

Since 2007, a UNICEF-led working group has consolidated efforts to report on the impacts of armed conflict on children in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The bulletin is published on a bi-monthly basis highlighting trends and patterns in grave violations against children.

Members of the working group include: Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Save the Children, DCI-Palestine, B'Tselem, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, War Child Holland, OCHA, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA and WHO.

This edition covers January & February 2012.



Photos: A Palestinian boy walks among the remains of Silwan's Cultural Café and sport field (*left*), a newly completed community facility which offered the only safe play area for children in the Wadi Hilweh neighbourhood. The Café was also used for social gatherings, cultural events and educational meetings. It was built with funding from foreign NGOs and members of the community. The facility, located next to an Israeli settlement (*right*), was demolished by Israeli Security Forces on 13 February 2012.

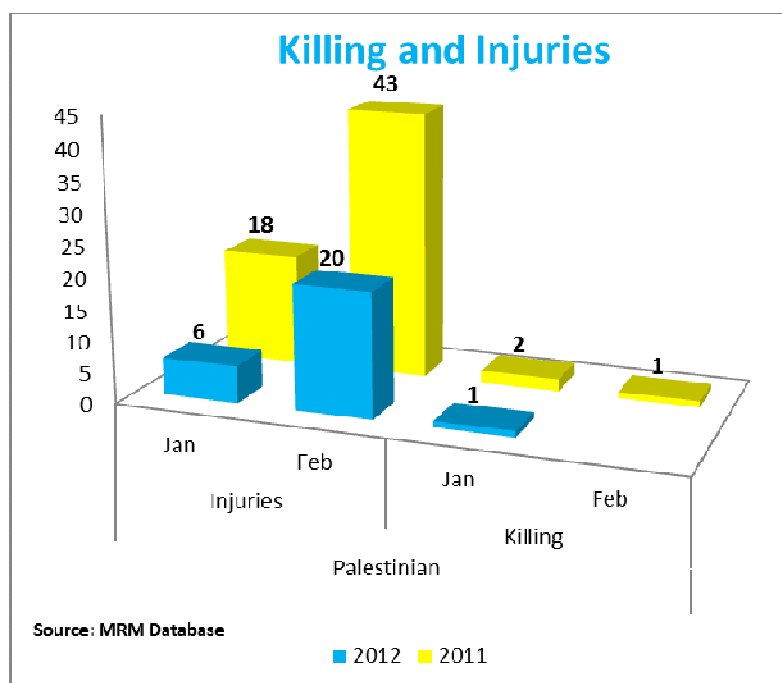
Credit: D.R. (left); UNICEF/Pirozzi (right)

KILLINGS AND INJURIES

In the first two months of 2012, no Palestinian children were reported killed but 26 were reported injured ((22 boys and 4 girls). No Israeli children were reported killed or injured during the same period. This represents a decrease in the number of children killed and injured compared to the same period last year when three Palestinian children were killed and 61 Palestinian children injured. Seventy-seven per cent of the injuries reported took place in the West Bank, including fifteen per cent in East Jerusalem and fifteen per cent in Hebron Old City. Twenty-three per cent took place in Gaza.

Nineteen children were injured directly by Israeli Security Forces (ISF), three children were injured by Israeli settlers, and four children were injured by unknown perpetrators due to the detonation of explosive devices.

Among the nineteen children injured by Israeli Security Forces, 15 boys were injured in the West Bank during demonstrations against settlement expansion or road closure, or during clashes between ISF and Palestinians. Six boys were physically assaulted by Israeli soldiers, seven boys were injured by rubber-coated metal bullets, and two boys were injured as a result of tear gas suffocation. Another four children, three girls aged 14, 6 and 3 years, and one 3-year-old boy, were injured in Gaza due to ISF air strikes.



Two boys and one girl were injured in settler related incidents, including an 11-year-old boy beaten by Israeli settlers in the Hebron Old City, a 17-year-old boy physically assaulted by settlers in Jerusalem and a 15-year-old girl hit by a stone thrown by settlers in Huwwara (Nablus).

Four boys were injured as a result of UXO explosions. Two boys aged 8 and 13 were injured in Gaza while handling or playing with explosive ordnance related to Palestinian armed factions, and two boys aged 11 and 13 were injured in Jinba (Hebron) when the horse they were playing with reportedly stepped on a landmine in a field where such explosions have been known to occur.

RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN BY ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

No incidents were reported.

ARREST AND DETENTION

At the end of February 2012, 187 Palestinian boys between the ages of 12 to 17 years (including 24 between the ages of 12 and 15 years) were in Israeli detention for alleged security violations, an increase of 17 children compared to the previous month. No children are currently held in administrative detention. Ten children from the West Bank were reported as transferred to prisons inside Israel in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010	318	343	342	335	305	291	284	286	269	256	228	213
2011	222	221	226	220	211	209	202	180	164	150	161	135
2012	170	187										

Source: DCI Palestine, Detention Bulletin, December 2011.

ILL-TREATMENT AND TORTURE

A sample of twenty cases of Palestinian children detained by Israeli Security Forces was documented through affidavits in the first two months of 2012. All of the 20 Palestinian children (19 boys and one girl, aged 9-17) who provided sworn affidavits, reported being subjected to ill-treatment and/or acts tantamount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by Israeli Security Forces. The cases involved the use of painful hand-ties (18 instances), blindfolding (17), threats of violence (11), beatings (10), denial of access to toilets (11), stripping of clothes (10), denial of access to food and water (6), and solitary confinement (6).

EDUCATION-RELATED VIOLATIONS

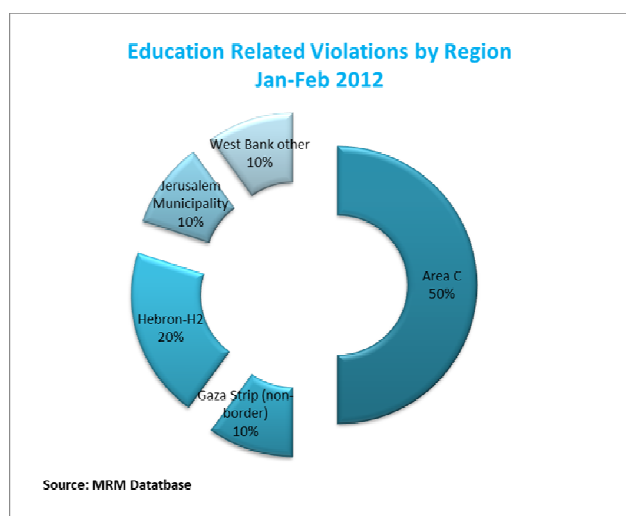
Attacks on schools

In the first two months of 2012, four incidents of attacks on schools were reported, three in the West Bank and one in Gaza, affecting 1,308 Palestinian children.

One incident involved damage to a school in the At-Tufah area in the north of Gaza City during an attack by Israeli Security Forces on a Hamas military training centre. Other incidents include a forced entry by Israeli settlers to the Haj Ma'zoz Al Masri Secondary School for Girls in Nablus, the demolition of a community cultural centre used for educational activities in Silwan (East Jerusalem - See photo on page 1), and the issuance of a stop-work order on a school in Jinba (Hebron).

Denial of access to education

Six incidents of denial of access to education were documented in the West Bank, affecting 70 Palestinian children. Compared to the last two months of 2011, there was a marked increase of denial of access to education in Hebron. In two instances, two 11-year-old boys and one 12-year-old boy were detained while on their way to or from school in the Old City by the Golani Brigade¹. Teachers, principals and students throughout the Hebron Old City have reported an escalation of incidents of physical abuse, verbal harassment and arrest and detention, as well as an increased number of instances of body and school bag searches, targeting particularly teenage and school age boys.



¹ The Golani Brigade has been deployed in Hebron Old City since 29 December 2011

In two other instances, the military escort for school children in at-Tuwani was late or did not arrive at the agreed meeting point to protect Palestinian children from settler attacks on their way to school. In another instance Israeli settlers denied access of 16 students to the school “Tiwana Basic School” in Tuba, south of Hebron.

In the Bedouin community of Khan al Ahmar, in the periphery of East Jerusalem, the closure of the main road link with the highway (Road 1) by Israeli Security Forces, using a metal guard rail, has made students’ and teachers’ access to school even more difficult. As a result of the closure, students and teachers are now dropped off directly on the highway (Road number 1) and have to jump the guard rail as cars drive by at full speed.

Attacks on hospitals

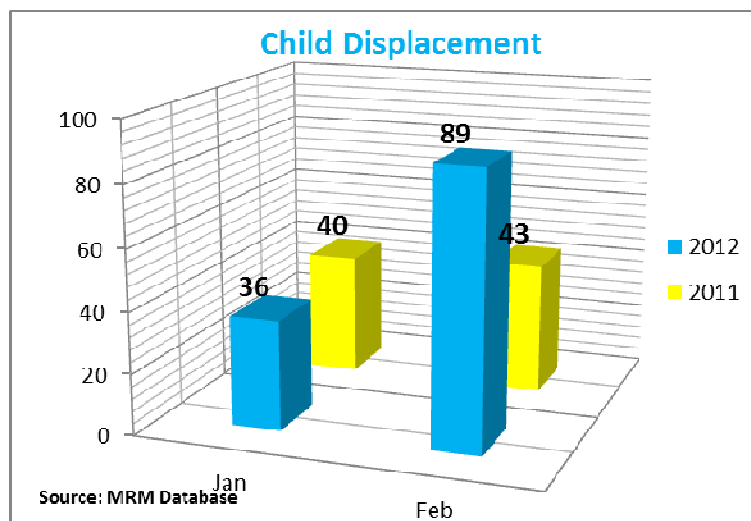
On 16 February, the windows of the Mohammed al-Durrah Hospital in the At-Tufah neighborhood east of Gaza City were broken and a nurse and a paramedic were injured as a result of an ISF attack on a training site used by the Izz Addin al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas.

Denial of humanitarian access for children

Children in need of specialized medical care outside of Gaza continue to face delays in access to health services. In January and February 2012, the Israeli District Liaison Office approved 627 out of 651 applications for children to cross Erez for medical treatment outside of Gaza. Twenty-four applications were delayed.

Displacement

In the first two months of 2012, Israeli authorities demolished 120 Palestinian structures across the West Bank, including 34 homes. As a result, 229 people lost their homes, including 125 children. Another 450 people, including 263 children, were otherwise affected by the demolitions, which caused community displacement and threats to livelihood.



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