics on Palestinians in the custody of Israeli security forces (2008 to 2011).

Stay Awake and Pray that you may not fall into Temptation

Matt. 26:41

by Salwa Duaibis

*Young Adult Conference,
Opening Worship at Church of all Nations - Gethsemane*

It was 2:50am on Thursday 12 January 2012 when Bushra Tamimi, a 39-year-old mother of two sons and three daughters woke up to the sound of loud banging at her front door. “I woke up startled and shaken” Bushra told me, “I didn’t know whether I was in the middle of a bad dream or whether this was for real. It was a very cold winter night and the loud banging made Bushra’s bones shiver. Bushra was alone with the children; her husband, Naji, was in jail on suspicion of organizing weekly non-violent protests in the village of An Nabi Saleh where Bushra and her family live. Bushra gathered all her courage and went downstairs to see who it was. Four masked and heavily armed soldiers stormed into the house and went upstairs to the girls’ bedroom. “Leave them asleep” shouted Bushra, “they are my daughters”.

The soldiers moved on to the boys’ bedroom and when they saw Anan, Bushra’s 16-year-old son, one of the soldiers poked him with the back of

his gun. Anan was forced out of bed while his mother watched. The soldiers did some talking in Hebrew over the walky-talky and about 40 soldiers and two dogs joined the others. One of them told Bushra they were here to arrest Anna. “He throws stones one of them told me” said Bushra, “we want to take him”.

The commander told Anan to put warm clothes on. He then blindfolded him and tied his hands behind his back and walked him out to the jeep that was waiting outside the house. By 4:00am Anan had been kicked and slapped and verbally abused and was on the floor of a military vehicle on his way to Benyamina, a settlement not too far from Jerusalem where he was going to be interrogated.

“I didn’t sleep that night, I cried and cried and the neighbours stayed with me till the morning” said Bushra with tears in her eyes. She continued; it was Friday the following day and Jonathan the activist told me I had to go to the interrogation center to be with Anan

during his interrogation because he is a minor, he was not yet 16". Bushra arrived at Benjamina at 13:30 and it wasn't until 17:00 that Anan was brought in. When Bushra entered the room to be with Anan, the interrogator pushed her aside and didn't allow her in. "and don't wait here, go home" the interrogator said but Bushra sat outside and listened while the interrogator shouted and yelled at her son. She was shivering but was not sure whether it was the cold weather or fear for the fate of her son that made her bones shake most.

The following day Anan appeared in front of a military judge and the prosecutor presented photographs to the judge and claimed they were evidence against Anan. The judge wanted to listen to me and hear my story" said Bushra with a surprise look on her face, "he was a nice judge". "He asked me whether I was allowed to attend the interrogation and I said no". The judge then dismissed the evidence against Anan as insufficient and decided to release him.

A few weeks later soldiers again came to Bushra's house in the middle of the night. They came with the same photos which the judge dismissed. Again Anan was taken out of bed, slapped and kicked and verbally abused, interrogated without his parents and released again on lack of evidence, except that this time Anan was left out on the street blind folded and hand cuffed and asked to walk home on his own.

I interrupted the deafening silence that

filled the room when Bushra finished telling her story. "How do you help your children live with this ongoing worry and fear" I asked. **"I do my best to make sure they stay asleep" she said in her calm, matter-of-fact soft voice. "I stay awake so that they can sleep"**.

Bushra's story is neither unique nor uncommon. It happened in a place not too far from here. Her pain and anguish are typical of many Palestinian mothers living under occupation today.

2000 years ago under Roman occupation Jesus stood in this very place. He went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Jesus words to his disciples could not be more appropriate to our situation today, here and now. I hear him telling us now: "why are you sleeping? Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation", the temptation of falling under the weight of fear and sorrow, of failing to act, failing to witness and to confront. Jesus is not asking us for much, he knows that with limited means and with limited resources we can make a difference. He knows too well, and so does Bushra, that when conscientious people are made aware of

a looming danger, bad things happen if we fall asleep. Injustice and oppression will creep in and children will be dragged out of their beds in the middle of the night if we surrender to our tendency to shut off and fall into deep sleep, if we allow intimidation, sorrow and fear to take control.

I need not tell you that each step of courage each one of us takes will invoke more and more courage, the courage to learn, the courage to understand, the courage to discern, the courage to speak out, and to confront.

When we transcend our own fears and weaknesses we unleash the power to confront injustice and oppression whenever and wherever it happens. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.

During this coming week you will see and hear about injustice and oppression that have become endemic, about fear and anguish that have crept into people's hearts and minds, about hopelessness and despair. Don't be exhausted by sorrow and grief, open up your eyes and stay awake so that Bushra's children can sleep. Most importantly, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has".

Margaret Mead

*Salwa Duaibis coordinator,
International Advocacy Program -
Women's Center for Legal Aid and
Counseling (WCLAC)*

Friends of Sabeel UK Witness Visit to Palestine – Israel

20th – 28th October 2012

Anne Clayton will be leading the trip with Sabeel Jerusalem and the visit will include:

- Hearing from UNOCHA, Parents' Circle, Rabbis for HR, Bethlehem Bible College, Augusta Victoria Hospital
- Meeting with Palestinian Christians in their homes for a meal
- A visit to the Tent of Nations to hear of life near settlements
- Picking olives on Mount of Olives (it will be olive picking time)
- Visiting Bedouin families who are being evicted in the South Hebron Hills area
- A visit to Sabeel - meet new Board Members.
- Visiting Jenin area and Zababdeh for lunch
- Visits to the Galilee area.

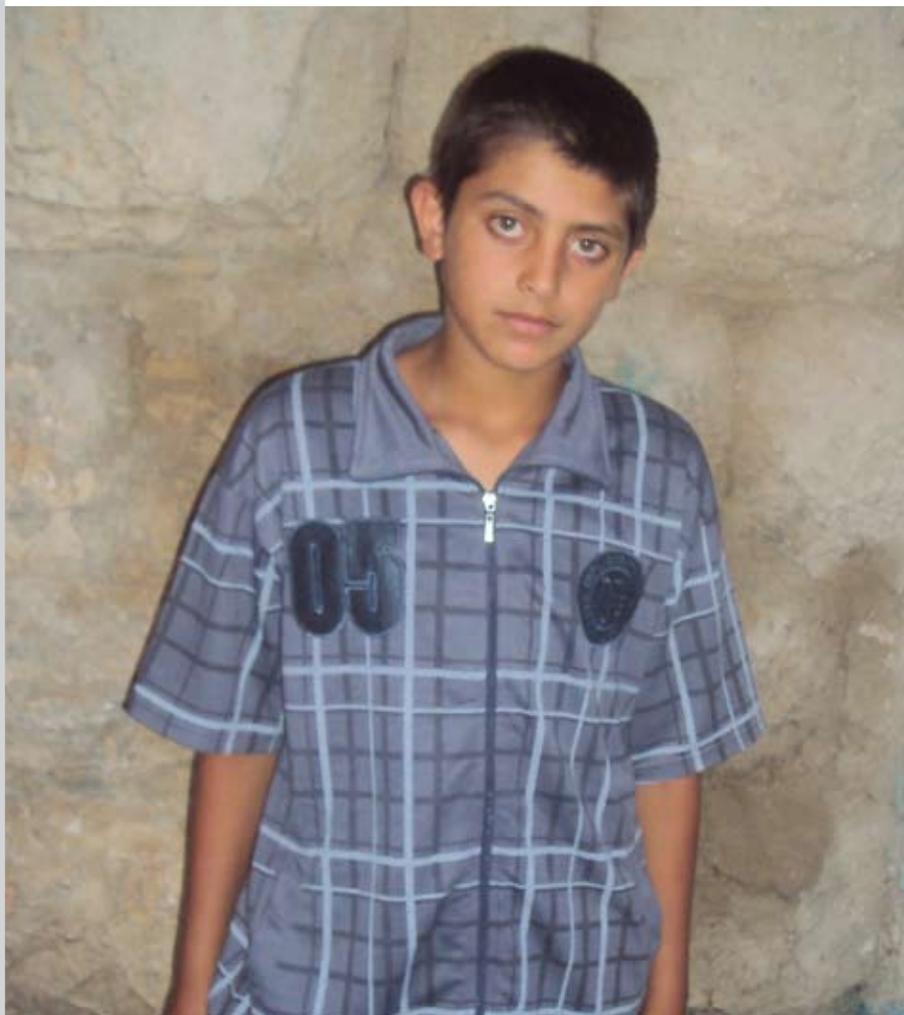


Photo by DCI

A Child's Story

Defence for Children International-Palestine was established in 1991 and is dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights of Palestinian children in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as other international, regional and local standards.¹ Each year, lawyers for DCI-Palestine represent hundreds of children in the Israeli military courts, as well as conducting prison visits and collecting sworn testimonies. The testimony below is just one of these stories.

Name: Muhannad Z.

Date of arrest: 22 May 2012

Age: 13

Location: Beit Ummar, West Bank

Accusation: Throwing stones and Molotov cocktails

¹ DCI-Palestine - <http://www.dci-palestine.org/>

On 22 May 2012, a 13-year-old boy from the town of Beit Ummar, in the occupied West Bank, is arrested by Israeli soldiers at 3:00 am.

The town of Beit Ummar is located near Bethlehem, in the West Bank. In the late 1970s, land from Beit Ummar was confiscated to build the Israeli settlement of Karmi Zur, located approximately 500 metres from the town. The residents of the town now hold weekly protests against being denied access to their farmland close to the settlement.

Thirteen-year-old Muhannad woke at 3:00 am to find four armed soldiers in his bedroom. "That was a scary surprise," he recalls. "My father told me they wanted to arrest me, and I asked him to tell them not to beat me. I was very scared." Once Muhannad was dressed the soldiers took him outside and tied his hands behind his back with a single plastic tie. He was also blindfolded. Muhannad was taken to a military vehicle and made to sit on the metal floor. He was not beaten during transfer but recalls being called "a son of a whore." Muhannad was taken to the settlement of Gush Etzion where he was made to sit on the ground for about 20 minutes. He was then taken to see a doctor who asked him some questions about his health, but without a physical examination. After being re-tied and blindfolded, Muhannad was made to sit on the ground again for about 30 minutes. "It was exhausting and hurt my back and legs," he recalls.

Muhannad was then taken for interrogation without the benefit of speaking to a lawyer, and he was not accompanied by a parent – a right Israeli children are generally entitled to. The interrogator first asked Muhannad whether he threw Molotov cocktails and



«He knocked me down and kicked me on my right knee.»

then whether he threw stones at soldiers. Muhannad denied both accusations. A second interrogator then dragged him out of the room. "He knocked me down and kicked me on my right knee. Then he grabbed me by my left shoulder, pulled me up and took me back to the interrogation room. He didn't say a word," recalls Muhannad. "Don't you want to confess?" said the first interrogator when I entered. 'First untie me and remove the blindfold so I can confess,' I said. The second interrogator untied me and removed my blindfold. 'Did you throw stones?' the first interrogator asked. 'No,' I said, and the second interrogator punched me hard in the chest. 'Did you throw stones?' the first interrogator asked again. 'No,' I replied. The second interrogator started pushing me in the chest with both hands until I was cornered and then re-tied my hands with a single plastic tie. I was scared and confused. I was hurting and crying, so I decided to confess," says Muhannad.

"How many times did you throw stones?" the first interrogator asked. 'Once,' I said, and the second interrogator re-blindfolded me and tightened it so hard I felt pain and I asked him to lower it so I could talk and he did so. 'How many times did



"I was scared and confused. I was hurting and crying, so I decided to confess," says Muhannad...

you throw stones?' the first interrogator asked. 'Twice,' I said. 'I'm going to believe you this time,' he said.

The interrogator then started showing Muhannad photographs of people from the town participating in a demonstration and asked him to identify them¹. Muhannad said he did not recognise anyone and the second interrogator then hit him on the head with a stick and then kicked him in the testicles. The first interrogator then showed him the photographs again and Muhannad made up a name of a demonstrator so he would not be beaten.

A short time later Muhannad was taken to another room and his blindfold and handties were removed. There was a policeman in uniform in the room who said: "I want you to give me the same answers you gave the first interrogator." The policeman then turned on a tape recorder and proceeded to ask him questions. The policeman asked for Muhannad's father's telephone number and called him and told him his son was in Gush Etzion and he should bring a lawyer. The policeman then allowed Muhannad to speak to his father on the phone and he told him he had been beaten. The policeman then snatched the phone away from Muhannad and hung up. At the end of the interrogation the policeman handed Muhannad a document written in Hebrew and ordered him to sign it, which he did. He then asked Muhannad if he had anything else to say to which he replied: "I've confessed because they beat me." However, the policeman turned off the tape recorder before Muhannad could finish talking.

Sometime later Muhannad was transferred to Ofer prison, in the West Bank, where he was detained with seven adults.

1- According to the US State Department, the Israeli army continues to use a 1967 military order that effectively prohibits Palestinian demonstrations and limits freedom of speech in the West Bank. The order stipulates that a "political" gathering of 10 or more persons requires a permit from the regional military commander. The penalty for a breach of the order is 10 years' imprisonment or a heavy fine - <http://is.gd/7zvQG4>

A Soldier Testifies

Breaking the Silence is an organization of veteran soldiers who have served in the Israeli military since the start of the Second Intifada and have taken it upon themselves to expose the Israeli public to the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory¹.

“Soldiers who serve in the Territories witness and participate in military actions which change them immensely. Cases of abuse towards Palestinians, looting and destruction of property have been the norm for years, but are still explained as extreme and unique cases. Our testimonies portray a different and much grimmer picture in which deterioration of moral standards finds expression in the character of orders and the rules of engagement, and are justified in the name of Israel’s security. While this reality is known to Israeli soldiers and commanders, Israeli society continues to turn a blind eye, and to deny what is done in its name. Discharged soldiers returning to civilian life discover the gap between the reality they encountered in the Territories, and the silence about this reality they encounter at home. In order to become civilians again, soldiers are forced to ignore what they have seen and done. We strive to make heard the voices of these soldiers, pushing Israeli society to face the reality whose creation it has enabled.” – Breaking the Silence.

The following testimony is taken from a compendium published by Breaking the Silence in 2012, and is reproduced here with their kind permission.

“What is that job, really?”

Unit: Armored Corps

Rank: First Sergeant

Date: 2005

Location: Nablus, West Bank

Soldier: “We moved to the Ari’el area, near Nablus. We were in charge of all roads crossing the West Bank from west to east, up to Tapuach Junction Checkpoint. Our designated mission was to prevent acts of terrorism. Simply handle the population. We would enter villages on a daily basis, at least twice or three times a day, to make our presence felt, and ... like occupying them. Showing we’re there, this area is ours, not theirs.”

Interviewer: “How is this done?”

Soldier: “A patrol goes in, or two patrols, two Hummers secured by a jeep. Raising hell inside the village. Whether

it’s to send in a whole company on foot in two lines like a military parade in the streets, provoking riots, provoking children. The commander is bored and wants to show off to his battalion commander, and he does it at the expense of his subordinates. He wants more and more friction, to simply grind the population, make their lives more and more miserable, so they don’t throw stones, so they don’t even think about throwing stones at the main road- not to mention fire bombs and other things. Practically speaking, it worked. The population was so scared it simply closed itself in. They hardly came out. Earlier I recall a lot of taxis with people on their way to work near

Thanks to

Gerard Horton

for his valuable assistance with the production of this issue.



the main road. Then it hardly existed any more. The whole village shut itself in. I'm talking to you about what a company commander is able to do."

Interviewer: "What level does it reach? What is he able to do?"

Soldier: "At first you point your gun at some five-year old kid, and feel bad afterwards, saying it's not right. Then you get to a point where ... you get so nervous and sick of going into a village and getting stones thrown at you. But it's obvious, you're inside the village, you've just passed the school house, naturally the kids will throw stones at you. Once my driver got out, and without blinking simply caught some kid and beat him to a pulp. And that kid was just sitting in the street and looked like some other kid, or wore another kid's shirt, or perhaps he was that kid, but that's not the point. He beat him to a pulp. Didn't detain him. Just beat him. And I remember they had this billiard club. These were already the more 'serious' guys, who throw Molotov cocktails. In order to get them out, detain and interrogate them, we'd catch – my company commander caught a 12-year-old kid there once, and made him get down on his knees in the middle of the street. Yelled like a madman, it looked like some Vietnam war movie, so that the other guys come out or else he'll do something really bad. He'd do something to that kid. I knew it was just a hollow threat, and after all, the guy's an officer, and I don't think an officer would do anything, but"

Interviewer: "Actually shackled him?"

Soldier: "He had a plastic shackle. I remember it was raining. We went in,



«The commander is bored ... he wants more and more friction, to simply grind the population, make their lives more and more miserable.»

and as usual stones were thrown at us. My communications man who runs fast caught this kid who supposedly threw stones, shackled him and took him to the company commander. Brought him back to this place in front of that billiard club. The vehicles were parked there. He got him down on his knees and yelled as if ..."

Interviewer: "In Arabic?"

Soldier: "No, in Hebrew, so loud that the kids from that club came out so we would interrogate them. They didn't come out on their own."

Interviewer: "What did he yell at that kid?"

Soldier: "He yelled at him to shut up and the kid cried of course ... He

also urinated in his pants, in front of the whole village. He got him on his knees and began to scream in Hebrew, to swear at him: 'Those fucking kids from the club should come out!' 'Get those whores out!' 'Let him be scared!' 'Look what I can do!' 'I'll show this kid.' Finally the kids didn't come out, but we always had in mind that image of the old Arab with his keffiyah and stick. Regardless if there's shooting or stones, no matter what, he's a kid in the middle of the street. Kids and soldiers both would respect him. So this old guy comes along and somehow convinces my company commander to release the kid. And that's how the episode ended. We got out of there. The next day, two Molotov cocktails were thrown at the main road. Se we didn't really do our job. And you wonder what that job really is?"



Photo by Gerard Horton

Photo by Salwa Duabibis



A Mother Speaks

by kind permission from: "Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)"

Name: Hamda M.

Date of incident: February 2012

Age: 43

Location: Beit Ummar, West Bank

Nature of incident: Night raids / arrest of children

A 43-year-old mother from Beit Ummar, near Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank, describes

repeated night raids on her home and the arrest of her children.

"Our village is surrounded by settlements in all directions and a road used by the army and settlers passes close by," says Hamda. "We have lots of problems because of the settlements and because of this road. Many children are arrested and the village is raided by

the army almost every day. The first three months of this year alone were a disaster," recalls Hamda.

"I was at home getting ready to sleep on a cold winter night in mid-February. I don't remember the exact date. I found it hard to sleep so I looked out the window to the hill across the valley where the settlement of Karmi Zur



«I was scared and worried that they might beat him up as they did before.»

is built. I saw army jeeps and soldiers moving around and I immediately knew this was not good news for the village. I woke my husband and told him it looks like the village might be raided. I wondered who the unlucky mother is whose son will be arrested tonight. It did not occur to me that they might be raiding our house.”

“My husband went to the bathroom and came back and told me soldiers were surrounding our house. I didn’t believe him, so I looked out to see for myself. I wondered who they were looking for. My son Yousef was already in prison and my other children are too young. I thought maybe this time they had come for my husband,” recalls Hamda.

“I got dressed. It was around 2:30 am when we heard the knock at the door. When my husband went to the balcony overlooking the entrance the soldiers verbally abused him. I think they recognised him because he takes part in the weekly demonstration against the settlements. They called my husband a dog and a donkey and my husband answered them back. They told him to come down and open the front gate. We all went down with him. They asked to see my husband’s identity card. They looked at the details and read the names of our children registered on the card. One of the soldiers asked for our son Mohammad who was standing next to me. When Mohammad identified himself one of the soldiers grabbed him from the front of his T-shirt and pulled him aside.”

“I was shocked when I finally realised they were here for Mohammad,” recalls

Hamda. “It didn’t occur to me that they had come for him; he is only 15 years old. When my other son Hamza saw they were about to arrest his brother he lost his mind and even kicked a soldier. I got into an argument with a soldier too. I wanted to know why they were arresting Mohammad. ‘He hasn’t done anything wrong,’ I shouted, ‘he is only 15, leave him alone,’ but they did not listen to me,” says Hamda.

“When I realised Mohammad’s arrest was inevitable, all I wanted to do was to give him warm clothes to put on as it was a freezing night. The soldier refused but I insisted. When the soldier started to shout at me and to humiliate me I asked to see his superior. ‘I want to speak to someone who will listen to me,’ I said, ‘I want my son to put on warm clothes.’ The supervisor agreed with me and I was able to give Mohammad some warm clothes.”

“Minutes later they took him away on foot. They did not tie his hands or blindfold him, but later my sister-in-law, who lives next door, told me she saw him blindfolded with his hands tied behind his back. She also told me that the young men in the neighbourhood started throwing stones at the soldiers. She saw that they put Mohammad in front and used him as a shield to protect themselves from the stones. They shouted at Mohammad and told him to tell the young men not to throw stones. Mohammad later told me that he was hit by two stones.”

Hamda’s son Mohammad was detained for several days. “During that time he

was detained at the settlement of Karni Zur, then they transferred him to Gush Etzion settlement and then to Ofer prison near Ramallah. All this time we didn’t know where he was or why he was taken. We contacted an Israeli human rights organisation who later told us he was in Ofer. They also told us he was assigned a military court hearing and that he was accused of many things,” says Hamda.

“That night I wasn’t able to sleep at all. I was worried about Mohammad and feared that they might beat him up. I felt sick for three days and stayed in bed. This is what happens to me each time my house is raided and one of my children is arrested. This is an unbearable situation; living in constant fear is affecting my health. I have high blood pressure and I sometimes have problems breathing. I take medicine to keep me going. It is very hard. Luckily Mohammad was released on bail several days later, but my other son, Yousef, is still in jail. He was arrested in October 2011.”

“Yousef’s arrest was a terrible experience for me,” says Hamda. “They beat him on his head in front of my eyes. I nearly lost consciousness as I watched helplessly. They tied his hands behind his back and took him away. They forced him on the ground with his face down and then crushed his head with their boots. I saw about 15 soldiers taking turns to beat and kick him all over his body, even in his sensitive parts. They beat him with plastic batons. He screamed out in pain and called for me. When I approached to

try to protect him a soldier hit me with the back of his gun in my chest. I was in severe pain and later found out that my rib was fractured. I still feel pain in my chest nearly six months later.”

“Yousef and I are very close. He is kind-hearted and always offers to help. He is detained in a prison inside Israel and I haven’t seen him for months. I applied for a permit to enter Israel to visit him but my application was rejected. It is killing me that I cannot see his face and speak to him. When I attended his court I saw how badly he was treated; there were bruises all over his face and he had lost weight,” recalls Hamda.

“My children’s lives are being destroyed. The time they spend in jail is crucial time in their lives which is lost forever. My other children suffer too. We are all depressed around each other. When I am sick and stay in bed the whole house comes to a standstill. I lose my ability to do my house work as usual and I neglect my younger children. I then force myself out of bed when I realise this is not going to help. I am unable to rest or sleep, not even at night, I am vigilant all the time, listening for sounds and looking around the house. The image of Yousef being hit on the head so harshly does not leave my mind. They deliberately wanted me to see him being beaten. I haven’t seen or

heard from him for five months now. I miss him and wonder how he is doing.”

“The happiest time for me is when I have all my children around me at home. I cook for them, I chat with them and I know they are safe. Unfortunately we haven’t had a peaceful time together in a long time. My house was raided so much during the last six months that I can’t even remember how many times. Night raids have become a routine. This affects the young children and disturbs the relationship between the adults. We are all anxious and tense all the time and have no tolerance for each other. I sometimes blame my husband for this situation and he blames me. He doesn’t have a regular job and he spends a lot of time at home. “

“If my husband could find regular work things would be much easier for us. We can hardly make ends meet. We also have to pay a lot of money for lawyers and fines; it is very hard. The village has lost so much land to the settlements and we lost so much income we used to receive from agriculture. The situation is not looking good, not for my husband and not for my children. There is nothing to look forward to in the future. I am sad and I have lost hope,” says Hamda.

Related links

Member of UK parliament speaks about

Palestinian mother from Beit Ummar.

Breaking the Silence – Video testimony:

“Everything was Filmed”.

DCI-Palestine – “Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention”.

UK lawyers’ report – “Children in military custody”.

*Take away from me the
noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the
melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like
waters,
and righteousness like an
ever-flowing stream.*

Amos 5: 23-24

Solitary C

The Story of

Since 2008, DCI-Palestine has documented 53 cases in which children report being held in solitary confinement in Israeli detention facilities, generally as part of their interrogation¹.

When a person is held in solitary confinement, meaningful contact with other people is typically reduced to a minimum. The reduction in stimuli is not only quantitative but also qualitative. The available stimuli and the occasional social contacts are seldom freely chosen, generally monotonous, and often not empathetic. The detrimental psychological and physical effects of detaining persons in solitary confinement are well documented and include: panic attacks; fear of impending death; depression, including clinical depression; social withdrawal; a sense of hopelessness; unprovoked anger; short attention span; disorientation; paranoia; psychotic episodes; self-mutilation; and attempted suicide.

For these reasons, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Mr. Juan Méndez, called for a complete ban on the use of solitary confinement for children, in a report submitted to the UN General Assembly, in October 2011¹. In his report, Mr. Méndez concluded that the use of solitary confinement “can amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment when used as a punishment, during pre-trial detention, indefinitely or for a prolonged period, for persons with mental disabilities or juveniles.” The call for the prohibition on the use of solitary confinement for children echoes

onfinement

Mohammad E.

a similar demand made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2007, which recommended that the practice be “strictly forbidden”.

In spite of the adverse consequences of holding children in solitary confinement, the practice of detaining Palestinian children in isolation in Israeli interrogation centres continues to this day. Mohammad’s story is just one of these cases.

Name: Mohammad E. / Date of incident: 6 June 2012 / Age: 16 / Location: Al-Jalame interrogation centre, Israel / Nature of incident: Solitary confinement

On 6 June 2012, a 16-year-old boy from Shuweika village, in the occupied West Bank, is arrested by Israeli soldiers at 4:00 am, and held in solitary confinement for 12 days in Al Jalame interrogation centre.

Sixteen-year-old Mohammad was awakened at 4:00 am by the sound of Israeli soldiers surrounding the family home. The family was ordered out of the house and ordered to present their ID cards. Once Mohammad was identified, his hands were tied behind his back with a single plastic tie and he was blindfolded. Mohammad was not informed why he was being arrested or

where he was being taken. “A soldier pushed me hard inside one of the jeeps and forced me to sit on the metal floor,” recalls Mohammad.

Mohammad was taken to a military base where he was asked some questions about his health while remaining tied. He asked to use the toilet but the soldiers refused to allow him to go. He was then transferred to Al Jalame interrogation centre, near Haifa, in Israel, in violation of article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits such transfers. On arrival at Al Jalame Mohammad reports being strip searched before being taken to a windowless cell where the light was kept on 24 hours. “I spent 12 days in solitary confinement in Cell No. 36,” says Mohammad. “I never saw anyone except the interrogator. I never knew whether it was night or day. I did not know what time it was. I did not even see the prison guard who brought me food; he slipped it through a flap in the door.”

Mohammad reports being interrogated six times whilst at Al Jalame. “The interrogator would force me to sit in a small metal chair and he tied my hands and feet to the chair. It was really painful to sit in this position,” recalls Mohammad, who was questioned without the benefit of legal advice and without one of his parents being present, rights Israeli children are generally entitled to. “He kept shouting and pounding the table,” says Mohammad. “At first he accused me of throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, which I denied.” On the third



Photo by DCI

occasion the interrogator brought one of Mohammad’s friends into the room who said he had confessed. “I then decided to confess so I could get myself out of the cell,” says Mohammad. “I confessed to throwing one Molotov cocktail at a military jeep but it missed. I also confessed to throwing stones three times.” After confessing, Mohammad was taken to a policeman who took his statement in Arabic.

After twelve days in Al Jalame, Mohammad was transferred to Megiddo prison, also inside Israel. He was strip searched on arrival.

1 DCI-Palestine, Urgent Appeal – Solitary Confinement. Available at: <http://is.gd/kDmNgq>. See also: The Guardian, “The Palestinian children – alone and bewildered – in Israel’s Al Jalame jail.” Available at: <http://is.gd/gGDV3E> and; B’Tselem and Hamoked, “Kept in the Dark: Treatment of Palestinian Detainees in the Petah Tikva Interrogation Facility of the Israel Security Agency,” (2010). Available at: <http://is.gd/oea6fX>

1 UN report on solitary confinement, available at: <http://is.gd/t2bF0U>



“The interrogator would force me to sit in a small metal chair and he tied my hands and feet to the chair. It was really painful ...”

Psychiatric Opinion

Recently, more and more professionals have been raising their voices and concerns about the psychological impact of prolonged military occupation and detention on children¹. In May 2011, Graciela Karmon, M.D., a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and board member of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, added her voice to these concerns in a Psychiatric Expert Opinion titled: “Coerced False Confessions: The Case of Palestinian Children.” Extracts from Dr. Karmon’s expert opinion are presented here with her kind permission².

“The purpose of this expert opinion is to address the psychological and social factors that affect children and adolescents who are in custody and undergoing police interrogation.

Interrogations in general are stressful situations for every person who undergoes them, but certain interrogation conditions and methods may lead to violation of the suspect’s free will, disruption of his or her mental balance, and therefore to coerced confessions.

Every person in detention and under interrogation, but especially a child or adolescent, may give a false confession despite his or her innocence, in order to escape from the situation, and particularly in the following circumstances:

- Emotional and/or physical stress;
- Threats;
- Mental and/or physical torture, cruel treatment, humiliation, physical and/or mental exhaustion;
- Sleep deprivation;
- Prolonged questioning for many hours;
- Leading questions ; and
- The use of deceptive and manipulative techniques (e.g. providing false investigation results).

I would like to particularly note that severe interrogating methods such as isolation may lead to irreversible mental damage, from behavioral changes to a loss of touch with reality (a psychotic state).

Following the application of such techniques, the detainee feels helpless and out of control of the situation. This state of mind may lead the detainee to surrender totally to the will of the interrogators, yield to their requests and provide a

confession according to their demands, a confession that will free the detainee from the interrogation.

Although some detainees understand that providing a confession, despite their innocence, will have negative repercussions in the future, they nevertheless confess, as the immediate mental and/or physical anguish they feel override the future implications, whatever they may be.

The groups most vulnerable to these methods of interrogation, which have a high likelihood of providing a false confession under coercion, are children and adolescents, drug addicts and/or alcoholics, and people with mental illness or mental retardation.

Children and adolescents have a lesser ability to endure pain and emotional and/or physical stress than adults. [They] are more vulnerable than adults to psychological methods of interrogation [and] may confess to crimes or offenses that they did not commit out of impulsiveness, fear or resignation, rather than out of a free and rational choice.

Children and adolescents are [also] more vulnerable to methods of leading questions in an interrogation. They are more vulnerable to deception and manipulation than adults, due to their relatively short life experience, and because of their tendency to believe in the totality of authority figures,



«In traumatic conditions of interrogation and detention ... children lose control of the situation and become particularly vulnerable ...»

such as teachers, religious leaders, parents, doctors, and police officers. Statements such as, 'I thought, because they promised me, that if I tell them things they would send me home³,' or, 'No one told me that policemen are allowed to lie,⁴' illustrate the extent of the vulnerability of children to these methods. Since in their normative lives, children and adolescents attend establishments that are managed by mature authority figures, their natural tendency is to respond to the wishes and authority of adults. Under stress, for example in an interrogation, they lack the ability, and even the option, to object to requests or coercion by adults.

[Further], children and adolescents are less future-orientated than adults. They take greater account of short-term than long-term consequences.

In traumatic conditions of interrogation and detention [...] children and adolescents lose control of the situation and become particularly vulnerable, lacking internal emotional resources and external ones drawn from adult figures. Without these resources, they feel helpless and unprotected. Their vulnerability prevents children and adolescents from acting in crisis situations. They thus become apathetic and indifferent, lose their trust in adults, suffer from episodes of extreme anxiety, experience learning difficulties, and suffer from sleeping problems and nightmares. In addition, they may display severe behavioral disorders, such as aggression, over-dependence, avoidance, difficulty in returning to routine, isolationist tendencies, and



photo by Sylwia Le Clezio

weeping. This is in addition to physical disorders, including eating disorders and bedwetting.

Moreover, following extreme humiliation and the physical and emotional stress the children and adolescents endure throughout the interrogation, they experience a profound loss of self-esteem, leading to harm to their sense of dignity and identity.

I also want to emphasize the negative effects of the interrogation of children and adolescents on the family structure, since the family is left in a state of disintegration and helplessness. The adults in the family do not feel that they can provide adequate support to the children and adolescents, as they were unable to prevent their arrest and the hardships of their interrogation. The entire family structure is disrupted as a result of the undermining of the adults as a source of support and authority.

Summary

The violent arrest process and psychological interrogation methods [...] lead to the breaking of the ability of

the child or adolescent to withstand the interrogation, while flagrantly violating his or her rights. These interrogation methods, when applied to children and adolescents, are equivalent to torture. These methods deeply undermine the dignity and personality of the child or adolescent, and inflict pain and severe mental suffering. Uncertainty and helplessness are situations that can too easily lead a child or adolescent to provide the requested confession, out of impulsivity, fear or submission. It is a decision that is far from free and rational choice.

The social and emotional consequences of the use of [harsh] methods of detention and interrogation by the investigating and/or detaining authority for the life of the child or adolescent are difficult to remedy and are damaging. They can cause serious mental suffering to a child or adolescent and cause psychological and psychiatric problems, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychosomatic diseases, fits of anger, difficulties in learning and concentration, memory problems, fears and anxieties, sleep disorders,

eating disorders, regressive symptoms, and bedwetting. Such outcomes are devastating to the normative development of the child or adolescent, especially when he or she is innocent. These detention and interrogation methods ultimately create a system

that breaks down, exhausts and permeate the personality of the child or adolescent and robs him or her of hope. These methods are particularly harmful to children and adolescents who live in poor, isolated populations, in a state of conflict, political tension,

and/or severe social stress, such as the occupied Palestinian population. The harmful effects on children can also harm the society to which they belong. Every child has the right to be a child, to his or her dignity, and to protection from all forms of violence.

1 Dr. Karmon's full opinion is available on-line at: <http://is.gd/ldaePr>

2 Equality and Justice for Children and Families, "The Use of Solitary Confinement for Minors in Israeli Detention," letter dated 30 January 2012 - Available at: <http://is.gd/29cWul>; "Israeli Professionals protest repercussions of the arrest procedures of Palestinian children," letter dated 20 May 2012 - Available at: <http://is.gd/dUSJZF>; and "60 Israeli professionals speak out at violence against children," letter dated 24 November 2010 - Available at: <http://is.gd/n50hHd>

3 Christine S. Scott-Hayward, "Explaining juvenile false confessions: Adolescent development and police interrogations," *Law and Psychology Review*, vol. 32, Spring 2007, p.68.

4 Ibid.

2012 SABEEL WITNESS VISIT

October 30 - November 8

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
invites you to join us for 9 nights to experience the reality of life in today's Holy Land:

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Glimpses of Our Activities

Jerusalem & Nazareth



Clergy trip - Ein Hod, Isufiya



Women's educational trip - "House of Grace" - Haifa



Pentecostal Picnic, Emmaus - site of destroyed village



Clergy wives' retreat, Taybeh



Women's Bible Study at "House of Grace" - Haifa



Youth Program with the Australian Group



Youth meeting - an evaluation of programs



Young people doing voluntary work at Qana Foundation



Women's meeting: watching the film "Jenin, Jenin", followed by discussion

Source: DCI-Palestine - Common complaints and areas of concern – January 2008 January 2012

#	Common complaints and areas of concern	Number of cases	Percentage of children
1	Hand ties	296	95%
2	Blindfolds	281	90%
3	Physical violence	234	75%
4	Detention inside Israel in violation of Article 76	196	63%
5	Arrested between midnight and 5:00 am	188	60%
6	Confession during interrogation	180	58%
7	Threats	178	57%
8	Verbal abuse and/or humiliation	169	54%
9	Strip searched	102	33%
10	Transferred on floor of vehicle	98	32%
11	Signed/shown documents written in Hebrew	91	29%
12	Solitary confinement	38	12%

Source: DCI-Palestine - Rights of Palestinian and Israeli children: Comparative table

#	Event	Civilian juvenile justice system	Military court system
1	Minimum age of criminal responsibility.	12	12
2	Minimum age for a custodial sentence.	14	12
3	Age of majority.	18	16-18
4	Legal right to have a parent present during interrogation.	Generally yes	No
5	Legal right to have a lawyer present during interrogation.	No	No
6	Legal right to have interrogation audio-visually recorded.	Partial	No
7	Maximum period of detention before being brought before a judge.	12-24 hours	4 days
8	Maximum period of detention without access to a lawyer.	48 hours	90 days
9	Maximum period of detention without charge.	40 days	188 days
10	Maximum period of time between charge and trial.	6 months	2 years
11	Percentage of cases in which bail is denied.	20%	87%
12	Percentage of cases in which a custodial sentence is imposed.	6.5%	90%

Concluding Words

by Gerard Horton

In order to maintain effective military authority over the West Bank for the past 45 years, a policy of collective punishment has been instituted to suppress all forms of resistance. The military courts and the detention of children is an integral part of this policy, which has enabled half-a-million Israeli civilians to live in illegal settlements, whilst the local Palestinian population is ground into submission.

The reports of abuse within the system are not new¹. In 2011, the Israeli organisation B'Tselem released a report – No Minor Matter – which looked at the plight of children prosecuted in Israeli military courts and concluded that: “the rights of Palestinian minors are flagrantly violated at every stage of the proceedings conducted against them, from the initial arrest and removal from their homes, through interrogation and trial, to serving the prison sentence and then release.”² Similarly, in a report published in 2012 by a group of prominent UK lawyers, which included a former Attorney-General and judge of

the Court of Appeal, serious breaches of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Fourth Geneva Convention were found³.

The response from the Israeli authorities to criticisms concerning the prosecution of children in military courts is based on security - they say throwing stones is dangerous and sometimes lethal, implying that death is commonplace. Although any loss of life is a tragedy to be avoided, evidence collected by B'Tselem indicates that in the past 11 years, four Israeli settlers have been killed by stones thrown at

vehicles travelling in the West Bank⁴. No one argues that offences should not be punished, but we should all be able to agree that children accused of the same crime must be treated with equality under the law. Why then is a child accused of throwing stones in the West Bank prosecuted in a military court just because he is Palestinian, whereas an Israeli settler child accused of the same offence is processed in a civilian juvenile justice system, with all the added protections and safeguards this implies⁵? Most would agree this is unwarranted discrimination that has no place in a modern democracy.

Many now argue that this institutionalised discrimination experienced by between 500 to 700 Palestinian children each year is unsustainable and must end. A number of simple and practical measures have been recommended to reduce the level of abuse that is being reported, which include measures that already apply to Israeli children. These measures include ensuring that all children, regardless of race, are entitled to see a lawyer prior to questioning and to be informed of their legal rights, including the right to silence. Further, just like Israeli children, Palestinian children should be accompanied by a parent when questioned, and finally, all interrogations must be audio-visually recorded. This final measure not only provides some protection to the child against improper interrogation techniques, but also protects the interrogator against any false allegations of wrongdoing.

Since June 1967, approximately three-


 Labelling an entire population as “potential terrorists” fails to acknowledge the part illegal Israeli settlement construction plays in raising tensions in the region, while leaving many frustrated that Israeli violations of international law go unchallenged.

quarters of a million men, women and children have been held in military detention. To suggest that all these people are “terrorists,” as is often implied, is both simplistic and unhelpful. Labelling an entire population as “potential terrorists” fails to acknowledge the part illegal Israeli settlement construction plays in raising tensions in the region, while leaving many frustrated that Israeli violations of international law go unchallenged.⁶ In few other situations would the international community tolerate an entire civilian population being held under military rule for 45 years, or the systematic abuse and military detention of children as young as 12. Until a bona fide attempt is made to right this institutionalised injustice, can anyone realistically expect the situation on the ground to improve?

1 UN Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations (Israel) (2009) – Available at: <http://is.gd/BZhoX8>; US State Department Human Rights Report (2010) – Available at: <http://is.gd/XXhTFX>; UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations (Israel) (2010) – Available at: <http://is.gd/4uXi72>; US State Department Human Rights Report (2011) – Available at: <http://is.gd/oZauch>; No Legal Frontiers, All Guilty! Observations in the Military Juvenile Court (2011) – Available at: <http://is.gd/RuWZW8>; The Australian, Stone Cold Justice (2011) – Available at: <http://is.gd/Isy4RZ>; The Guardian, “The Palestinian children – alone and bewildered – in Israel’s Al Jalame jail.” Available at: <http://is.gd/gGDV3E>; DCI-Palestine, Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted (2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/cFBSgP>.

2 B’Tselem, No Minor Matter (2011) – Available at: <http://is.gd/ttzZmh>.

3 UK lawyers report, Children in military custody (2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/EM6Imu>.

4 B’Tselem, Attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinians – Available at: <http://is.gd/mqWxdX>.

5 UK lawyers report, Children in military custody (2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/EM6Imu>.

6 The Independent, “UK ready to take on Israel over fate of children clapped in irons,” – Available at: <http://is.gd/aF1ZB4>.



Photo by Martin Hauschild

We pray...

for the children,
that the children may live,
that they may have
children of their own
and that it will go on –
this great blossoming
that is meant
to go on and on –
we pray for peace,
in their name.
that they would have a world
worth being born into,
a future worth dreaming about,
that they might become,
in their own time,
all that our race might come to be,
– that they might have that chance–
we pray for peace,
in their name.

from “Praying for Peace” ed. Michael Hare Duke

Mark the Dates:

Sabeel’s Global Young Adult Conference
July 1-6, 2013

Sabeel’s 9th International Conference
The evening of the 19th till the morning
of 25th, November 2013

Stay updated on our website: www.sabeel.org



PURPOSE STATEMENT *f* SABEL

Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity among them, and lead them to act for justice and love. Sabeel strives to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation, and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. The word 'Sabeel' is Arabic for 'the way' and also a 'channel' or 'spring' of life-giving water.

Sabeel also works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence, and witness of Palestinian Christians as well as their contemporary concerns. It encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace informed by truth and empowered by prayer and action.

For more information on Friends of Sabeel groups in your area please contact our international representatives or the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem.