



September 13, 2002

The Impact of Conflict on Children in Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel

*The Watchlist estimates that over 370 children under age 18 have been killed since September 2000, and thousands more have been injured in violence between Israelis and Palestinians.¹ Children represent approximately 15 percent of all individuals killed in that time period. Israeli and Palestinian children are also suffering serious physical and psychosocial effects from the escalation of violent conflict. In some cases, they themselves have perpetrated violence. **This report is a call for immediate action to protect Palestinian and Israeli children.**²*

INDICATORS

Introduction to General Indicators

The following are basic indicators on the situation of Palestinian and Israeli children and adolescents. While efforts are being made to monitor and report on violations of the rights of Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian territory (OPT),³ there are gaps in available data due to difficulties in gathering and sharing information and lack of access to vulnerable populations. There are also gaps in the types of data being collected for both Palestinian and Israeli children regarding problems like gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Israel
Population	Estimated 3,300,000 (OPT) Estimated 1,800,000 (53%) under age 18	6,040,000 total 2,022,000 (33.5%) under age 18
Voting Age	Age 18 (Palestinian National Election, 2000)	Age 18 (Israeli Government Elections)
GDP per Capita	70% of population living below poverty line. During periods of curfews unemployment is as high as 63.3%. GDP US\$1,578 (1999 estimate)	Currently in economic recession. Estimated 10% unemployment. GDP US\$18,900 (2000 estimate)
Refugee and Internally Displaced Populations	Approximately 1.5 million registered Palestinian refugees. Over 50% are estimated to be children. Gaza: Estimated 875,000 registered refugees, of whom 468,000 (55%) live in camps. Estimated 240,000 children live in camps. West Bank: Estimated 625,000 registered refugees, of whom 168,000 (27%) live in camps. Estimated 76,000 children live in camps. At least 3,500 Palestinians, including children, have recently been forcibly displaced from their homes in OPT. (2002)	Israel hosts approximately 4,700 refugees. (end 2001) Israel does not categorize Jewish immigrants as refugees. Jews are eligible to immigrate to Israel and become citizens regardless of the reasons for leaving a country of origin. ⁴ Some Jewish immigrants and children of immigrants have sought refuge in Israel from persecution and conflict in their countries of origin, including Arab nations, former Soviet Republics, Ethiopia, Latin America, Europe and elsewhere.
Infant Mortality	25.5 deaths per every 1,000 live births. (1995-1999)	8 deaths per every 1,000 live births. (1999)

	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Israel
HIV/AIDS Rates	44 reported HIV/AIDS cases in OPT (2000). No child-specific data is available.	Estimated total: 2,400. Estimated children: fewer than 100.
Education Indicators	Approximately 600,000 children were able to attend school on a regular basis in April 2002. 98% of children of primary school age were enrolled in school year 1999-2000.	96% gross enrollment rate (primary school). 86% gross enrollment rate (secondary school).
Voluntary and Compulsory Recruitment	18 is the voluntary recruitment age for the Palestinian police and security forces. Age 17 is applied in special cases per Jordanian law. Compulsory recruitment is not applicable, as there is no national military force.	Age 18 (compulsory and voluntary).
Child Soldiers	Children and adolescents are known to participate in various armed groups and perpetrate violence, including suicide bombings.	In January 2002, Israel announced that it would end the deployment of youth under age 18 and stop accepting conscripts before their 18 th birthday.
Gender-Based Violence⁵ (GBV)	There has been no systematic documentation of conflict-related GBV. Israeli armed forces are alleged to have conducted degrading strip searches, made sexual threats and perpetrated other forms of GBV, including against adolescent boys and child prisoners.	There has been no systematic documentation of conflict-related GBV.
Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)	Landmines and UXO killed 11 children in OPT in 2002. ⁶ Approximately 2,500 Palestinians, including many children, have been injured or killed by mines or UXO since 1967 in OPT.	No data on the number of landmine victims is available. ⁷ The exact number of landmines and UXO is unknown. The U.S. Department of State estimates 260,000 mines in Israel, West

	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Israel
Landmine and UXO (continued)	The number of landmines and UXO in OPT is unknown. Israel has declared at least 16 known minefields in OPT. These fields were planted by Britain (during the Mandate period), Jordan and Israel. UXO from Israeli military training and action remain in OPT. Palestinian armed groups are also reported to use landmines, booby traps and pipe bombs.	Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights planted by Israel and by Britain, Jordan, Syria and others. Israel stated in 1999 that at least 350 minefields exist in areas that serve no strategic value. Other minefields are known to exist. Israel has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty and reportedly continues to use mines near borders, in sensitive areas and in OPT.
Small Arms	The exact number of small arms in circulation among Palestinians in OPT is unknown. Estimates indicate that there are approximately 15,000 registered and between 60,000 and 100,000 more small arms in circulation.	An estimated 265,000 Israelis own private firearms. Another 45,000 are thought to own illegal firearms. (2002)

(Note: Statistics are based on reports from various organizations that have conducted research in OPT and Israel. See sources below.)

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

	Palestinian Authority (PA)	Israel
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	The PA officially endorsed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995. ⁸	Ratified 1991
Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	? Endorsed	? Signed 2001
Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography		? Signed 2001

	Palestinian Authority (PA)	Israel
Other Treaties Ratified		International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Convention of the Elimination on All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol
UN Security Council Resolutions	Hundreds of UN Security Council resolutions address matters related to Israel and OPT, including the “land for peace” resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Most recently, in 2002, UNSC res. 1391, 1397, 1402, 1403, 1405 and 1415 address these matters (see below). None of the resolutions specifically address children’s rights and security.	

International humanitarian law provides for the protection of civilians, including children, in situations of armed conflict. The Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the special protections due to children in situations of armed conflict (art. 38). In the case of this conflict, the duty to protect children falls upon both the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Both Israeli and Palestinian officials have three major obligations: to protect children, to prevent military and security forces under their control from committing abuses against children and other civilians and to adequately investigate abuses and bring the perpetrators to justice.

All parties are accountable to international human rights and humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and all standards for protection of civilians under occupation.⁹ Under international law, Israel is responsible for the protection of civilians, including children, in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. This includes obligations to respect lives and property and facilitate humanitarian access for all civilians in those areas. Israel rejects the *de jure* applicability of its responsibilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and its actions have harmed children, who should be afforded special protections according to international standards. The PA is also responsible for protecting children in those areas and often fails to do so. Violent attacks targeting Israeli civilians, particularly children, are a violation of international law and a rejection of international standards of child protection. Under the Geneva Conventions, the PA and

Palestinian armed groups are responsible for preventing armed attacks against civilians, including children.

FOCUS ON PALESTINIAN CHILDREN SUMMARY

The situation described in this section relates primarily to the escalation in violence and focuses on Palestinian children living inside OPT. There is evidence that both state and non-state actors have violated the rights of Palestinian children. Since September 2000, it is estimated that over 300 Palestinian children have been killed and over 7,000 injured as a result of Israeli military operations, extrajudicial killings or denial of access to medical treatment and humanitarian assistance. In one example, the Israeli military launched an F-16 air strike into an apartment building in a residential area of Gaza City to hit the founder of the armed wing of Hamas. Nine children, including a 2-month-old infant, were killed in the attack. In some instances Israeli civilians have killed and violently injured Palestinian civilians, including children. Increasing poverty in OPT has also created new vulnerabilities for children, including an increase in malnutrition and anemia levels.

Israel's Operation Defensive Shield (March 29, 2002, through April 21, 2002) and other military actions have included destruction of property, detention, torture, ill treatment and firing at houses and people. They have also included restrictions of movement, including those of medical patients, humanitarian aid workers, human rights observers, journalists and others. These military operations were undertaken with the stated intention of protecting the security of Israeli citizens by destroying Palestinian terrorist infrastructure. However, according to the Geneva Conventions the operations should have ensured that children were protected.

Palestinian infrastructure, such as schools, medical offices and other civil institutions, has been damaged and destroyed by Israel's military operations. Thousands of civilians have been left without electricity, water, food, medical supplies and other important goods and services, such as garbage and sewage disposal. One humanitarian agency estimates that 800,000 civilians living in urban areas have been deprived of basic services. For example, Human Rights Watch found evidence of Israel's "indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force" and serious abuses against civilians, including children, in Jenin refugee camp, the site of intense fighting. The United Nation's Secretary-General reported use of violence by both Israeli and Palestinian combatants that placed civilians and infrastructure in harm's way during Israel's military incursion into Jenin. In some instances Israeli forces have directly targeted children's goods and services. In one case at a youth center in Al-Amari refugee camp, Israeli soldiers destroyed computers, musical instruments and furniture. International donors estimate damage in OPT at approximately US\$370 million from the end of March through the end of May 2002.

HEALTH

Israel's policies of curfews, closures and blockades and a general sense of insecurity have restricted movement of Palestinian civilians in OPT. This combination of restrictions has a devastating impact on children, obstructing their access to health care, schools, places of worship and social, recreational and other activities. According to UNICEF, over

330,000 children were confined to their homes during Israel's Operation Defensive Shield. During the same period, approximately 500,000 children living in villages were unable to access health services.

Closures and blockades in OPT have prevented access by humanitarian personnel and blocked movement of emergency vehicles to transport patients and badly needed supplies. A doctor in Gaza reported to Refugees International that residents in Gaza had been virtually cut off from specialist health services for an entire month, depriving over 3,000 patients, including children, of access to health care. Immunizations, care of chronically ill patients and acute care of communicable diseases have been adversely affected. A child protection agency operating in OPT estimated that 500,000 Palestinian children have been prevented from receiving their required vaccinations. In June 2002, a consortium of 32 relief agencies operating in OPT publicly issued their concerns about restrictive Israeli policies that hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians.

The Israeli military has targeted and shot at humanitarian convoys, ambulances and personnel of the International Committee of the Red Cross and others. In one example, a convoy of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reportedly came under fire during the delivery of formula for premature infants to the Ramallah hospital despite prior coordination of the convoy with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

In some cases, the IDF has failed to let ambulances pass checkpoints to reach hospitals, even after conducting searches. The government of Israel asserts that ambulances have been used to transport terrorists and their weapons. In some cases the severe delay of patients at checkpoints has led to children's deaths. One NGO reports that at least 14 pregnant women gave birth at checkpoints or before reaching a medical facility; such delays have resulted in obstetric complications, and two such cases resulted in the death of newborn infants. On August 27, 2002, the Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General reported that Israeli authorities agreed to limit checkpoint stops for ambulances to no more than 30 minutes and to create systems to ease the burden on pregnant women and the seriously ill.

Palestinian children are in urgent need of food assistance due to limited supplies and access to food, as well as to increased poverty resulting from large portions of the labor force being unable to reach their places of employment in OPT or inside Israel. According to preliminary findings of a new survey on health and nutrition, 13.2 percent of children under five in the West Bank and Gaza are suffering from chronic malnutrition and 9.3 percent from acute malnutrition.¹⁰ These levels are significantly higher than findings of a similar study conducted two years ago by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The 2002 preliminary findings also report that nearly one fifth of Palestinian children of ages 6 to 59 months are moderately or severely anemic, which can lead to impaired learning and growth development.

The survey also reveals the impact of the economic collapse and restrictions on freedom of movement in OPT on food consumption. Fifty-three percent of households in the survey reported that they have had to borrow money to purchase food. Some households attributed the decrease in food consumption to lack of availability of food. The market survey revealed shortages among wholesalers of high-protein foods such as fish, chicken and dairy products, particularly infant formula and powdered milk. Additionally, households reported a decrease in spending on such higher-priced food items.

By mid-2002, the international community and the regional parties took steps reflecting the growing concern over the humanitarian crisis in OPT. In August 2002, the UN Secretary-General appointed Catherine Bertini as a Personal Humanitarian Envoy to assess the nature and scale of the Palestinian humanitarian crisis. Several international agencies and governments announced plans to increase food assistance and other emergency aid in OPT to alleviate shortages. Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in negotiations to address the humanitarian situation, and Israel has released the first of three installments of withheld Palestinian tax revenues.

EDUCATION

Movement restrictions, shelling and bombardment of educational facilities and a sense of insecurity have severely limited children and teachers' access to schools. Israeli military forces have attacked Palestinian schools and educational facilities, and at times children have been present. One hundred and twelve of approximately 1,760 schools in OPT were damaged between the end of March 2002 and August 2002, according to UNICEF. Eleven of these were completely destroyed. NGOs report that 275 educational programs were severely disrupted and that educational facilities and materials have been systematically destroyed. Israeli military actions damaged the Palestinian Ministry of Education and in some cases Palestinian schools have been used as detention facilities, bases for Israeli military operations or closed by military order.

UNICEF calculates that approximately 600,000 Palestinian children of school-age children in OPT were unable to attend school on a regular basis during Israel's Operation Defensive Shield. The closure of schools has had a particularly negative impact on girls in secondary schools. *Education under occupation*, a recent report by Save the Children (UK and Sweden) documents the negative impact of closures and curfews on Palestinian education. These effects include preventing children from attending school, leaving them filled with anxiety, bored and isolated. Of the children surveyed in the report, from four areas particularly impacted by violence, almost all reported seeing a soldier or crossing a checkpoint on their way to school. Two hundred seventy five schools in OPT are within 500 meters of an Israeli military post.

Movement restrictions also obstruct school construction, hamper national curriculum training and reduce teacher time. Teachers have been unable to reach their classrooms, and teacher/student ratios have increased, raising concerns about educational effectiveness. In Gaza, approximately 337 teachers were unable to reach their classrooms during Operation Defensive Shield. In total, UNICEF reports 55,000 lost teaching sessions and 11,000 missed classes. All 24 schools in Jabalia refugee camp have operated

at some point on a double-shift system. Schools near Ramallah report having combined more than one grade in the same classroom. At the end of the school year 2002, many children in OPT were unable to sit for matriculation exams that are prerequisites for graduation and university entrance.

SHELTER

House Demolitions

Since September 2000, the IDF has demolished hundreds of Palestinian homes, leaving thousands of children and their families homeless. UNICEF reports that 2,200 children, primarily from Jenin, were homeless in May 2002. In one example, 600 people, of whom the vast majority was children, were left homeless in Rafah in the southern part of Gaza Strip, due to house demolitions in January 2002. The destruction of Palestinian homes is a strategy of the Israeli military aimed at evicting civilian populations from areas they consider to be military zones, according to many analysts. Israeli officials contend that demolitions are carried out to deter violent attacks against Israelis, to track down individuals related to such attacks and to destroy tunnels used to smuggle weapons.

House demolitions are a form of collective punishment and a breach of international law. Nevertheless, in August 2002, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the military's appeal to demolish the homes of Palestinian terror suspects without warning. In addition, on September 3, 2002, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that individuals involved with violent attacks against Israelis could be transferred from the West Bank to Gaza if the relatives are proven to present a danger to Israeli security. These transfers may include children and adolescents. The international community has widely condemned these decisions.

OTHER

Psychosocial Impact

UNICEF reports that all 1.8 million Palestinian children in OPT experienced violence in some form during Israel's Operation Defensive Shield, such as witnessing shootings, military bombardments and injury or death of neighbors. Reports from the field describe the graphic depiction of the current violence on television, radio, posters and other media as having a negative impact on children's well-being and abilities to cope. The Institute of Community and Public Health at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank reports that signs of psychological distress among school children include crying, fear of loud noises, sleep disorder, nervousness, decrease in eating and weight, hopelessness and abnormal thoughts about death.

Students have reported difficulties concentrating in class. The report *Education under occupation* maintains that Palestinian children's lives are tense and dominated by the violence that surrounds them. One child participant in the study said: "Fear dominates, you think about all the things that cause anxiety, you get psychological problems. Boredom causes violence and aggression against younger children in the family and neighborhood...."

A study by Bristol University (UK) looking at the impact of political violence on the lives of Palestinian 16- to 19-year-olds explains that many adolescents view violence as

endemic and a socially justified problem-solving tool. It reports that students describe their violent behavior as imitative and connected with experiences of violence and aggression by Israeli troops. It states that students who are actively involved in street confrontations and political violence are more likely to use violence in their school and family environments. The study suggests that all of this has contributed to an environment where domestic violence is common and children experience violence by parents and teachers.

Participation in Violence

Specific data about the numbers and gender of Palestinian children and adolescents who have perpetrated or planned violent attacks or who are active with armed groups is unknown. There is no conclusive evidence that children have been recruited or systematically used by Palestinian armed groups.

There are reports that some groups indoctrinate, exploit and train children and adolescents. For example, reports indicate that children have been enrolled in military-style camps, which include military discipline rules and training in the use of light arms. In some instances armed groups, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al Aksa Brigades, use children during demonstrations, dressing them up like fighters or suicide bombers. In a few instances, children and adolescents independently devise and mount violent attacks against Israelis.

Male and female adolescents have killed themselves and others in suicide bombings and been implicated in plans to carry out attacks. Three adolescent suicide bombers in 2002 were the first females known to carry out suicide bombings against Israelis since the escalation of violence.¹¹ In late April 2002, three adolescent boys, between ages 13 and 15, armed with knives and homemade bombs attempted to attack an Israeli settlement in Gaza. Israeli guards at the outskirts of the settlement shot the boys before they were able to carry out the attack. The boys were not known to be participants of any formal armed groups.

Some parents, adults and community leaders condemn children's involvement in violence. After parents' outcry over the involvement of their boys in the April incident, Hamas and Islamic Jihad issued a statement calling on children not to participate in violence until they are older. Other adults praise young Palestinians' involvement in violent activities creating an environment where suicide attacks are often celebrated. Reports describe an increasing atmosphere of anger and hostility toward Israelis and Jews.

Reports indicate that some children and adolescents, including girls, have been pressured to act as informants, or "collaborators," by the Israeli security service, although the number of participants and extent of this practice are unknown. One child protection agency indicates that between 60 and 75 percent of incarcerated children are pressured to act as informants. Many Palestinians view collaboration as a crime, and individuals suspected of working with Israel often face violent reprisals, including assassination. The

most recent was of a 17-year-old girl accused of collaboration with Israel who was shot to death by the Palestinian Aksa Martyrs Brigades in August 2002.

Detention of Children

From 170 to 375 Palestinian children are held in Israeli military and civil detention, depending on varying reports. According to B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights group, over 2,500 Palestinians were detained in May 2002; Defense for Children International/Palestine Section (DCI/PS) estimates that children comprise 10 to 15 percent of all detainees, which equals between 250 and 375 children. Many have been rounded up and detained since the outset of Israel's Operation Defensive Shield. B'Tselem and other groups allege abuses, ill treatment and torture of Palestinian child and adolescent detainees in Israeli detention centers, in contravention of international standards. These detainees do not have access to juvenile courts or judges, probation officers or police officers who are specifically trained to deal with the interrogation and detention of children.

In some cases, Palestinian children prisoners are held with Israeli adult prisoners and they have suffered physical abuse and sexual violence. DCI/PS reports various forms of torture against child detainees, such as sleep deprivation, position abuse, deprivation of food and drink, threatening language, prohibition from using the toilet and placement in isolation.

FOCUS ON ISRAELI CHILDREN SUMMARY

Israeli children live in a growing environment of insecurity and fear. Israeli children are among the targets and victims of violent attacks carried out by armed Palestinian groups operating from OPT. Following a spate of suicide bombings, the Quartet diplomatic group (the United Nations, European Union, Russian Federation and United States) stated in July 2002, "[We] deeply deplore today's tragic killing of Israeli civilians and reiterate [our] strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism." Since September 2000, approximately 72 Israeli children in Israel and in Israeli settlements have been killed by suicide bombings and other violent attacks. A coalition of NGOs in Israel raised concerns with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, alleging that the direct targeting of Israeli children appears to be a major strategy of armed Palestinian groups.

The composition of Israeli society is complex and is affected by conflict on many different levels. The majority of Israeli children are Jewish. They come from families who have lived in Israel for several generations, or from immigrant families who have sought refuge in Israel from persecution and conflict elsewhere or have moved to Israel for ideological, religious or other reasons.

Israel also has a significant Muslim and Christian Arab population, approximately 20 percent of the total. As a minority group, Arab Israeli children face their own unique set of challenges, related to socioeconomic, educational and legal inequalities among others. They are also in the difficult position of being the citizens of a country caught up in conflict with their Arab Palestinian kin in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This has

resulted in stress, trauma and fear about the future for many Arab Israeli children. At the same time, as citizens of Israel, the Arab children share many of the same dangers and security fears about the armed conflict as Jewish Israeli children. All of these factors impact each child's individual and group ability to cope with the escalation in violence.

HEALTH

For various reasons, directly and indirectly linked to the armed conflict, Israel is in an economic recession, with approximately 10 percent unemployment, increasing poverty and widening socioeconomic gaps. Large-scale military and defense spending has left social, environmental and other programs that support children short funded. Some child protection and other social agencies call for increased state spending in education, healthcare and special needs of disabled and other vulnerable groups. Most recently, pediatric intensive care units have reported a need for more beds due to increased child injuries during suicide bombings and other violent attacks. In another example, one social welfare agency explained that anecdotal and other evidence shows that HIV/AIDS is a significant problem among adolescents. However, little attention or national resources are spent on assessing the problem, testing or on education and awareness programs.

EDUCATION

Palestinian armed groups have attacked Israeli students and educational facilities. In July 2002, the armed group Hamas detonated a bomb by remote control at Israel's Hebrew University in Jerusalem, killing and injuring students.¹² Palestinian armed groups have also detonated bombs and perpetrated violent attacks against school buses carrying Israeli school children and against public buses near school grounds.

Concerns related to educational standards in Israel are not generally tied to the current atmosphere of violence. However, discrepancies in budget allocation, educational standards, attendance rates and drop-out rates for Jewish and Arab Israelis and high levels of violence in schools can be linked to the ongoing conflict. A study conducted in 2000, before the recent escalation in violence, found that fear of violence in school or on the way to and from school often led students to avoid attending school. At that time, 15.7 percent of elementary students, 6.5 percent of junior high students and 4.6 percent of high school students reported avoiding going to school at least once a month due to fear of violence. In 2002, Israeli NGOs reported that on average only half of the Ministry of Education's requisite number of psychologists is available at schools across social sectors.

Other related problems include increased adolescent delinquency and school dropout rates. According to a local NGO assisting at-risk youth, 5 percent of Jewish-Israeli adolescents and 33 percent of Arab-Israeli adolescents are not attending school. An additional 7 percent of youngsters in Israel are defined as "covert dropouts," meaning they are registered at school, but attend class infrequently and perform poorly and may be at risk for delinquent behavior. As many as 60,000 junior high and high school students in Israel are defined as underachievers. In addition, local authorities and youth services reportedly assist less than half of all adolescents considered to be "alienated" from

schools and social services. Girls in particular are reported to attract less attention from local services and are less likely to seek help on their own.

OTHER

Psychosocial Impact

Suicide bombings, drive-by shootings and other violent attacks on Israeli civilians by armed Palestinians have left Israeli children and adolescents gripped with fear. The threat of future attacks has created an atmosphere of insecurity in Israel, which has limited children's ability to move about, to attend school and to participate in social, cultural, religious and other events. A recent story in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'Aretz* explained: "they [a group of high school students] seem to be living in a state of tension and fear. They're afraid to travel, afraid to go out at night, afraid to meet friends after school, afraid for themselves and their relatives who might get hurt in an attack. The past year undermined their sense of confidence and security."

According to groups in Israel assisting victims of suicide bombings and other attacks, some Israeli children are seeking assistance to help them cope with the trauma of witnessing violence. Reports indicate that the conflict has created a deep sense of gloom and pessimism among Israeli children and that many are losing hope for their own futures and the possibility of peace in the region. An Israeli psychologist reported: "We are seeing a lot of children suffering from regression — bed wetting, insisting on sleeping in their parents' bed. Some have terrible nightmares. Others are depressed. They lose their appetites and just watch TV all day."

Reports also point to Israeli children and adolescents' growing intolerance and anger toward Arabs. One Israeli mother told a news reporter that her 14-year-old is very suspicious and searches the faces on buses for possible suicide bombers. Open expressions of hatred toward Arabs and Arab children are increasing.

Small Arms

Many Israeli civilians in Israel and in Israeli settlements in OPT carry small arms, citing personal security concerns. Gun sales have reportedly risen since the escalation in violence, including in Israeli settlements.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

The UN Security Council has passed many resolutions on the conflict in the Middle East, with special attention to the "Question of Palestine." Between January and April 2002 alone, the Council passed six resolutions related to the Middle East conflict: UNSC res. 1391, 1397, 1402, 1403, 1405 and 1415. These resolutions have varied in content. They have stressed the safety of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law; expressed sorrow for attacks against Israeli civilians and condemned terrorism; expressed concern for the dire humanitarian situation of Palestinian civilians; and affirmed a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

UN Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict call for Security Council action to protect children in specific conflicts (UNSC res. 1263, 1314 and 1379). UN Security Council Resolution 1379 (2001) states, “The Security Council expresses, accordingly, its determination to give the fullest attention to the question of the protection of children in armed conflict when considering the matters of which it is seized” (paragraph 3). Yet, none of the resolutions on the Middle East refer to the special protection needed for children.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UN SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

Protection of Palestinian and Israeli children can only be achieved by an immediate and sustained cessation of all violence in OPT and Israel, with the fullest commitment by all leaders. This should be the primary objective of all efforts to protect children. At the same time, the UN Security Council should call for the following actions to improve children’s situation:

Immediate Action

Encourage Israelis and Palestinians to give the highest priority to child protection in ongoing discussions related to security and humanitarian access and any future negotiations.

- * Call on the government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and all non-state parties to the conflict to ensure that children are not targeted by or participants of military operations, suicide bombings and other violent acts.
- * Commission the Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to travel to the region to obtain specific child protection commitments from Israeli and Palestinian leaders, giving top priority to ending the targeting and participation of children and adolescents in violence. In keeping with the Security Councils’ recognition that the protection of children is a matter of international peace and security, the findings of the mission should be made public and include regular updates on the implementation of commitments obtained.
- * Hold all parties accountable to standards of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the standards for protection of civilians under occupation. Devise mechanisms to promote the implementation of recent Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, protection of civilians and building peace in the region. The first of these should be the deployment of Child Protection Advisers who will report regularly to the Security Council on abuses of the rights and security of children, with particular attention to the growing problem of youth participation in violence.
- * Call on international donors to support programs to help children and adolescents cope with the psychological stress of armed conflict and insecurity. This should include programs to improve tolerance and reduce hatred. It should also include anti-violence campaigns, youth counseling and training courses in cross-cultural communication and problem-solving skills.

* With the start of the new academic year, all students in OPT and Israel, including girls, should be afforded full and safe access to education, and the authorities should ensure this access throughout the year.

Protection for Palestinian Children

* Call for unhindered and continuous access of the UN, ICRC and other international humanitarian agencies to Palestinian populations, particularly children. This would include lifting restrictions on movement of people. Humanitarian assistance, including food and medical supplies as well as education and healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, should be available to all civilians. Women and children and all civilians must have safe access to these basic services.

* Urge the government of Israel to ensure that Palestinian children and their homes and educational, health and recreational facilities are not targets of or used as bases for military operations.

* Urge the fair and humane treatment of all Palestinian detainees in Israeli detention centers, particularly children, in accordance with international laws: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice and the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty.

* Call on the government of Israel to fulfill its commitments to release final installments of Palestinian tax revenues, and negotiate other arrangements to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in OPT.

* Encourage donor governments and agencies to address the increasing malnutrition and anemia among children by improving food assistance and iron supplements, and providing special training for detection and treatment of malnutrition and anemia.

Protection for Israeli Children

* Call on all Palestinian armed groups to stop targeting Israeli civilians, including children, with suicide bombings and violent attacks, and urge the Palestinian Authority and all Palestinian leaders to uphold responsibilities under international law to prevent any such attacks on civilians.

* Expand the UN's mandate to include data collection related to the impact of violence on Israeli children.¹³ Information about the impact of conflict on Israeli civilians, particularly children and adolescents, should be used to inform the Security Council and other UN bodies during all deliberations on the Middle East conflict and the Palestinian question and during programmatic decision making.

* Call on the State of Israel to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

Ongoing Action

* Ensure that the special protection needs and rights of children are included in a future cease-fire and/or peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and/or Palestine Liberation Organization. Any process leading to such agreements should consider the views of Palestinian and Israeli children and women in accordance with UNSC res. 1379 and 1325.

* Call on member states to support Palestinian, Israeli and international co-existence groups, including those founded by and for children and women, which have adapted their programs and continued to promote peace, coexistence and tolerance despite the difficult circumstances.¹⁴ Efforts to maintain contact between peace activists and develop confidence building measures, particularly those focusing on the role of children, adolescents and women in peace building should be encouraged.

SOURCES

Adameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association and Defense for Children International-Palestine Section, *Palestinian Prisoner's Day: Thousands of Palestinians Blindfolded, Handcuffed and Tortured*, April 17, 2002

Amnesty International

Israel/Occupied Territories: Demolition of houses is an act of collective punishment, January 14, 2002

Israel/Occupied Territories: The heavy price of Israeli incursions, April 4, 2002

Israel/Occupied Territories: Israeli military action is collective punishment, April 12, 2002

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and the International Commission of Jurists, *Joint Statement*, April 7, 2002

Anti-Defamation League, *Palestinian Kindergartners Being Schooled in Hate*, <http://www.adl.org/Terror/kindergartners.asp>

Bir Zeit University, Institute of Community and Public Health

Life and Health During the Israeli Invasion of the West Bank: The Town of Jenin, May 22, 2002

Environmental and Public Health Crisis Emerging in Western Ramallah Villages, June 3, 2002

The Effects of Israel's Operation Defensive Shield on Palestinian Children Living in the West Bank, June 29, 2002

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Palestinian Women, Eileen Kuttab (Commissioned by UNIFEM), April 2002

Bristol University, *Understanding Adolescent Violence: Lessons from Palestine*, 2002 www.id21.org/society/e2ha1g1.html

Boston Globe, *As Attacks Spiral, Gun Sales Soar*, April 6, 2002

B'Tselem

Sexual Harassment of Palestinian Women, 1996

Torture of Palestinian Minors at the Gush Etzion Police Station, July 2001

Fatalities in the al-Aqsa Intifada, www.btselem.org
Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2001*, and additional information 2002
Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, Svirsky, Gila, *The Price of 35 Years of Occupation*, May 28, 2002
Defense for Children International – Israel Section and The Israeli Children’s Rights Coalition, *NGO Comments on the Initial Israeli State Report on Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2002
Defense for Children International/Palestine Section
Violations of Palestinian Children’s Rights Stemming from the Israeli Occupation, April 1, 2002
Update on Children, April 8, 2002
Hundreds of Palestinian Children Arrested in the Last Twelve Days, April 9, 2002
Siege on Palestine: Effects of the Israeli Siege on Palestinian Children, May 10, 2002
The Reality of Occupation: Israeli Violations of Palestinian Child Rights, June 2001
Palestinian Child Killed in Al’Amari Refugee Camp by Israeli Army UXO, July 18, 2001
The Problem of Landmines and UXO in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2002
Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, First GCMHP Study on the Psychosocial Effects of Al-Aqsa Intifada, www.gcmhp.net
Global IDP Database: Israel, www.db.idpproject.org
Ha’aretz
As Terror Mounts, So Do Gun Sales, March 6, 2002
Conflicted Youth, April 24, 2002
Gaza Palestinians Denounce Use of Children in Suicide Attacks, April 25, 2002
Explosives, Lack of Equipment Hamper Jenin Rescue Teams, April 25, 2002
Human Rights Watch
World Report 2002
Second Class: Discrimination against Palestinian Arab Children in Israel’s Schools, 2002
Israel/Occupied Territories: Jenin War Crimes Investigation Needed, May 3, 2002
Israel: Decision to Stop Use of “Human Shields” Welcomed, May 10, 2002
International Campaign to Ban Landmines, *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*
International Committee of the Red Cross, *The ICRC calls for respect of the medical mission*, March 27, 2002
International Labour Conference, *Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab Territories*, June 2002
International Youth Foundation and JDC-Brookdale Institute, *An Overview of Children and Youth in Israel: Policies, Programs and Philanthropy*, 1996
Israeli Supreme Court Decision, HCJ 7015/02, Ajuri v. IDF Commander, September 3, 2002
Jerusalem Post, *Would-be woman suicide bomber nabbed in Tulkarm*, April 12, 2002
Miftah

The Effects of Israel's Operation Defensive Shield, July 3, 2002
The Impact of Israeli Attacks and Closures on Palestinian Economic Life, August 2, 2002

New York Times
Passions Inflamed, Gaza Teenagers Die in Suicidal Attacks, April 25, 2002
Palestinian Children, Increasing Signs of Malnutrition, June 26, 2002
For Arab Informers, Death; For the Executioners, Justice, September 1, 2002

OCHA Weekly Humanitarian Update Occupied Palestinian Territories, August 26, 2002
Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, *One Year Al-Aqsa Intifada, Fact Sheets and Figures*,
www.phrmg.org/monitor_2001/oct2001-child_fatalities.htm
Palestine Monitor, *Fact Sheet: Children*, March 2002

Refugees International
Continuing Israeli Closures Cause 'A New Level of Desperation' in the Gaza Strip, April 24, 2002
Palestine Visual Mission: The Aftermath of Israeli Incursions into the West Bank,
www.refintl.org April 1, 2002

Save the Children (UK and Sweden), *Education under occupation: Palestinian children talk about life and school*, March 2002

Simon Wiesenthal Center, *Special Online Report: Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority Condemn a Young Generation to Hatred and Death*,
<http://www.wiesenthal.com/social/pdf/index.cfm?ItemID=6233> August 12, 2002

Terror Victims Association, *Victims Lists 200-2002*, www.terrorvictims.com

UNAIDS/WHO, *Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Israel*, 2000 Update, revised

UNICEF
Occupied Palestinian Territory, Donor Alert, April 4, 2002
Occupied Palestinian Territory, Donor Update, May 29, 2002
Israel country statistics, www.unicef.org

United Nations, A/ES-10/186, Report of the Secretary-General Prepared Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution ES-10/10 (Jenin Report), July 30, 2002

UNRWA, Public Information Office HQ Gaza,
UNRWA School in Amari Camp Occupied, March 13, 2002
Preliminary Assessment and Proposed Response following Israeli Incursion of West Bank, April 24, 2002

UNWIRE
Donor Agencies to Meet with Israeli Authorities on Proposed Restrictions, May 28, 2002
Another Suicide Bombing Prompts More Israeli Raids, May 28, 2002

USAID, Bureau for Asia and the Near East, *HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in the West Bank and Gaza*, February 2000

USAID, CARE International, Johns Hopkins University, Al Quds University, Global Management Consulting Group, *Preliminary Findings: Nutritional Assessment and Sentinel Surveillance System for West Bank and Gaza*, August 5, 2002

US Committee for Refugees, *Survey 2002*

Village Voice, Foa, Sylvana, *Kids in the Hell, The Conflict's Forgotten Victims*, July 17-23, 2002

World Bank, *Fifteen Months — Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis*, March 2002

World Bank Group, *Middle East and North Africa: Israel*

<http://www.worldbank.org/html/schools/regions/mena/israel.htm> 2002

¹ This estimate is drawn from reports of Defense for Children International: Palestine Section, B'tselem and the Terror Victims Association.

² Readers interested in the historical and political context of the conflict should refer to sources cited at the end of this report and other works on this subject.

³ The High Contracting Parties of the Geneva Conventions, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations and other international groups have continued to recognize the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as territory occupied by Israel. At time of writing, Israeli military forces are engaged in Operation Determined Path and have militarily reoccupied seven Palestinian population centers in OPT, including those where authority had been previously transferred to the Palestinian Authority under the Oslo peace process.

⁴ Every Jew's right to immigrate to Israel is set out in the Law of Return 5710-1950.

⁵ Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term used for any harm that is perpetrated on a person against her/his will that has a negative impact on the physical and/or psychological health, development and identity of the person and is the result of gendered power relationships determined by social roles ascribed to males and females. Violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic or sociocultural, and is almost always and across all cultures disparately impacting women and children.

⁶ This number is estimated from January through August 2002.

⁷ According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, statistics of landmine and UXO victims in Israel are not available because mine victims are listed under the umbrella category of "Victims of Hostile Activities."

⁸ The PA has been unable to ratify this and other international conventions because of its non-state status.

⁹ There are diverse interpretations of the application of international law in this crisis. For more information, readers should refer to sources cited at the end of the report and other works on this subject.

¹⁰ The surveys were funded by the United States Agency for International Development and carried out by CARE International, Al Quds University, Johns Hopkins University and Global Management Consulting Group.

¹¹ Estimates of their ages range from 17 to 19.

¹² Students killed and injured in this attack were 18 and older.

¹³ Currently UNICEF is mandated by the UN General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights globally, including Israeli children through the Israel National Committee for UNICEF.

¹⁴ Readers interested in contacting these groups should contact the Watchlist.

The Watchlist works within the framework of the provisions adopted in Security Council Resolutions 1261, 1314, and 1379, the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols, and other internationally adopted human rights and humanitarian standards.

Information is collected through an extensive network of organizations that work with children around the world. Analysis is provided by a multi-disciplinary team of people with expertise and/or experience in the particular situation. Information in the public domain may be directly cited in the report. All sources are listed in alphabetical order at end of report to protect the privacy of sources.

General supervision of the project is provided by a Steering Committee of international non-governmental organizations known for their work with children and human rights. The views presented in any report do not represent the views of any one organization in the network or on the Steering Committee.