



الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال | فرع فلسطين
Defence for Children International | Palestine Section

Recruitment and Use of Palestinian Children in Armed Conflict

February 2012

Defence for Children International - Palestine Section is a national section of the international non-governmental child rights organisation and movement, Defence for Children International (DCI), established in 1979, with consultative status with ECOSOC. DCI-Palestine was established in 1991, and is dedicated to defending, promoting and protecting the rights of Palestinian children in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as other international, regional and local standards. As part of its ongoing work to uphold the rights of Palestinian children, DCI-Palestine provides free legal assistance, collects evidence, researches and drafts reports and conducts general advocacy targeting various duty-bearers.

Address: PO Box 55201, Jerusalem

Tel: +972 (0)2 242 7530

Fax: +972 (0)2 242 7018


Email: info@dci-pal.org

Website: <http://www.dci-palestine.org>

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*Cover photo: Balata refugee camp, Nablus, occupied West Bank, May 2011.
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“I chose to join the group because of the general situation here, the national spirit to resist the occupation and the conditions in the refugee camp. Another reason was that 12 members of my extended family have been killed by the Israelis.”

AD – ex-child combatant

A. Executive Summary

The recruitment and use of children in armed conflict is prohibited under international law. Recruitment and involvement in armed conflict can take many forms, ranging from direct involvement in fighting, to subsidiary roles, such as acting as informants, scouts, cooks and porters. The prohibition also includes using children as human shields against possible attack. In the context of the military occupation of the Palestinian Territory, both Israel and Palestinian armed groups have violated the prohibition.

The report covers an eight year period between 2004 and 2011 (the reporting period) and identifies three circumstances where children are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by both parties to the conflict:

- *Human shields:* During the reporting period, DCI, and other human rights organisations, have documented **17 cases** of Palestinian children being used as human shields by Israeli forces. The practice of using human shields involves forcing civilians to directly assist in military operations or using them to shield an area or troops from attack. Civilians are usually threatened and/or physically coerced into performing these tasks, most of the time at gunpoint.
- *Informants:* During the reporting period, DCI has documented **16 cases** where attempts have been made to recruit Palestinian children as informants by the Israeli authorities. The task of the informant is to monitor the movement and activities of people living in his or her neighbourhood and to pass this information onto Israeli forces. The types of activities that are monitored cover a wide spectrum, ranging from involvement in armed resistance and political activism, to children throwing stones.
- *Child soldiers:* During the reporting period, DCI has documented **26 cases** where Palestinian children have participated, either directly or indirectly, in hostilities, usually under the banner of an armed group. This participation ranges from openly bearing arms and launching rockets, to performing subsidiary roles, such as scouting and cooking.

The key findings of the report include:

1. In 16 out of the 17 cases involving the use of Palestinian children as human shields, the event occurred after a ruling by the Israeli High Court of Justice declared the practice illegal under domestic law. This would suggest that the Israeli army is either ignoring the court's judgment, or not properly ensuring compliance with its ruling. It is also significant to note that in only one case was anybody held accountable for using a child as a human shield.
2. The report identifies **16 cases** in which attempts were made by Israeli authorities to recruit children as informants, most recently in November 2011. Most attempts at recruitment occur during interrogation following arrest and the report identifies a number of methods, including the offer of money and early release. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the reluctance to talk, it is difficult to ascertain the scale of the problem, although there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the practice is widespread.
3. Finally, the report identifies **26 cases** involving the recruitment and use of children by Palestinian armed groups during the reporting period. It is significant to note that in 23 out of 26 cases (**88 percent**), the children were from the Gaza Strip. It is also significant that in all 26 cases (**100 percent**) the evidence indicates that the children were not forcefully conscripted, but volunteered to join a group or to participate in hostilities. When asked why they volunteered, the children gave reasons ranging from patriotism to the 'oppression' of the occupation and the killing and imprisonment of family members. The report finds that the recruitment and use of children by Palestinian armed groups increases during large scale incursions by the Israeli army, but such involvement does not appear to be either widespread or systematic.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations intended to assist the relevant stakeholders to adopt a series of measures aimed at upholding the legal prohibition against the use of children in armed conflict, with a particular focus on holding all parties accountable.

B. Introduction

In 2004, DCI-Palestine published a report on the use of children in hostilities by both parties to the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹ This report seeks to provide an update on developments that have occurred during the intervening years, focusing on the recruitment of children by both Israel and Palestinian armed groups.

Because children are uniquely vulnerable to military recruitment and manipulation into violence, their use in armed conflict is expressly prohibited under international law. The regulation of the use of children in conflict situations was further strengthened in 2005, when the UN identified the recruitment or use of child soldiers as one of six “grave violations” relating to children in armed conflict warranting regular monitoring, reporting and response “due to their exceptionally brutal and deliberate nature.”²

In regards to the use of Palestinian children by Israel, the report considers two forms of recruitment and involvement in armed conflict:

- **Human shields:** The practice of using human shields involves forcing civilians to directly assist in military operations or using them to shield an area or troops from attack. Civilians are usually threatened and/or physically coerced into performing these tasks, most of the time at gunpoint.
- **Informants:** Palestinian informants (also known as collaborators) lead normal public lives in their communities, and a dangerous clandestine existence in which they work for the Israeli authorities. They are asked to provide information on neighbours and relatives, to infiltrate and report on activities of specific groups, or to participate in other activities as requested by the occupation forces.³

The report also considers the recruitment of child soldiers by Palestinian armed groups. According to the definition contained in the Paris Principles (2007): “A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking, or has taken, a direct part in hostilities.”⁴

The Report concludes by making a number of recommendations, including full accountability by all parties to the conflict for the recruitment and use of children in hostilities.

C. Applicable law

The use of children in armed conflict is prohibited under international law. Under the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), there are express provisions prohibiting the recruitment and involvement in hostilities of children below the age of 15 years.⁵ There is authority to support the proposition that what constitutes the involvement of children in hostilities should be interpreted broadly, including but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers and spies, and not simply restricted to persons carrying weapons.⁶ The Fourth Geneva Convention also expressly prohibits the use of civilians as human shields, and bans their physical or moral coercion to obtain information, which arguably also prohibits the coercive recruitment of children as informants.⁷

In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), which raised the age of recruitment and involvement in hostilities to 18.⁸ Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority are bound by the terms of OPAC,⁹ and the report proceeds on the assumption that Palestinian armed groups are also bound by these legal provisions.

Further, the prohibition against using civilians as human shields or obtaining intelligence from them has been expressly endorsed by the Israeli High Court of Justice. In the words of the then Chief Justice of the Court, Aharon Barak, in 2005: “The civilian population is not to be used for the military needs of the occupying army. They are not to be ‘volunteered’ for cooperation with the army. From this general principle is derived the specific prohibition of use of local residents as a ‘human shield’. Also derived from this principle is the prohibition of use of coercion (physical or moral) of protected persons in order to obtain intelligence.”¹⁰

Finally, the prohibition against involving children under 18 in hostilities has been incorporated into Palestinian law by virtue of the Child Law, which states that “children shall not be used in military action or armed conflict. The state shall take all the appropriate measures to guarantee the above.”¹¹ The Child Law applies to both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Accordingly, this report proceeds on the basis that the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in any capacity, including their use as human shields and informants, is expressly prohibited by law.

Map 1 – Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory



D. Recruitment by Israel

Overview

The report considers two ways in which Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are used by Israeli forces to assist them in their military activities. First, children are sometimes used as human shields in military operations, and secondly, children are coerced into becoming informants who provide intelligence to Israeli forces.

Human shields

The practice of using human shields involves forcing civilians to directly assist in military operations or using them to shield an area or troops from attack. Civilians are usually threatened and/or physically coerced into performing these tasks, most of the time at gunpoint. As already noted, the practice is illegal under both international and Israeli domestic law. Examples of the use of children as human shields by the Israeli army include:

- Compelling children to search bags or houses for people, weapons or explosives (see case studies 1, 3, 4 and 15);
- Detaining children inside houses where soldiers have taken up operational positions in order to reduce the likelihood of the position being attacked by armed groups (see case study 14); and
- Making children stand or walk in front of soldiers during confrontations to shield the soldiers from gunfire or stone throwing (see case studies 2, 13, 14 and 15).

"The soldier approached me and grabbed my shirt from my neck and dragged me away. 'He's a child,' my mother began shouting. I thought they would kill me. I became very scared and wet my pants [...] He pointed his weapon at me. He was shouting at me and I did not understand him, so he grabbed me and pushed me against the wall. He then started motioning with his hand and I figured out he wanted me to open the bags."

M. R. – 9 years
15 January 2009

Since April 2004, DCI-Palestine and other human rights organisations, have documented 17 cases of Palestinian children being used as human shields by the Israeli army. In 16 out of the 17 cases, the event occurred after the Israeli High Court of Justice had ruled the practice illegal under domestic law in 2005. This suggests that the Israeli army is not effectively implementing the Court's decision, or is simply disregarding the order altogether. Evidence in support of the conclusion that the Israeli army is disregarding the Court's order can be found in the testimonies collected by the Israeli organisation Breaking the Silence, from soldiers who served in the war in Gaza in late 2008.¹²



Ali and Ala, used as human shields in January 2009, re-enact the position in which they were detained (see case study 13).

Photo credit: DCI-Palestine.

Organisation: Breaking the Silence
Report: Soldiers' Testimonies from Operation Cast Lead – Testimony 51
Location: Gaza Strip
Date: December 2008 to January 2009

“After we got out of there, we had a talk with our unit commander. All kinds of things came up and professional issues were also addressed. Some people said that the crew was not sufficiently prepared, and they also brought up moral issues that troubled them such as using civilians. He denied this, but I don't believe him when he says he's not aware of this happening on the ground. This procedure of using civilians exists, he knows about this. 'Neighbor procedure' is an official army procedure; it's just not called that any longer.”

Since the High Court's ruling in 2005, lawyers and human rights organisations, including DCI, have submitted a number of complaints in relation to the use of children by the Israeli army as human shields. In one case, a nine-year-old boy was used as a human shield during the war in Gaza in January 2009 (Operation “Cast Lead”) (See case study 4). On 28 April 2009, a complaint was submitted to the Israeli authorities in relation to this case and on 11 March 2010, two soldiers from the Givati Brigade were charged. The two soldiers were convicted on 3 October 2010 of ‘inappropriate behaviour’ and ‘overstepping authority,’ and were later demoted to the rank of sergeant and given three-month suspended prison sentences. DCI is of the view that the leniency of the sentence is unlikely to have an effective deterrent effect, and is not commensurate with the gravity of the offence. To DCI's knowledge this is the only case in which anybody has been charged with an offence arising out of the use of children as human shields.

Table 1 – Cases of children used as human shields since April 2004

#	Name	Date	Age	Details
1.	M.B.	15 Apr 2004	13	Tied to the bonnet of a military jeep for four hours during clashes.
2.	S.T	2 May 2006	16	Forced to walk in front of soldiers and enter a house in search of combatants.
3.	A.E.	26 Feb 2007	15	Forced at gunpoint to walk in front of soldiers during clashes.
4.	J.D.	28 Feb 2007	11	Forced at gunpoint to walk in front of soldiers and enter an abandoned house in search of combatants.
5.	I.M.	11 Apr 2007	14	Forced to sit for 15 minutes on the bonnet of a jeep during clashes.
6.	O.G.	11 Apr 2007	15	Forced to sit for 10 minutes on the bonnet of a jeep during clashes.
7.	R.N.	11 Jul 2007	14	Wounded whilst being forced to evacuate others from a house.
8.	A.S.	4 Jan 2009	14	Detained for 10 days and forced to search houses during war in Gaza.
9.	A.A.	5 Jan 2009	15	Detained close to military operations for four days during war in Gaza.
10.	A.A.	5 Jan 2009	16	Detained close to military operations for four days during war in Gaza.
11.	N.A.	5 Jan 2009	17	Detained close to military operations for four days during war in Gaza.
12.	K.A.	5 Jan 2009	15	Detained close to military operations for four days during war in Gaza.
13.	H.A.	5 Jan 2009	12	Detained close to military operations for four days during war in Gaza.
14.	M.R.	15 Jan 2009	9	Forced at gunpoint to search bags thought to contain explosives during war in Gaza.
15.	D.A.	18 Feb 2010	16	Forced at gunpoint to search for a weapon.
16.	S.A.	16 Apr 2010	14	Forced at gunpoint to walk in front of soldiers during clashes.
17.	N.A.	19 Aug 2010	13	Forced at gunpoint to walk in front of soldiers and enter a house in search of combatants.



S. being used as a human shield by Israeli soldiers in Beit Unnar, April 2010.

Credit: Courtesy of Maan News

Case studies – Human shields

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 1
 Name: N.A.
 Date of Incident: 19 August 2010
 Age: 13
 Location: 'Asira Al Qibliya, occupied West Bank



On 19 August 2010, a 13-year-old boy is used as a human shield by Israeli soldiers whilst searching a house in 'Asira Al Qibliya, near Nablus, in the occupied West Bank.

Thirteen-year-old N. lives with his parents and three siblings in a village south of Nablus. Their house is located near the settlement of Yizhar, built on village lands. On the evening of Thursday, 19 August 2010, N.'s parents went to visit his grandfather, while N. stayed home watching television with his younger brothers I. (10) and M. (9). Sometime between 8:00 and 9:00 pm, the three brothers heard gun shots from a nearby village and climbed to the roof of their house to check what was happening. When the boys got to the roof they saw a number of military vehicles in the neighbouring village and saw soldiers firing sound bombs and tear gas canisters.



About 20 minutes later, the military vehicles entered N.'s village. The vehicles stopped near their house and "we heard someone saying in Arabic through loudspeakers 'Come down to the yard, come down.'" As N. and his brothers descended, they were "very scared and my brothers started crying," he recalls. "The soldiers started throwing sound bombs at us and firing tear gas canisters so we ran to our uncle's house."

From inside, they heard a voice saying in Arabic, "You have five minutes to leave the house." N.'s uncle opened the door to find more than 20 soldiers surrounding the house. He was ordered to come out and raise his hands. "He had barely walked two metres

when a soldier threw a sound bomb at him," N. recalls. "My cousin, S. (2), who had followed his father, started crying and screaming because he was very scared. My uncle held him and tried to take him inside but they shouted at him 'Come here or I'll shoot you in the head.'"

The uncle's hands were then tied. N. also recalls that the soldiers "threatened to beat and shoot those who were crying," asking, "Where are the terrorists?" His uncle responded, "you're scaring the children," to which the soldier replied, "Shut up or I'll shoot you in the head."

After the soldiers had searched the uncle's house an officer asked N. for the keys to his house, which he had hidden. "He slapped me across the face and hit me hard on the back with his hand. He walked to the door and tried to break it down. I was standing about three metres away from him surrounded by four soldiers, including a short female soldier." When N. approached the officer, the female soldier kicked him in the back of his legs and knocked him down. "I was on the ground and about two metres away from the officer. He looked at me and said, 'Open the door.' I stood up and approached the door. I got the key out of the place where I had hid it and opened the door."

As N. opened the door, a soldier pointed his weapon at him ready to shoot. I opened the main door and the officer ordered me to enter and turn the lights on. I entered the living room and turned the lights on. The switch was near the living room door, which leads to other rooms in the house. Once I turned the lights on, I saw the short black soldier approaching the main door while still pointing his weapon and ready to shoot, as if he was scared someone would jump in front of him. Then the officer approached the short soldier and stood at the main door. He ordered me to open the door that goes to the other rooms in the house and I did so. 'We're scared,' he said to me when he ordered me to turn on the lights. I felt they were scared that someone might be inside the house and therefore they wanted me to open all the doors to make sure no one was in the house. Then he ordered me to get out. Nobody was in the house and the soldiers finally left the village at around 11:30 pm, "after scaring and horrifying us for almost three hours," recalls N.

25 August 2010

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 2
 Name: S. A.
 Date of Incident: 16 April 2010
 Age: 14
 Location: Beit Ummar, occupied West Bank

On 16 April 2010, a 14-year-old boy is used as a human shield by Israeli soldiers during clashes in the village of Beit Ummar, in the occupied West Bank.

Fourteen-year-old S. lives in the village of Beit Ummar, near Hebron. On 16 April 2010, S. was on his way to an event marking Palestinian Prisoners' Day at a local school. On his way to the school, S. heard the sound of tear gas canisters being fired and people saying that there were protests against Israeli soldiers in the eastern part of the village. S. continued walking towards the school, where he found two Israeli soldiers standing by the gate. "I didn't hear about any soldiers near the school and it didn't occur to me that they would be there," says S.



S. being used as human shield by Israeli soldiers. Credit: Courtesy of Maan News

"One of the soldiers grabbed the back of my arm and the other grabbed my shoulder." S. recalls. "When they grabbed me, they said in Hebrew 'why do you throw stones?' I know a few Hebrew words. 'I didn't throw any stones,'" replied S. The soldiers maintained their grip on S. and made him walk in front of them for about 40 metres while stones were being thrown in their direction. "Stones were being thrown at them from different directions and they were hiding behind me so I could cover them from the stones," says S. "They were shouting and saying 'throw! throw!' in Hebrew to the youths who were throwing stones. They did this twice but the stones didn't hit me, although they landed near us. Apparently, the youths saw me with the two soldiers and stopped throwing stones." S. believes that the soldiers were from the Israeli border police from the colour of their uniforms.

S. was then taken to a military jeep. "A commander in regular army uniform ordered me to open my hands and he looked at them. 'Did you throw stones?' he asked me. 'No,' I said, and he said 'liar.'" Soon afterwards, S.'s hands were tied behind his back with plastic ties and he was blindfolded. S. was then helped into the back of a jeep and a few minutes later he heard the voices of his mother and uncle outside the vehicle. "I heard my uncle asking them to release me but a soldier told him to 'get lost.' A number of people had gathered around the vehicle and they were talking," recalls S. "A soldier then fired a tear gas canister at them and immediately the jeep started moving. I felt my eyes were burning because of the gas."

A short time later the vehicle stopped and the 'commander' started to question S. "Did you throw stones?' he asked me. 'No,' I said, and he immediately hit me on the shoulder and back with the antenna from his handheld radio. He also kicked my right leg and it was very painful because he was wearing combat boots. He kept questioning me and beating me for about half-an-hour. He once hit me with the antenna just beneath my left eye and it swelled up. I felt great pain. 'I swear I didn't do anything and I didn't throw stones,' I kept telling him. The 'commander' also picked up a plastic cup and ordered me to drink. 'I don't want to drink,' I said to him. 'Open your mouth,' he said. 'I don't want to,' I said. At that moment he hit me with the antenna and placed the cup to my mouth and poured the water down my throat. The water tasted bad and smelled like sewerage. I immediately vomited because it was unbearable."

Moments later, the 'commander' cut S.'s hand ties, removed his blindfold and released him. It was around 4:00 pm.

17 April 2010

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 3
 Name: D. A.
 Date of incident: 18 February 2010
 Age: 16
 Location: Nablus, occupied West Bank



On 18 February 2010, a 16-year-old girl from Nablus, in the occupied West Bank, is forced at gunpoint by Israeli soldiers to search for a weapon.

"It was around 3:30 am," recalls 16-year-old D., "and I was sleeping in my house in the old city of Nablus. My family and I woke up to the sound of banging on the door." Soldiers soon broke down the front door and stormed inside the family home. "There were more than 30 soldiers and some of them were wearing masks over their faces."



Credit: DCI-Palestine

D. recalls that the soldiers started beating and kicking her younger brother, Khaled (15), whilst asking him where his older brother, Mohammad (17) kept his weapon. "In the meantime," she says, "Mohammad was in the hall standing among the soldiers with his hands tied. He was beaten by them and asked about his weapon." D. was then asked to fetch Mohammad's ID card. "I went to the room and a soldier followed me. 'Are you bringing Mohammad's weapon?' the soldier asked me and I said: 'Mohammad doesn't have a weapon; I'm just going to get his ID.'"

Two soldiers followed D. into the bedroom. "One of the two soldiers ordered me to stand in a corner and I did so and he pointed his weapon at me. I was shivering in fear," says D.. "I gave the ID to one of the soldiers and one of them ordered me to sit on the bed where Mohammad had been sleeping. They pointed their weapons at me and one of them sat beside me." D. recalls that one soldier was taking photographs with a digital camera. "The soldier sitting beside me stood up and ordered me to lift the mattress to see what was underneath. He was speaking in broken Arabic: 'You lift the mattress, and we step away.' I did what he said and I was quivering because I was very scared. They moved three metres backwards towards the door while aiming their weapons at me. They also ordered me to search the closets and other items in the room while they were aiming their weapons at me."

D.'s father describes what happened as follows: "They focused their search on the place

where Mohammad had been sleeping. They ordered D. to lift the mattress but she couldn't because it is heavy. At that moment they moved about two metres away from her and pointed their weapons at her. 'I can't lift it, you want me to tear it apart?' she asked them, and they ordered her to leave it. She was scared and kept crying and shivering the whole time. I saw the whole thing because the door of the room where I was is directly opposite."

Following the search, the soldiers started to take Mohammad with them. "My father asked the soldiers to bring Mohammad to him before they took him away," recalls D.. "My father is diabetic and has had both legs amputated, so he can't walk. The soldiers shouted at him and at first refused to bring Mohammad, but about 15 minutes later they brought Mohammad and he was allowed to say goodbye to my parents and siblings. After that, the soldiers took Mohammad outside the house in his pyjamas. They refused to allow him to change his clothes. They wanted to take him barefoot but my mother begged them to let him wear his shoes."

On 20 September 2010, DCI-Palestine and Adalah lodged a complaint with the Israeli authorities concerning the treatment of D. and her family. On 19 October 2010, the Israeli army informed the organisations that the Military Police are investigating the case. DCI has received no further communication from the authorities in relation to the status of the complaint.

17 April 2010

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 4
 Name: M. R.
 Date of incident: 15 January 2009
 Age: 9
 Location: Gaza City, Occupied Palestinian Territory



On 15 January 2009, a nine-year-old boy from Gaza City is forced at gunpoint by Israeli soldiers to search bags suspected of containing explosives.

"The Israeli operation 'Cast Lead' started on 27 December 2008 and many areas in the Gaza Strip were invaded," recalls nine-year-old M. "I was scared that something might happen to me because of the bombardment so I stayed inside the house because I thought being in the house with my family was the safest place."



On the night of 14 January 2009, an intense Israeli bombardment in M.'s neighbourhood forced the residents of his apartment building down to the basement to seek shelter. M. recalls that there were about 40 men, women and children in the basement seeking shelter. At around 5:00 am, units from the Givati Brigade entered the basement "firing." M. recalls seeing the red laser sights from their guns everywhere. The soldiers separated the men from the women and children and forced them to strip down to their underwear. Whilst this was going on a soldier approached the group of women and children and pointed to M. and said: "Come here."

"The soldier approached me and grabbed my shirt from my neck and dragged me away. 'He's a child,' my mother began shouting. I thought they would kill me," recalls M., "I became very scared and wet my pants. I could not shout or say anything because I was too afraid. The soldier dragged me 20 metres away. He pointed his weapon at me. He was shouting at me and I did not understand him, so he grabbed me and pushed me against the wall."

"He then started motioning with his hand and I figured out he wanted me to open the bags; small bags that the residents brought down with them containing their personal effects and money. The bags were similar to the bags used by football players. I

understood from his hand gestures that he wanted me to open the bags. There were two bags in front of me. I grabbed the first one as he stood one-and-a-half metres away. I opened the bag as he pointed his weapon directly at me. I emptied the bag on the floor. It contained money and papers. I looked at him and he was laughing. I grabbed the second bag to open it but I could not. I tried many times but it was useless, so he shouted at me. He grabbed my hair and slapped me very hard across the face. I did not shout or cry but I was very scared. He dragged me away from the bags and forced me to stand against the wall, as he stood about one-and-a-half metres behind me. He then shot at the bag that I could not open. I thought he shot at me, so I shouted and put my hands on my head. He then pulled me through the corridor and another soldier said 'Go to your mother.' I ran to my mother and hid in her arms. 'I wet my pants,' I said to her. 'It's fine,' she said."

M. and the other residents of the apartment building were held in the basement by the soldiers at gunpoint until 3:00 pm. M. recalls that one of the soldiers guarding them sat on a chair nearby: "He would shout now and then 'boom, boom' like an explosion. We would all put our hands on our heads, and the soldier would laugh loudly. He repeated this about five times. He then went and sat about five metres away from us. Four other soldiers sat next to him. The soldiers pointed their weapons at us, and I would get scared. I could see the red light moving over my body and my siblings and mother. There was a thin red light coming from their weapons. Whenever I saw them lifting their weapons or the red light, I thought they would shoot us."

At 3:00 pm the soldiers told the women and children to carry a white flag and head for the nearby Red Crescent building. The men were told to remain behind.

On 28 April 2009, a complaint was submitted to the Israeli authorities in relation to the army's use of 10 children as human shields, including M., and on 25 November 2009, M. and his mother were requested to attend an interview conducted by the Israeli Military Police at Erez Checkpoint, Gaza. According to M.'s mother, M. was prevented from using a toilet prior to his interview and wet himself. On 11 March 2010, two soldiers from the Givati Brigade were charged with using M. as a human shield and were convicted on 3 October 2010 of 'inappropriate behaviour' and 'overstepping authority'. On 21 November 2010, the two staff sergeants were demoted to the rank of sergeant and given three-month suspended prison sentences each.

28 March 2009

Informants

Israeli forces employ a number of techniques to maintain control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the recruitment of Palestinians as informants. The task of the informant is to monitor the movement and activities of people living in his or her neighbourhood and to pass this information onto Israeli forces. The types of activities that are monitored cover a wide spectrum, ranging from involvement in armed resistance and political activism, to children throwing stones.

Under international law there is a prohibition on seeking to obtain information from protected civilians through the use of physical or moral coercion.¹³ The prohibition covers all cases, whether the pressure is direct or indirect, obvious or hidden and regardless of purpose or motive.¹⁴ As already noted, the prohibition against coercing persons to become informants has also been endorsed by the Israeli High Court of Justice.¹⁵

The primary means by which Israeli forces seek to recruit Palestinians, including children, as informants appears to occur during their interrogation following arrest. Each year, approximately 500–700 Palestinian children from the West Bank are arrested and interrogated by Israeli forces, before being prosecuted in military courts. The majority of these children are accused of throwing stones. It is estimated that since 2000 alone, around 7,500 Palestinian children, some as young as 12 years, have been detained and prosecuted in the system.

Within this military detention system, children are frequently arrested from the family home by heavily armed soldiers in the middle of the night. The children are then painfully tied and blindfolded before being placed in the back of a military vehicle and transferred to an interrogation and detention centre. It is rare for a child, or his/her parents to be told the reason for arrest, or where the child is being taken. The arrest and transfer process is frequently accompanied by both physical and verbal abuse.¹⁶

"If you want to go home, you have to work with us,' he said. 'And do what?' I asked. 'We need you to tell us about people who throw stones,' he replied. 'Lock me in forever then, because I won't work with you.' I said."

I.Z. – 16 years
4 May 2009

"At this point, he approached me and put his hand on my shoulder. 'I just want you to tell me about those who cause trouble and disturb your work,' he said. I became very scared and wished I could get out of the room because I knew he wanted me to work as a spy and tell him about the people in Gaza."

M.B. – 17 years
11 September 2011

The child generally arrives at the interrogation and detention centre in a sleep deprived and traumatised state of confusion. Children are questioned in the absence of a lawyer or family member, and there is no provision for the audio-visual recording of the interrogation as a means of independent oversight.¹⁷ Few children are informed of their right to silence at the time of arrest, or prior to being questioned. During interrogation children are frequently threatened and physically assaulted which often results in the provision of a coerced confession, or the signing of documents which the child has not been given a chance to read or understand.¹⁸ It is also at this point in the system that attempts to recruit children as informants occur. These attempts usually involve a combination of inducements and threats. Examples of the types of threats and inducements used in attempts to recruit children as informants include:

- Offering early release (see case studies 7, 8, 16 and 17);
- Offering money in return for information (see case studies 5, 6, 7 and 8);
- Offering to provide a car or a house in return for information (see case studies 7 and 16); and
- Threatening the child with imprisonment if the child does not become an informant (see case studies 6 and 18).

DCI has documented cases involving soldiers, policemen and security agents attempting to recruit children as informants. However, the body primarily responsible for recruiting Palestinian children as informants is the Israel Security Agency (ISA), also known as the Shabak, and formerly known as the General Security Service (GSS). The Shabak is Israel's domestic agency responsible for intelligence gathering; it carries out covert operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, conducts some interrogations and reports directly to the Israeli Prime Minister.¹⁹

"I saw the intelligence officer, who introduced himself. He was tall and blonde. He sat on a chair next to me. He was smiling at me. He asked me about my health. He was polite. He asked me to collaborate with him and work as an informant. 'All you have to do is tell me about those who carry out military activities targeting state security, especially people your age who throw stones and Molotov cocktails on the road that leads to Ari'el,' he said. 'I'm not a spy,' I said. He became angry and shouted at me 'You'll see what will happen to you, dog!' He called one of the soldiers and ordered him to tie me and take me out."

M.K. – 16 years
26 March 2009

Due to the sensitive nature of this issue within Palestinian society, it is very difficult to ascertain the scale of the problem as many people either refuse to discuss it altogether, or deny that any attempt was made to recruit them for fear that they will come under suspicion in their local community. However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the practice may be widespread.²⁰

Since June 2006, DCI has documented 16 cases in which children report that they were asked to become informants under some form of coercion or inducement. In all 16 cases, the children say they rebuffed the attempt to recruit them.

Table 2 – Cases of the attempted recruitment of Palestinian children as informants since 2006.

#	Name	Date of arrest	Age	Details
1.	M.H.	18 Jun 2006	17	Interrogator at Ofer offered M.H. money and assistance in studying abroad if he agreed to become an informant.
2.	A.J.	28 May 2007	17	Interrogator at Askelan asked A.J. to become an informant.
3.	M.S.	1 Aug 2007	15	Interrogator at Al Jalame asked M.S. to become an informant.
4.	M.B.	25 Jul 2008	17	Interrogator at Ofer threatened M.B. that he would remain in detention if he did not collaborate and would be released immediately if he became an informant.
5.	R.F.	21 Mar 2009	14	Interrogator at Jaba' police station offered R.F. money and immediate release if he became an informant.
6.	M.K.	26 Mar 2009	16	Interrogator asked M.K. to become an informant.
7.	I.Z.	4 May 2009	16	Interrogator at Gush Etzion tells I.Z. that if he wants to go home he will have to become an informant.
8.	I.H.	14 May 2009	16	Interrogator at Huwwara offers I.H. immediate release, a car and a house if he becomes an informant.
9.	I.D.	30 Sep 2009	17	Interrogator at Ofer asked I.D. to become an informant and then shouted at him when he refused.
10.	I.A.	21 Feb 2010	17	Soldier at a checkpoint asked I.A. if he wanted to work with the Israeli border police.
11.	A.S.	23 Apr 2010	17	Interrogator at Al Jalame offered A.S. early release, money and a car if he agreed to become an informant.
12.	M.B.	11 Sep 2011	17	Interrogators at Ashdod and Eretz offered M.B. money if he agreed to become an informant.
13.	K.J.	19 Oct 2011	16	Interrogators at Al Mascobiyya offered K.J. money and a car if he agreed to become an informant.
14.	M.A.	12 Nov 2011	17	Interrogator at Salem offered M.A. a permit to enter Israel and money if he agreed to become an informant.
15.	D.A.	28 Nov 2011	17	Interrogator at Salem offered D.A. a permit to enter Israel and money if he agreed to become an informant.
16.	R.A.	28 Nov 2011	17	Interrogator at Salem offered R.A. a mobile phone and money if he agreed to become an informant.

Case studies – Informants

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 5
 Name: M. A.
 Date of arrest: 12 November 2011
 Age: 17 years
 Location: Jericho, occupied West Bank

On 12 November 2011, a 17-year-old boy is arrested by the Jordanian authorities for crossing the border between the West Bank and Jordan. He is handed over to the Israeli authorities, who offer him a permit to enter Israel and money if he agrees to become an informant.

M.A. lives with his family in a village near Nablus, in the West Bank. He dropped out of school to work in construction “because of our harsh economic condition.” At around 6:30 pm on 12 November 2011, M.A. was picking olives in Jericho near the border with Jordan, when he impulsively decided to cross the border. “I jumped over the Wall and crossed the Jordan River. The area was very shallow and didn’t have much water. I walked for a long time and I reached a Jordanian military checkpoint.”



The Jordanian soldiers at the checkpoint interrogated M.A., but he “did not cooperate much because I myself didn’t know why I had crossed the border.” M.A. was then handed over to members of the Jordanian intelligence service, who subjected him to physical violence during interrogation. For two days, he was kept in a cell “so small the mattress barely fitted. It had no windows, except for a gap of about 20x30 cm near the ceiling. It had no toilets and was almost dark. They kept my hands and feet tied. They brought me food only once in two days, but it smelled terrible. It was only good for animals.”

Two days later, M.A. was handed over to the Israeli border police. “The Israeli border police handcuffed my hands and feet and put me in a military jeep. Then, they transferred me to an Israeli hospital, where I underwent some checks. When they had made sure I was fine, they put me back in the jeep and kept me inside it the entire night. It was very cold that night and it rained heavily,” M.A. reports.

“In the morning, I was transferred to Megiddo prison,” he continues. “I was strip searched and detained in a room with children my age [...] On 16 November, I was transferred to Salem interrogation and detention centre, where I was interrogated. The interrogator kept my hands and feet handcuffed. ‘You’re accused of throwing stones, crossing a closed military zone and sneaking into Jordan,’ he said, and I confessed,” says M.A.

Then the interrogator said to M.A.: “I suggest you work with us and become an informant and in return we’ll allow you to enter Israel any time you want and will protect you from the Jordanian army, because they want to put you on trial.” M.A. rejected the offer: “I don’t want to be a spy,’ I said to him. ‘You’ve got me wrong, we just want you to provide us with information about youth activities in your village and about the members of Hamas and Fateh who throws stones,’ he said. ‘If you do so, we’ll help you a lot and give you money,’ he added, but I refused. ‘I won’t be a spy even if you shoot me,’ I said.”

M.A. was interrogated “for more than two hours, during which time my hands and feet were handcuffed and I did not have a lawyer or a family member present.” He is still being held at Megiddo prison inside Israel and no charges have been filed against him.

22 November 2011

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 6
 Name: M.B.
 Date of arrest: 11 September 2011
 Age: 17
 Location: Gaza sea border



On 11 September 2011, a 17-year-old boy from Gaza City is arrested while fishing and is offered money to become an informant.

M.B. lives with his family in Gaza City. He works as a fisherman, as his father cannot work due to health problems. "My family is poor, just like any other family working at sea" he says. "There are 10 of us at home, so I had to go fishing, although I do not earn much. On a good day we can earn 20 to 30 shekels [around 8 US dollars]. We fish near the border between north Gaza and Israel, because there are many fish there, but we have to use hooks, not nets, because if the Israelis chase us, we won't have enough time to escape," M.B. explains.



*Fishing boat in Gaza.
 Credit: DCI-Palestine*

On Sunday, 11 September 2011, M.B. went fishing as usual with some of his relatives. "That day, I saw two Israeli patrol boats," he says. "We started approaching the buoys marking the border in order to fish on the other side. The patrol boat did not object, so we went beyond the signs and threw the hooks into the sea [...] About half-an-hour later, I saw the patrol boat coming fast toward us [...] All the fishing boats started fleeing south [...] I knew that if we stopped the Israeli soldiers would confiscate our boat and would detain us. I wanted to flee, but then I heard gunshots and saw bullets hitting the water around the boat. I stopped the engine [...] there were around 10 Israeli soldiers pointing their rifles at us."

The boys were ordered to take off their clothes and swim towards an inflatable boat where soldiers were waiting for them. Once they climbed on the inflatable boat, which was tied to the patrol boat, their hands were tied behind their backs, and they were blindfolded and made to lie down facing the floor. They were then taken to the port of Ashdod, where they arrived about three hours later. "I felt the patrol boat had stopped. A soldier untied me and removed the blindfold [...] I looked around and saw a

huge port with many patrol boats and soldiers." The boys were taken to a room, where M.B. realised that his uncle and cousins had also been apprehended.

In the interrogation room M.B. was given a brief medical check. "My legs were shivering because I was very scared," he recalls. "I did not know what was going to happen to me. Were they going to beat me? Put me in jail?" Then the interrogator asked him: "What brought you to the restricted area?" "I was fishing because that area has many fish and I have to make money for the family," I said. "Do you know what the boats that come to that area at night do?" he asked. "They come to catch sardines," I said. "Do you know the names of the fishermen from Hamas and Islamic Jihad?" the interrogator asked. "I don't know, I know they're fishermen," I said. He frowned and became upset. "Don't lie to me," he said. "I'm not lying," I replied." The interrogation continued: "How much money do you earn a day?" "Around 20 shekels," I said. "That's it? How do you live then?" he said. "It's enough for food," I replied. "Do you smoke?" he asked. "Yes," I said. "Why didn't you say so? Here, take a cigarette, big boy," he said to me, while handing me a cigarette. Another soldier lit it. "How about I give you 100 shekels, or even 200, and we become friends?" the soldier said. "You mean I become a spy," I said. "It's so that you can have a better life; you tell me who brings weapons, who causes trouble at sea, and I'll let you fish anywhere you want," he added. "I don't want to fish anywhere," I said. "Next time I catch you, you'll wear the brown uniform," he said, meaning he'll put me in jail. "Put me in jail, I don't care," I said."

"You don't want money? Fine, get lost," the interrogator said. He ordered me to sign the paper he had written, but not in Arabic. I think it was written in Hebrew. I signed it. "Take him away," the interrogator told one of the soldiers. I stood up and noticed three stripes on the interrogator's shoulder. I think it was his rank."

M.B. was taken back to the room where his two relatives were being held. Around five hours later, soldiers came into the room, tied their hands, blindfolded them, shackled their feet, and took them to a bus for transfer. "When the bus stopped, soldiers pulled us out and removed the handcuffs and the blindfolds [...] I looked around and found myself at Erez Crossing Point." At Erez, M.B. was taken again to an interrogation room. "Do you know where you are," the interrogator asked. "No," I said. "This is the Israeli intelligence service," he said [...] "I don't want to hear the things you said earlier in Ashdod, I want to hear something different," he said."

The interrogator asked M.B. to point out where he lives and other places on a computer map. Then, another man came into the room. "He started talking to the interrogator

in a language I did not understand; I suppose it was Hebrew," says M.B. "Whenever the interrogator asked me something, he would speak to the other man but in Hebrew [...] 'Do you know any person from Hamas or Islamic Jihad who goes to sea?' the interrogator asked. 'No I don't, they're all fishermen,' I said. He became quiet. Then he got up and stood next to me. 'You're a good guy, and I like you because you don't lie. How are you going to go back to Gaza?' the interrogator asked. 'I'll walk until I find a car,' I said. 'You'll take a taxi, but how are you going to pay for it?' he asked. 'I don't have money, so I'll pay for it when I get back to the house,' I said and he got out some money from his pocket. 'Take it so you can pay for the taxi,' he said. 'I don't want it,' I responded. 'No driver will take you for free,' he said. 'I'll pay for it when I arrive home,' I said. 'I'll give you as much money as you want,' the interrogator said. 'You don't earn much working at sea, and that's why I want to help you and give you money to help your siblings and your sick father,' he said. 'I don't want it,' I replied. 'I want to help you out so you can help me out with something,' he said."

"At this point, he approached me and put his hand on my shoulder. 'I just want you to tell me about those who cause trouble and disturb your work,' he said. I became very scared and wished I could get out of the room because I knew he wanted me to work as a spy and tell him about the people in Gaza. 'I don't know them,' I quickly said and he did not say anything [...] 'Okay, go home now,' he said, 'But don't tell anyone I asked you to work for me because I didn't, do you understand?' he said."

M.B. and the other boys were then released. "The soldier came back and took us out to a metal gate. He opened the gate and ordered us to keep walking along the corridor until we reached Gaza."

15 September 2011

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 7
 Name: A.S.
 Date of arrest: 23 April 2010
 Age: 17
 Location: 'Azzun village, occupied West Bank

On 23 April 2010, a 17-year-old boy from 'Azzun, near Qalqiliya, is arrested from his family home by Israeli soldiers at 1:00 am. He is told that he will be released if he agrees to work as an informant.

At 1:00 am, on 23 April 2010, A.S. was woken by noises outside. Israeli soldiers entered his home and ordered the family into one room while they searched the house. A.S. recalls that during the search, soldiers "took down a Palestinian flag and some pictures with verses from the Holy Qu'ran written on them and started stepping on them. They meant to offend me and my family," says A.S.



After several hours, the soldiers arrested A.S. They tied his hands behind his back with plastic cords so tightly that they began to swell. During the trip to the police station, one of the soldiers forced him to stand in the moving vehicle and repeatedly kicked him until he fell over. Outside the police station in Ari'el settlement, A.S. was beaten and left lying on a pile of gravel until 9:00 am.

A.S. was then transferred to Al Jalame detention and interrogation centre, near Haifa inside Israel, in contravention of article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits such transfers out of occupied territory. There, "they took me out of the cell and put me in a room with a very low ceiling that smelled really bad, like a sewer. They tied my hands and feet while I was standing so I could only move a little." Later on he was moved to another cramped room. His hands were tied to the walls and his feet were chained to the floor: "My hands were twisted and my feet were wide open. They kept me in this position for six consecutive days. During this time they would spray gas in my face," says A.S.

A.S. reports that: "While I was detained at Al Jalame, I remember several interrogators coming to the interrogation room and asking me to work with them in return for my release within five days. They said they would buy me a new car and deposit some money to my bank account if I provided them with information on some activists in my village. Of course I refused and they took me back to the cell."

After 40 days of interrogation, A.S. confessed to the accusation that he had fired a weapon at an Israeli car in the occupied West Bank. A.S. was then transferred to Megiddo Prison inside Israel.

13 June 2010

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 8
 Name: R.F.
 Date of arrest: 21 March 2009
 Age: 14
 Location: Qatanna village, occupied West Bank



On 21 March 2009, a 14-year-old boy from Qatanna village, near Ramallah, is arrested near his family home by Israeli soldiers. During interrogation he is offered money and his release if he agrees to become an informant.

At 11:00 am, on 21 March 2009, R.F. was in his bedroom surfing the internet when he heard a large group of children shouting, "army, army!" R.F. rushed outside and saw two military jeeps close to his home. He recalls: "A confrontation broke out between the children and the soldiers. The children threw stones at the jeeps. An Israeli soldier got out of one of the jeeps. He was wearing a dark green military uniform and green helmet. He pointed his weapon at us but did not open fire. I think he just wanted to scare us."



As the children continued to throw stones, R.F. and the others began to approach the jeeps. When they were close, a soldier got out and began to chase them. "We all ran away. I ran about 20 metres and tripped. I fell on the ground and the soldier was behind me. When I was on the ground, the soldier grabbed me violently by the neck, which was painful, and started shouting." R.F.'s parents and brothers arrived as he was being put into a jeep. His father tried to argue with the soldiers. More soldiers exited the jeep and one soldier hit R.F.'s brother with a rifle. "My mother was quiet but her eyes watered. The two soldiers put me inside the jeep and closed the door, and I could no longer see outside," recalls R.F.

R.F. was blindfolded and his hands were tied with plastic cords. He was taken to a police station in Giv'at Zeev settlement. After five hours, he was taken to an interrogation room

and accused of throwing stones at soldiers. "Another interrogator walked into the room and twisted my hand behind my back. He grabbed my hair hard and I kept shouting. He insulted me, saying, 'You're an animal, you're a dog.' Then he began cursing Allah and religion." The man continued to hit R.F. as another interrogator convinced him he would only go home if he confessed. R.F. then confessed to throwing stones. He was then ordered to place his fingerprints on, and sign documents written in, Hebrew.

R.F. was then taken to another room and photographed. "The interrogator who was sitting behind the desk – not the one who hit me – came to me. 'I'll give you money and send you home if you agree to work with me,' he said. 'Lock me up for as long as you want, because I won't work for you,' I quickly replied." R.F. was immediately tied, blindfolded and transferred to Ofer Prison. He was detained there until 7 April 2009, when a judge released him after imposing a fine of NIS 8,000

1 July 2009



Grffiti in Balata refugee camp, Photo credit: DCI-Palestine

E. Recruitment by Palestinian armed groups

Overview

This section of the report seeks to shed some light on the recruitment and use of children by Palestinian armed groups in the years since DCI last published a report on the topic in July 2004. DCI's 2004 report concluded that "children have been recruited by Palestinian political groups to carry out armed attacks, though there is no evidence to suggest that such recruitment is a systematic phenomenon."²¹

In examining developments since 2004, the report relies on a number of sources including statements made by spokesmen for Palestinian armed groups and testimonies collected from ex-child combatants. However, it must be noted that conducting research on this topic poses a number of challenges. Armed resistance is an extremely sensitive subject within Palestinian society and one which is rarely spoken about openly. This is partly due to concerns regarding collaborators or informants within the community, and the fact that being identified as a member of a resistance group can lead to long term imprisonment, and in some cases, targeted for assassination by Israeli forces.²² Accordingly, those who agreed to be interviewed did so on the condition of anonymity.

The report adopts the same definition of child soldiers adopted by the Paris Principles and Guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups (2007). These principles state that: "A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking, or has taken a direct part in hostilities."²³ The report does not consider children involved in stone-throwing with no links to armed groups as child soldiers – a view shared by the UN.²⁴

Palestinian resistance

Palestinian resistance movements emerged after the 1948 war, with the creation of the state of Israel. The new state was established on 78 percent of the land formerly included under the British Mandate, also known as ‘historic Palestine’, in what is today the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.²⁵ Following the war in 1967, the remaining 22 percent of historic Palestine, comprising of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, was occupied by Israeli forces, and has remained under military occupation ever since.

During the past 44 years of occupation, the UN estimates that well over 700,000 Palestinians have been imprisoned following prosecution in Israeli military courts.²⁶ According to the Israeli human rights organisation, B’Tselem, since the start of the second Intifada (uprising) in September 2000, 1,095 Israelis and 6,540 Palestinians have also been killed as a direct result of the conflict.²⁷ According to DCI documentation, during the same period, 1,351 Palestinian children have been killed as a result of the conflict, and over 7,500 children, some as young as 12 years, have been detained in Israeli prisons.

It is within this context that Palestinian resistance groups operate, and where “resistance fighters” are often glorified, and “martyrs” (those killed as a result of the conflict) are seen as heroes and role models.²⁸ This situation potentially provides fertile ground for the recruitment of children into armed conflict by the various Palestinian armed groups, and is the subject of this section of the report.

The report considers the use of children by five political factions and their military wings:

1. Fatah and the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades;
2. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades;
3. The Palestine Liberation Front (PLF);
4. Islamic Jihad and the al Quds Brigades; and
5. Hamas and the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.

Fatah and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

Fatah, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, was founded in Kuwait in the late 1950s by Yassar Arafat and others.²⁹ Fatah was created as a secular organisation seeking the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle, and the establishment of a secular democratic Palestinian state.³⁰ The group carried out its first armed action in 1965. By

1969 it was the largest Palestinian resistance group with control over the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).³¹ In 1993, at the Oslo Accords, Fatah recognised Israel’s right to exist and became the dominant force in the Palestinian Authority.³²

Fatah has had several military wings throughout its history, the most recent being the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (al-Aqsa Brigades). The al-Aqsa Brigades were established in 2000 during the second Intifada by members of Fatah who wished to distance themselves from the organisation’s non-violent stance. They believed that independence could only be achieved through joint negotiations and armed resistance.³³ The al-Aqsa Brigades drew much of their support from the refugee camps located throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.³⁴ The organisation’s stated goal has been to resist the Israeli military occupation and to establish a sovereign Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.³⁵ The organisation is not officially recognised by Fatah’s political leadership and does not possess a centralised decision-making body, but rather “takes decisions under loose, personality-driven local command structures, with a degree of autonomy and improvisation not characteristic of the other organisations.”³⁶ According to one description of the al-Aqsa Brigades, it “is any five or six guys who call themselves that.”³⁷

In May 2011, DCI interviewed a member of the al-Aqsa Brigades in Gaza to ascertain the group’s policy on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The group’s spokesperson stated that children below the age of 18 years are not recruited by the organisation as fighters. However, the spokesperson conceded that children are involved in other activities, such as promoting the organisation. He also admitted that children do sometimes get caught up in hostilities, such as during Israel’s invasion of the Gaza Strip in late 2008 (Operation Cast Lead). The full text of the interview is presented below:

Name:	M.F.
Spokesman:	al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades Nabeel Masoud Unit
Location:	Gaza Strip
Date:	9 May 2011



“Members of our group are selected based on three criteria:

1. Résumé and patriotism;
2. Nomination by a known member of the movement; and
3. Willingness to volunteer for military action.

While the minimum age of recruitment was not specified between the first and second Intifadas, the current minimum age is 18. Those under the age of

18 are not engaged in military actions but are involved in other types of activities, such as promoting the movement's ideas and philosophy among students and the general public.

All our fighters are above the age of 18 and this rule does not vary in times of Israeli incursions or attacks. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades does not allow anyone under the age of 18 to engage in clashes or face the invading troops. Sometimes, however, something goes wrong and children end up assisting the fighters. These children are not trained by the movement, but sometimes they get caught in a contact zone or invasion area. This is what happened during Operation Cast Lead. I don't hide the fact that some groups allow children into the battlefield and use them as fighters.

There are several reasons why Palestinian children feel motivated to join armed resistance groups or to get involved in the armed conflict, including:

- The psychological pressure that Israeli incursions put on them;
- The images on television of people bleeding or torn into pieces;
- The community's appreciation for 'martyrs' (those killed during the conflict); and
- The huge impact some 'martyrs' have had, especially on children.

Although there are members in my group who are under 18, they are not involved in military actions. The tasks that they are asked to perform vary and include: participating in student and youth unions; participating in scientific and cultural activities; raising awareness about the risks of cooperating with the occupation forces; and raising security awareness.

The number of children joining armed resistance groups varies from one group to the next. However, I would estimate it at three percent in al-Aqsa Brigades. In other groups it is higher. This is very serious. I am aware that recruiting children to take part in hostilities is a war crime. In my experience involvement in combat operations can have many psychological impacts on children.

They become violent, unstable, worried and scared. This could develop into criminal behaviour, as happened in 2007, when clashes erupted between Hamas and Fatah. The fighters got involved in killings and vandalism. We were fighting the occupation on the one hand, and then started fighting each other. These clashes were a result of the psychological pressure the groups are under.

Armed factions often adopt children who have been killed during an armed attack against Israeli targets as their members. Frankly I think this is a huge mistake from all groups including my group, who race and fight among themselves to adopt martyrs to tilt the balance in favour of one group over another. This severely damages the group's image, as well as the Palestinians' image and their best interests. It also gives the Israeli occupation an excuse to kill our children."

PFLP and the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades

The PFLP was established in 1967 by George Habash, a Christian physician. The organisation was intended as a movement with a Marxist/Arab nationalist ideology.³⁸ Initially, the PFLP sought to establish a secular Palestinian state in all of historic Palestine. However, in 2000 the group accepted the "new realities created since Oslo,"³⁹ and henceforth advocated for the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, withdrawal of Israeli soldiers to the 1967 borders, the dismantling of Israeli settlements, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees.⁴⁰

The PFLP started by carrying out a series of high-profile attacks in order to draw international attention to the Palestinian cause. The PFLP became known for its hijacking of commercial airliners, before switching to targets inside Israel in the late 1970s. The organisation has split on a number of occasions giving rise to additional groups:

- The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) (1968);
- The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) (1969); and
- The Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) (1977) (an offshoot of the PFLP-GC).

In the 1990s, the PFLP lost influence following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Islamic Hamas movement. The organisation initially opposed the Oslo Accords and suspended its participation in the PLO, but rejoined in the late 1990s.⁴¹

The PFLP's military wing is known as the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, named after Mustafa al-Zibri, a PFLP leader assassinated in 2001. The military wing was established during the second Intifada, when they carried out a number of high-profile attacks, such as the assassination of the Israeli Minister of Tourism and a series of suicide bombings.

Despite DCI's best endeavours, the researchers were unable to interview leaders of the PFLP or the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades. However, in 2004, a member of the PFLP Central Committee informed DCI that "the PFLP is against the recruitment of children in military actions and the leadership of the PFLP is fully aware that such recruitment amounts to a war crime."

PLF

In June 2011, DCI managed to interview a spokesman for the PLF to ascertain the group's policy on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The group's spokesperson stated that children below the age of 18 years are not recruited by the organisation. The interview was presented below:

Name: M.L.
Spokesman: Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF)
Location: Gaza Strip
Date: June 2011



"Members are selected by the Palestine Liberation Front based on the following criteria:

1. PLF membership;
2. Age; and
3. Physical-build, strength, courage and temperament.

The minimum age of recruitment in our armed group is 18-years. This rule does not vary during times of Israeli incursions or attacks because this rule is part of the PLF leadership's instructions and bylaws. In my opinion, children are motivated to join armed resistance groups or to get involved in the armed conflict for a number of reasons:

- Patriotism;
- Occupation and what it entails for Palestinians;
- Upbringing; and
- Life experiences, such as participating in martyrs' funerals and witnessing scenes of bombings, shellings and people killed.

While it is difficult to estimate the magnitude of the phenomenon of children joining armed resistance groups, I think it is rare. There are no members in the PLF under the age of 18. In relation to psychological effects of armed combat on children, it is my opinion that whoever is involved in military action believes in resistance and martyrdom, and therefore has sufficient strength to protect himself from harm. Intellectual mobilisation is very important in this matter."

Islamic Jihad and the al-Quds Brigades

Islamic Jihad was founded in Egypt in the late 1970s by a group of Palestinian students from Gaza who were members of the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴² Ramadan Abdallah Shallah, one of the founders and leader of the movement based in Damascus, explains that Islamic Jihad "came about as a revolutionary Islamic response to the Palestine question, hoisting the slogan 'Islam, Jihad and Palestine' – Islam as the point of departure, Jihad as the means, and Palestine as the object of liberation."⁴³

Islamic Jihad opposed the Oslo Accords. Its stated objective is "Palestine – from the river to the sea – an Arab, Islamic land whose jurisdiction prohibits giving up one inch of its land."⁴⁴ Its main goal is to prepare the Palestinian people for "martyrdom, as well as preparing them politically and militarily and in all educational, cultural and organisational methods [...] to qualify them to carry on their martyrdom duties toward Palestine."⁴⁵

Upon their return to Gaza, Islamic Jihad members started to mobilise Palestinians through mosques, schools and universities, and by the mid-1980s they commenced military action. Unlike other Palestinian groups, Islamic Jihad does not implement social programmes. This is, according to Abdallah Shallah, because the movement's "legitimate and national convictions stressed that the call to Jihad and resisting the occupation should precede all other activities."⁴⁶

The military wing of Islamic Jihad, the al-Quds Brigades, was established in 1992. During the second Intifada, the group organised joint attacks with Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.⁴⁷ In recent years, the al-Quds Brigades have joined other groups in launching rockets from Gaza into Israel,⁴⁸ and during Operation Cast Lead (December 2008 - January 2009), the al-Quds Brigades fought against the Israeli forces in Gaza alongside other Palestinian military wings.⁴⁹

In May 2011, DCI interviewed a spokesman for the al-Quds Brigades to ascertain the group's policy on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The group's spokesperson stated that children below the age of 16 years are not recruited by the organisation. The interview is presented below:

Name: M.I.
Spokesman: al-Quds Brigades
Location: Gaza Strip
Date: 10 May 2011



“Members are selected by Islamic Jihad based on the following criteria:

1. Fulfilment of religious obligations in an Islamic Jihad mosque;
2. Personal desire to join the movement;
3. Values and experience; and
4. Mental and physical development.

The minimum age of recruitment in our armed group is 16 years and above. This rule does not vary in times of Israeli incursions or attacks.

Members are chosen based on their learning skills, and their physical and intellectual abilities. A 16-year-old with the physical and intellectual abilities of a 20-year-old can join the movement and resist aggression, but we cannot allow just anyone to participate in armed action, as this might destabilise the whole group. Islamic Jihad fighters are often in the field with their weapons and equipment, and that makes it difficult for them to move around. We use 16-year olds and above because they are more active and energetic than stationed fighters.

In my opinion there are several motives for children to join armed resistance groups or to get involved in armed conflict. These include:

- We live under occupation and oppression;
- Their willingness to become martyrs;
- The desire to use weapons to defend their homeland; and
- Gaining status in the community.

Resistance groups often adopt children who have been killed during an armed attack against Israeli targets as their members based on their parents' affiliation. Sometimes, however, there are problems when family members belong to different groups. The group pays for the funeral and any other expenses related to the child's death. In addition, it gives a monthly allowance to the child's family. I feel that adopting children after they are killed severely damages the group's image as well as the Palestinians' image.

Those members of our group who are under 18 are asked to perform tasks depending on their skills. They can do security tasks, if their IQ is high, or be snipers, gunners and scouts. I think the scale of the phenomenon of children joining armed resistance groups varies from one group to another. I estimate it at five percent in Islamic Jihad, but higher in other groups. In my experience involvement in combat operations can have psychological effects on children. They become violent and unstable. They become nervous and scared. However, with practice, they can become brave and strong.”

Hamas and the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, was founded in 1987 shortly after the outbreak of the first Intifada. It was established by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a religious and political leader.⁵⁰ Initially, Sheikh Yassin, completely paralysed due to a childhood accident, founded the Islamic Centre along with other members of the Brotherhood. The Centre started as an organisation managing a mosque, a medical clinic, a sports club, and a women's centre. The Islamic Centre gradually grew to become an important charity controlling numerous mosques in Gaza and providing support for families in need.⁵¹ With the outbreak of the first Intifada, the leaders of the Islamic Centre established a new group – Hamas.

Hamas calls for the liberation of historic Palestine and says that the only way to achieve this goal is through armed struggle. According to the organisation's charter, no one has the right to give up any part of Palestine. Hamas operates on a political, military and social level. Since its founding, the organisation has been able to build support through its social programmes. These include charitable funds to establish schools, clinics and hospitals, and free services to families suffering from economic hardship.⁵²

The combination of these welfare programmes and widespread frustration with Fatah in the wake of the second Intifada led to Hamas' victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections of 2006. The ensuing clashes between Hamas and Fatah resulted in Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip, where it is currently in power.

Hamas' military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, was established in 1992 during the first Intifada. The armed group responds to Hamas' political leadership, and seeks to “evoke the spirit of Jihad amongst Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims; defend Palestinians and their land against the Zionist occupation and its aggression; liberate Palestinians and the land usurped by the Zionist occupation forces and settlers.”⁵³

The al-Qassam Brigades carried out their first suicide bombing in 1994, in retaliation for the killing of 29 Palestinians by an Israeli settler in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. They continued to carry out attacks in order to disrupt negotiations between Israel and the newly established Palestinian Authority, and increased their strikes against Israelis during the second Intifada. Since Hamas' takeover in Gaza and the subsequent blockade of the Gaza Strip, the al-Qassam Brigades have resorted to launching home-made rockets against Israel.

DCI attempted to contact the al-Qassam Brigades in order to ascertain the group's policy on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, but without success. However, there is evidence to indicate that the group officially favours 18 years as the minimum age for recruitment.⁵⁴

Recruitment and involvement of children with armed groups

Since the publication of the 2004 report, DCI has documented **26 cases** in which there is evidence that children were associated with armed groups. It is significant to note that in **23 cases (88 percent)** the children were from the Gaza Strip.⁵⁵ The 26 cases documented in the report should not be viewed as an exhaustive list of the involvement of children with armed groups. The age categories of the 26 children are presented in the following table:

Table 3 – Cases of child recruitment by Palestinian armed groups (2005-2011) – By age

Age	Number	Percentage
0-13 years	0	0%
14 years	1	4%
15 years	3	12%
16 years	8	31%
17 years	14	53%
Total	26	100%

According to DCI's documented evidence, the al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, holds the highest responsibility for recruiting children (**34 percent**). It must be noted though that in nearly half of all cases (**46 percent**), the group responsible for recruiting the child was unknown. Information concerning the full breakdown of cases by armed group is contained in the following table.

Table 4 – Cases of child recruitment by Palestinian armed groups (2005-2011) – By group

Group	Official age for recruitment	DCI cases of under 18 recruitment	Percentage
Unknown	-	12	46%
al-Qassam Brigades	18	9	34%
al-Quds Brigades	16	2	8%
al-Aqsa Brigades ⁵⁶	18	1	4%
PLF	18	1	4%
Non-aligned	-	1	4%
Total		26	100%

In all **26 cases (100 percent)** evidence indicates that the children were not forcefully conscripted, but volunteered to join the groups. When asked why they volunteered, the children gave reasons ranging from patriotism to the 'oppression' of the occupation and the killing and imprisonment of family members. There is also some concern that children may become attracted to volunteering for groups due to the glorification of armed struggle.⁵⁷ In 18 of the 26 cases (**69 percent**) the children were killed as a direct consequence of their involvement with armed groups.

Nature of involvement

Based on the evidence collected by DCI for the report, the nature of children's involvement in the armed conflict since July 2004 falls under three broad categories. First, there are those children whose involvement with armed groups does not involve taking a direct part in fighting, such as cooking, relaying messages and acting as scouts (see case study 9). Secondly, children who take a direct part in fighting, such as bearing arms and involvement in the launching of rockets (see case studies 10, 11, 19 and 20). Finally, children who take part in some form of hostilities, but who appear to act independently of any armed group (see case study 12). It is also relevant to note that DCI was unable to find any evidence that indicates a child was directly involved in a suicide bombing during the reporting period.⁵⁸

Case studies – Cooks, messengers and scouts

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 9
 Name: A.F.
 Date of incident: 12 January 2009
 Age: 15
 Location: Gaza City



A witness who refused to give a sworn statement says the child had been assisting members of Islamic Jihad throughout Israel's incursion into the Gaza Strip (Operation Cast Lead), helping injured combatants and preparing food for the group. He was with members of Islamic Jihad when he was killed on 12 January 2009.



Case studies – Direct participation in hostilities

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 10
 Name: B.E.
 Date of incident: 2007
 Age: 14
 Location: Beit Hanoun, Gaza Strip



On 10 December 2009, a 16-year-old-boy is arrested by the Israeli army near Erez crossing point and is interrogated about his involvement in launching a rocket two years earlier.

Around noon on 10 December 2009, 16-year-old B.E. and his friend went to Sekka Street near Erez crossing point to collect iron and copper scrap. As the boys began working, two gunshots were fired. "One of them almost hit me. I was so scared that I fell on the ground. There was a big stone on the ground. I fell onto the stone and sustained some minor bruises," says B.E.



The two boys remained on the ground, afraid that they would be shot at again if they moved. After about 10 minutes, over 20 soldiers approached. Two of the soldiers spoke Arabic and ordered the children to stand up and take off their clothes. The soldiers searched the clothes and returned them to the boys. "After that, a soldier grabbed my neck and walked me for about 15 minutes until we reached Erez crossing point. He took me to a room inside Erez crossing point and ordered me to take off my clothes again. I took them off and they were searched again and returned." B.E. was kept inside this room until 4:00 am the next day, when he was brought a few biscuits and water. He was questioned about his name, family and occupation, and was not allowed to sleep.

After the interrogation, B.E. was transferred to Askelan Prison in Israel. He was immediately taken to an interrogation room, where the interrogator began questioning him about an incident two years ago, involving activity in the border between Gaza and Israel. B.E. denied any involvement in the incident and after half an hour of interrogation, he was placed into solitary confinement for 10 days.

B.E. was then told he was being transferred to a juvenile prison. There, he met a man named Abu al-Abed who asked him about his party affiliation and any activities he had carried out in Gaza. "I told him I had been injured by shrapnel from an Israeli missile about two years ago and he asked me why," says B.E., who responded: "Two Hamas members from the Qassam Brigades, asked my friend M.K. and I to go near the fence at the Erez crossing point to link two wires that were already attached to a rocket. I went there and attached the two wires as they asked. The rocket blasted off and fell on the fence but did not explode or enter into Israel. Several minutes later, an Israeli missile was fired at us and exploded near my friend and me. My friend was killed and I was injured. Then I fled the area," B.E. told Abu al-Abed.

One hour later, B.E. was taken back to interrogation. He was presented with everything he told Abu al-Abed. B.E. signed a paper, confessing to the events from two years ago. He was then taken back to solitary confinement for a week before being transferred to Remonim Prison.

28 December 2009

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 11
 Name: A.A.
 Date of Incident: 5 January 2009
 Age: 17
 Location: Jabalia, North Gaza

On 5 January 2009, a 17-year-old boy leaves his house with a rifle and bullets to join combatants. Around 10 days later his body is found by paramedics.

Seventeen-year-old A.A. lived with his family in Jabalia, North Gaza. Since the beginning of the ground invasion stage of 'Operation Cast Lead', his 20-year-old brother had been fighting Israeli forces in the area of Izbet Abed Rabbo. At around 3:00 pm on Monday, 5 January 2009, A.A. received a call on his father's mobile phone from his brother. "He asked A.A. to bring him bullets and a Kalashnikov rifle," says his father.



"A.A. took the rifle and left the house. I knew he would not come back because he had always talked about clashes and shooting Israeli soldiers. He had participated in previous clashes, and always wanted to be a martyr," explains A.A.'s father.

"A.A. left the house at around 3:10 pm and never came back," his father continues. "I didn't hear anything about him or his brother. They had their mobile phones off. I stayed in the house waiting for news about them, to know that they were both fine. Izbet Abed Rabbo had been a battle field; the sound of bullets and explosions hadn't stopped. I heard tanks, as well as ambulances with their loud sirens. Hours and days went by without receiving any news about my sons."

At around midnight on 17 January, the boy's father heard on the news that the Israeli army would withdraw from Gaza. "I became very excited because I thought I would see my sons or at least hear something about them," he says. On Sunday, 18 January, he headed to Izbet Abed Rabbo to look for his sons. "Ambulances were gathering all the injured who had been trapped in Izbet Abed Rabbo. I couldn't find my sons. I went to Kamal Odwan hospital in Beit Lahiya to see whether they were there. I checked the injured but couldn't find them. Then I went down to the morgue and saw my sons' bodies full of wounds, and their smell was unbearable. Medics

told me they had been killed several days ago. A paramedic told me he had found A.A. dead on the ground in Izbet Abed Rabbo with multiple injuries in the head and all over his body. He said A.A. had been dead for at least 10 days because his body was decomposed."

22 June 2009

Case studies – Children acting independently

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 12
 Name: A.Y. and A.Z.
 Date of Incident: 21 May 2010
 Ages: 17
 Location: Khan Younis, Gaza Strip

On 21 May 2010, two 17-year-old boys are killed when they approach the Israeli border with Gaza carrying an assault rifle.

On 21 May 2010, A.Y. and A.Z. stole an assault rifle and headed to the border fence that separates Gaza and Israel. Both A.Y. and A.Z. had family problems and often talked to their cousin, T., about carrying out a "martyrdom operation."



When T. heard they had taken the gun he feared they were going to carry out their plan to go to the border with a gun. He recalls: "They always talked about this in front of me since I was their friend. The three of us were always together but I thought they weren't serious because they didn't have a gun. But now that they had a gun, it was possible that they would do it." T. took his bicycle and rushed to the border area, arriving there at around 1:30 pm. Just then, he received a phone call from A.Z: "Ask the youngsters to forgive me," A.Z. said. T. tried to call him back, but he couldn't get through. Then he heard heavy shooting coming from the area near the border fence.

When F., another cousin, heard the shooting, he went outside his house, near the buffer zone, to see what was happening. He was told that A.Z. and A.Y. had tried to cross the border into Israel and had been shot. F. rushed to his roof and saw soldiers shooting at

the hill between the towers: "I saw an Israeli jeep parked near an observation tower and shooting at the hill between the two observation towers on the border. I also saw the soldiers in another observation tower shooting at the hill as well." When he looked at the hill, he saw two boys crawling along the ground, but he couldn't recognise which one was A.Z. and which one was A.Y. He went down to the street to inform the people gathered there that A.Y. and A.Z. were still alive.

At that moment, T. received a message saying he had a missed call from A.Z. Immediately, T. called him back. Gasping and crying, A.Z. said: "Please cousin, come and get me." T. advised him to try to crawl back, or to tell A.Y. to carry him, but A.Z. replied: "He's injured in the head and chest, I'm injured in the chest and legs." Then the call was disconnected. An Israeli Apache helicopter appeared overhead and opened fire. Although F. was scared about going to his roof again for fear of being targeted, he ventured up and saw one of the boys on the ground "lifting his hand up in the air as if he was surrendering." At that moment, an Israeli tank opened fire at the child from close range. "The firing was coming from the tank's 500 mm machine gun and was aiming at the child who had his hand raised," F. says.

A.Z. and A.Y.'s bodies were later handed over to the Red Cross and taken to Naser Hospital. T., who saw their bodies, says "A.Y.'s face was disfigured and his lower jaw was blown off. His legs were severely torn apart as if they had been ripped apart by a knife, not live ammunition. A.Z.'s abdomen, chest, and legs were injured. His body was torn apart as if it was cut up with a knife, especially his legs." A.Z. and A.Y. were buried the next morning.

28 June 2010

Response of the Palestinian Authority

In August 2011, DCI discussed the issue of child recruitment with the Palestinian Attorney-General and a spokesperson for the Civil Police in the West Bank.⁵⁹ Both officials informed DCI that law enforcement authorities in the West Bank were not aware of any reports of children being recruited by armed groups in recent years and that the Palestinian Authority is committed to strengthening law enforcement. A statement obtained by DCI from the Attorney-General on the subject of the recruitment of children is presented below.

Name:	Ahmad al Maghani
Position:	Attorney-General, Palestinian Authority
Location:	Ramallah, West Bank
Date:	25 August 2011

"The Palestinian Authority and Palestinian Law consider any person below 18 years of age as a child, and the involvement of children in hostilities is prohibited. In the six years that I have been working as the Attorney-General in the West Bank, I have never received any complaints or reports about children being recruited by factions. When I received the request by DCI-Palestine to comment on the issue for the report, I sent a memorandum to all the prosecution offices in the West Bank asking if any office has handled any case of this type. They all responded in the negative. I believe in the West Bank there is no systematic recruitment of children by Palestinian armed factions."

Recruitment of children – Palestinian Honour Code

In 2010, following a workshop on child recruitment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, DCI drafted a written code of conduct relating to the involvement of children in armed conflict. The code states, *inter alia*, that "the involvement of children, whether individually or within groups, in armed conflict, is a grave violation of their fundamental rights [...] We stress the fact that effective child protection from the impact of armed conflict is achieved through our unconditional commitment which acknowledge that children have no part to play in armed conflict." On 4 May 2010, the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces signed the code.⁶⁰ The full text of the code is contained in **Annex 3**.

F. Concluding remarks

The body of evidence presented in this report identifies three circumstances where Palestinian children are vulnerable to recruitment by both sides to the conflict. In all cases, the recruitment involves a violation of international law. The three circumstances identified in the report are:

- Human shields;
- Informants; and
- Recruitment by armed groups.

The report identifies **17 cases** in which Palestinian children have been used as human shields by the Israeli army. It is significant to note that in 16 out of 17 cases, the event occurred after the High Court of Justice ruled the practice to be illegal under Israeli domestic law. This would suggest that the Israeli army is either ignoring the court's judgment, or not properly ensuring compliance with its ruling. It is also significant to note that in only one case, was anybody held accountable for using a child as human shield.

The report also identifies **16 cases** in which attempts were made by Israeli authorities to recruit children as informants, most recently in November 2011. Not only does this violate international law, but is in contravention of the Israeli High Court of Justice's 2005 ruling. These attempts at recruitment usually occur during the interrogation of children following their arrest. This process is facilitated by the sheer number of Palestinians who have been arrested and interrogated by the Israeli authorities, which according to the UN amounts to more than 700,000 men, women and children since 1967. The report identifies a number of methods used in the attempt to recruit children, including the offer of money and early release. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the reluctance to talk, it is difficult to ascertain the scale of the problem, although there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the practice is widespread.

Finally, the report identifies **26 cases** involving the recruitment and use of children by Palestinian armed groups. It is significant to note that in 23 out of 26 cases (**88 percent**), the children were from the Gaza Strip. It is also significant that in all 26 cases (**100 percent**) the evidence indicates that the children were not forcefully conscripted, but volunteered to join the groups. When asked why they volunteered, the children gave reasons ranging from patriotism to the "oppression" of the occupation and the killing and imprisonment of family members. The nature

of involvement ranged from ancillary roles, such as cooking or acting as scouts, to direct involvement in hostilities. All but one of the armed groups considered in the report stated that their official age of recruitment is 18. In the case of Islamic Jihad, the stated age for recruitment is 16. The report concludes that the recruitment and use of children by Palestinian armed groups increases during large scale incursions by the Israeli army, but such involvement does not appear to be either widespread or systematic. Evidence in support of this conclusion is twofold:

- In the eight years since DCI's last report on the topic, the organisation has only documented 26 cases (**4.3 cases per annum**); and
- Out of the 352 child fatalities documented by DCI during the Israeli invasion of Gaza in December 2008 (Operation Cast Lead), the organisation was only able to find clear evidence of indirect or direct participation in hostilities in 15 cases (**4.26 percent**).

However, as already stated elsewhere in the report, there are limitations on obtaining comprehensive data on the topic.

In the final section, DCI makes a number of specific recommendations arising out of the findings of the report.

The following recommendations are intended to assist the relevant stakeholders to adopt a series of measures aimed at upholding the legal prohibition against the use of children in armed conflict.

Human shields

1. Israeli authorities should take immediate steps to ensure that all Israeli forces operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are aware of the prohibition against using civilians as human shields.
2. Israeli authorities must ensure that all cases involving the use of civilians as human shields are thoroughly and impartially investigated and those found responsible are brought promptly to justice, and the penalties imposed are commensurate with the gravity of the offence.

Informants

3. Israeli authorities should take immediate steps to ensure that the prohibition against the use of coercion (physical or moral) of civilians in order to obtain intelligence is enforced. It must be noted that this prohibition extends to the attempted recruitment of children as informants during interrogation or otherwise.
4. In order to facilitate this prohibition, Israeli authorities should take immediate steps to ensure that all interrogations of children are audio-visually recorded and conducted in the presence of a lawyer and parent of the child.
5. Israeli authorities must ensure that all cases involving the attempted recruitment of children as informants are thoroughly and impartially investigated and those found responsible are brought promptly to justice, and the penalties imposed are commensurate with the gravity of the offence.

Involvement in armed groups

6. The Palestinian Authority and armed groups should take immediate steps to ensure that the prohibition against the recruitment of persons under the age of 18 for use in armed conflict is strictly enforced.
7. The Palestinian Authority and armed groups must ensure that the involvement of children in armed conflict be given the widest possible definition in accordance with the Paris Principles, which state: “A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking, or has taken a direct part in hostilities.”
8. Consideration should be given to amending the Palestinian code of conduct relating to the involvement of children in armed conflict (Honour Code: No to Child Recruitment (2010) (see Annex 3)) to ensure that the code reflects the broad definition of involvement of children in armed conflict reflected in the Paris Principles. The amended code should be widely disseminated to all armed groups and communities for endorsement.
9. The Palestinian Authority and other de facto authorities must ensure that all cases involving the recruitment or use of children in armed conflict, as defined in the Paris Principles, are thoroughly and impartially investigated and those found responsible are brought promptly to justice, and the penalties imposed are commensurate with the gravity of the offence.

Annex I – Additional case studies

Human shields

Voices From The Occupation

Case study:	13
Names:	'Ala A. (15), Khalil A. (15) Ali A. (16), Nafiz A. (17)
Date of incident:	5 January 2009
Location:	Beit Lahiya, Gaza Strip



On 5 January 2009 four children were held for four days by the Israeli army, during which time they were used as human shields.

Khalil lives with his extended family in his grandfather's house in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip. His cousins Nafiz, Ali and 'Ala live nearby, in the same neighbourhood.

On 3 January 2009, during Operation Cast Lead, Beit Lahiya was invaded by Israeli troops. Ali and his family decided to shelter in a relative's house nearby, as this house was less exposed to the bombing. However, as the ground invasion intensified on 5 January 2009, Ali and his family came under fire. "Bullets entered my uncle's house. We all lay down on the ground and began crawling to escape." Ali's mother and aunt waved a white banner out the window and shouted that there were children inside, but Ali says that "when they waved the white banner, the soldiers fired heavily at the banner." Then, the soldiers stormed the house, using a grenade to blow down the front door, and the occupants were marched outside.



'Ala. Credit: DCI-Palestine

Ali remembers: "I was very scared because the soldiers ordered us to stand in a line against the wall. I thought they were going to execute us." The women and younger children were sent to another house but the rest were marched at gunpoint to Khalil's house, which had been invaded and occupied by soldiers at 2:00 am that morning.

Ali remembers seeing Khalil, his grandfather and uncle when they entered the house: "They were tied and blindfolded, and sitting inside the sitting-room." Then, Ali was blindfolded. "They tore up clothes from inside the house to blindfold us." Several hours later, at 5:00 pm that day, they were taken out of the house and forced to stand in a line

in the middle of the street. "The soldiers were standing behind us," Ali explains. "One of the soldiers told us to cover our ears as a bulldozer uprooted the trees behind Khalil's grandfather's house, and a second bulldozer approached. The bulldozer moved over a mine, causing a huge explosion." As they were taken back inside, Ali realised why they had been brought out to the street. "I think they took us out and made us stand in the middle of the street while they stood behind us so that no one would shoot at them. Even if someone had shot at them, the bullets would have hit us instead."



Ali. Credit: DCI-Palestine

The next day the group were moved to another house. Khalil recalls: "They forced us to walk through farmland as the soldiers surrounded us. The house is only about 50 metres away from my grandfather's house, but we had to walk for a long distance to reach it. I think that was because the soldiers were securing the place and using us as human shields; we had to go round and round the house several times." After this, they were forced to sit in a trench for three days, with their hands tied behind their backs, as the bombardment continued around them.

On Friday 9 January, the women and children were freed. Ali, Khalil, and 'Ala set off under tank fire for the school where their family were sheltering, finally arriving hours later. Khalil remembers that when he was reunited with his family he saw "tears in their eyes, I asked them why they were sad, and they told me that my father had been killed in the war." Ali remembers that when he saw his family, "I started to cry because I was very happy, especially after seeing my mother. She looked exhausted because she had not eaten since we had been detained by the army." Nafiz arrived seven days later, having been detained in a prison inside Israel.

On 18 January 2009 the war ended. "I came back to my grandfather's house on the morning of 18 January 2009," remembers Khalil. "I discovered that its windows were smashed and the Israeli army had ransacked its contents. My father's house, near my grandfather's house, was completely destroyed." On Ali's return home he found, most of the windows and doors broken. "There had been many explosions inside, we found shells inside," says Ali. "We now live in the gas station where my father works."

30 March 2009

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 14
 Name: Amin S.
 Date of Incident: 5-15 January 2009
 Age: 17
 Location: Jabalia refugee camp, Gaza Strip



On 5 January 2009, a 17-year-old boy is detained by Israeli soldiers along with his father, relatives and neighbours and is held for 10 days, during which time he is used as human shield, detained and mistreated.

Amin lives with his family in the Ezbet Abed-Rabbo neighbourhood of Jabalia refugee camp, North Gaza. On 5 January 2009, during the ground invasion stage of 'Operation Cast Lead', Amin was in the kitchen with his parents and siblings at noon time, when his cousin came knocking with his hands tied with white plastic cords and told the family to come out. There were around 40 soldiers in the yard. Amin and his father were also hand tied with plastic cords, and about 30 soldiers entered the house to search it.



Shortly after, gunshots were heard, and soldiers took Amin's father to a nearby house from which they thought the shots had been fired, but they did not find the shooter. Then the entire family was taken to the same house, where they found the family who lived in it tied in a room. After a while, the women and children were told to carry white flags and go to Salah Ad-Din Street. Amin's father asked the soldiers to let Amin go with them but they refused.

Amin, his father, and two of their neighbours were ordered to walk in front of about 60 soldiers. "As we walked in front of them, the soldiers went down to the ground and the officer talked to my father and ordered us to get down on our stomachs," reports Amin. "We would crawl for three metres. Then the officer would make a sound and point at us to stop crawling as we reached a tree. We would stay under that tree for about half an hour, during which time the soldiers would point their weapons in all directions. One of them was holding binoculars and would look through them. Then, the officer would make a sound, and we would look at him. He would point at us to proceed for another few metres. We would crawl for three metres and stop for another half hour. We crawled like this for about 15 metres, until around 8:00 pm. While we

were crawling, the ties around our hands grew tighter. My father asked the officer to untie us but he said we had to be patient and wait until the soldier responsible for our ties comes. Blood was swelling my hands. Both my elbows were wounded. I felt a lot of pain but was able to bear it so far."

At around 1:30 am, on 6 January 2009, they were forced to walk in front of soldiers to a nearby house, where they were allowed to sleep in a room with only two mattresses for four people. At about 3:30 am, they had to walk to yet another house with 50 soldiers walking behind them. The house was crowded with more soldiers. With their hands still stied they were allowed to put some mattresses on the floor to sleep. On 7 January at noon, soldiers took Amin's father away for two hours. He was forced to open the doors of neighbouring houses and ask residents to leave. Every day the soldiers would take Amin's father away with them and use him for two hours.

The detainees were kept in that house for another six days. "On Tuesday, 13 January 2009, at around noon, the officer came and told us they would take us to Erez crossing point. I felt extremely scared. I thought that they would arrest me and beat me there, while interrogating me, as I heard people saying during previous invasions," says Amin. All of the men, still tied, were blindfolded and made to walk for about 500 metres, where they were ordered to enter a tank. "The tank travelled slowly for about 200 metres and then started accelerating," recalls Amin. "Dust and exhaust fumes entered the tank and I choked; I had difficulty in breathing. The tank moved for half an hour, during which time a soldier came and started hitting the back of my right shoulder with the barrel of his assault rifle, while my head was between my legs and my hands tied. 'Brother of a whore, you're Hamas. Why do you let Hamas fighters come to you and set ambushes?' the soldier said in Arabic. Then, he hit me on the chest with his metal helmet. He stood up and kicked me with his boots on my left leg and I started shouting. He hit the five of us one by one... 'If an officer asks you whether I hit you or not, say no,' the soldier who hit us said to us."

When the tank stopped they were transferred to military jeeps and then to a minibus, where Amin remembers seeing "four soldiers in orange uniforms, carrying shackles. They untied the plastic cords and replaced them with shackles around our hands and feet. There was a 20-centimetre-chain between the shackles around my feet." The soldiers beat the detainees many times with sticks and Amin started crying. They drove for about one hour to desert-like land, where they were made to walk to tents for interrogation.

Amin was interrogated in a tent for two hours, his hands and feet still shackled. He was slapped repeatedly and punched in the face and abdomen while being asked about his father and his neighbours' political affiliation. He was detained and questioned several times until 15 January, when he and others were released. Amin's father stayed behind. They walked to Jabalia camp, where a relative told Amin that his mother and siblings were at his uncle's house in Jabalia. Amin recalls: "I entered my uncle's house and started crying because I could not believe that I was finally with my family. All I could think of was my father and kept wondering why the soldiers did not allow him to come back home with me. I stayed at my uncle's house until the end of Operation Cast Lead on 17 January 2009." Amin's father was detained for seven months and released on 6 July 2009.

2 August 2009

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 15
 Name: Jihan D.
 Date of incident: 28 February 2007
 Age: 11
 Location: Nablus, Occupied West Bank



On 28 February 2007, an 11-year-old girl is made to search an apartment for combatants by Israeli soldiers. After her ordeal, the soldiers told her not to tell anyone what had happened.



Jihan lives in the old city of Nablus with her grandmother, aunt, parents and two siblings. On Wednesday, 28 February 2007, at about 5:00 am, Jihan was woken up by the voices of Israeli soldiers announcing a curfew. "I heard the soldiers saying through loudspeakers 'No walking in the streets; you will endanger your life,' and I heard sounds of sporadic explosions," she says. Through the window, she saw the soldiers "breaking down some doors in the neighbourhood using iron tools and hammers." At 8:00 am, soldiers stormed her house, but left 40 minutes later after interrogating her father. When they left, Jihan heard them going into the neighbour's houses.

A few hours later, the soldiers returned. "At around 3:00 pm, the soldiers, 50 of them, came back and searched the house thoroughly." They interrogated Jihan's

father and held the family for hours. At around 8:00 pm a soldier came into the room where Jihan was with her family and screamed her name. "He grabbed my shoulder and took me to the yard. He started interrogating me in Hebrew and another soldier translated: 'Where are the fighters? Where are the tunnels?' He threatened me to put me in prison. He brought handcuffs and threatened to handcuff me. He actually tried handcuffing me but I pulled my hands back. He asked me so many questions that I had to give up. I told him about a house, south of ours, where some young men come once in a while."

At 8:30 pm Jihan was asked to go with the soldiers to show them where the house was. "I walked in front of the soldiers who were armed and ready to shoot. The area was quiet and no one was there." After Jihan showed them where the house was she was brought back home, to find it still full of soldiers. "Some of them were lying on the bed, some of them sitting on the floor, and one soldier was standing behind me. None of the soldiers said a word, except one soldier asked me my name [...] Ten minutes later, the two soldiers who brought me back to the house walked into the room with another soldier. One of the soldiers spoke Arabic and asked me to accompany him again to the abandoned house. I walked in front of the three soldiers and we all headed towards the house," Jihan explains. "When we reached the house, I saw a number of soldiers surrounding the house, especially the entrance. While going up to the third floor, I saw several soldiers on the stairway."

Jihan realised that the soldiers had not yet entered the apartment, they were waiting for her. "The stairway to the third floor was dark; so the soldiers switched on the lights on their weapons. I walked into the house; the entrance led directly to the kitchen. I remembered that the kitchen had a door that led to the roof. The soldiers then headed to the roof and searched it. I asked them to take me back to my house but one of the soldiers said 'Tell us first where the young men are,' but I said I did not know any place else. So they held me there for 10 minutes. Afterwards, they brought me back home and one of the soldiers said 'Do not tell anyone that you came with us, do not tell anyone that we took you.' Another soldier gave me a sweet and a biscuit."

Jihan was so exhausted when she got home that she fell asleep. "The next day," she recalls, "the soldiers pulled out from the area and of course out of our house."

24 March 2007

Informants

Voices From The Occupation

Case study:	16
Name:	I.H.
Date of arrest:	14 May 2009
Age:	16
Location:	Al Ein refugee camp, Nablus, occupied West Bank



On 14 May 2009, a 16-year-old boy from Al Ein refugee camp, near Nablus, is arrested by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint. He is detained and interrogated for nine days, during which time he is told that he will be released if he agrees to work as an informant.

I.H. lives in Al Ein refugee camp, near Nablus. On the morning of 14 May 2009, he was arrested at a checkpoint when he refused to show his I.D. card to Israeli soldiers. He was strip searched and then handed a telephone to speak with an Israeli military captain. The captain asked him for the names of his friends, as well as where he lived in relation to a known PFLP leader. I.H. was held at the checkpoint for five hours. 'I asked for some water and to be allowed to use the bathroom but they refused,' he recalls. 'The soldiers didn't tell me the reason why they were arresting me the entire time I spent at the checkpoint. They even confiscated my mobile phone and did not allow me to call my family or anyone.'



I.H. was transferred to Huwwara interrogation and detention centre and interrogated. I.H. recalls that the interrogator "started calling out the names of cousins that had been killed. He also talked about my uncle; who was killed as well. 'Yes those are my relatives,' I said. He counted all my relatives who had been killed, and I would say 'yes my relatives,' and he would say 'may they rest in peace.' Then, he said 'what kind of family is this? Members are either dead or prisoners. Even your father is a prisoner.' 'Yes, and he's sentenced for 22 months,' I said. 'How about your brother?' he asked. 'He's sentenced for four and a half years,' I said. 'When will he be released?' he asked. 'September, maybe,' I said. 'Then, both of you will be released together,' he said..."

I.H. reports that on the eighth day of detention, he was interrogated by a man named Shadi, who 'accused me of throwing home-made grenades at military jeeps, which I

denied. Then he threatened to bring my mother in and kill her in front of me.' After three hours of interrogation, Shadi gave I.H. a piece of paper and ordered him to write a confession.

Once he completed his statement, '[Shadi] gave me some water to drink, and I drank it after he untied me. He asked me whether I wanted to work with them as an informant and told me that I would be released if I said yes. But I refused. 'Working with us means a house, a car and a wife,' he said. 'I don't want that and I won't work with you,' I said to him."

I.H. was sentenced to one-and-a-half years in prison after being charged with membership of a banned organisation (PFLP), throwing and attempting to throw homemade grenades and obstructing a road. He was transferred to prison inside Israel, in contravention of article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits such transfers out of occupied territory.

18 August 2009

Voices From The Occupation

Case study:	17
Name:	I.Z.
Date of arrest:	4 May 2009
Age:	16
Location:	Husan village, occupied West Bank



On 4 May 2009, a 16-year-old boy from Husan village, near Bethlehem in the West Bank, is arrested from his home by Israeli soldiers at 3:00 am. After being interrogated in the settlement of Gush Etzion he is told that he will only be released if he agrees to work as an informant.

I.Z. is from Husan village, near Bethlehem. On 4 May 2009, he was woken by the sound of trucks and cars outside the family home. Looking from the balcony, he saw his father at the front door speaking with Israeli soldiers. "My father then came to me and said that the soldiers wanted to arrest me. I became extremely frightened. My father asked me not to be afraid, but I



cried. I was terrified, because this was my first time being arrested and because there were so many soldiers surrounding the house," recalls I.Z.

I.Z. was taken to the Gush Etzion settlement block for questioning and was put into a cell for the night. At the time of his arrest, I.Z.'s had a leg injury and he needed crutches to walk. He recalls: 'Before entering the detention room, the soldier took my crutches from me and said that it was forbidden to take them inside.'

The next morning I.Z. was taken for interrogation. "I was tied and blindfolded. They did not give me the crutches; I had to walk slowly without putting pressure on my injured foot." The interrogators began questioning I.Z. about his injury. "'I fell off a balcony,' I replied. 'We have pictures showing you throwing stones at the soldiers who shot and injured you,' he said. 'This is not true,' I said. Then another person, tall and huge, slapped me three times across the face and insulted me. 'Son of a whore. I'll open up your ass if you don't confess.' 'In the meantime, a third person stood behind me and pushed my left foot. I fell onto the floor. Then he hit my injured foot several times. I felt extreme pain, so I decided to confess," says I.Z.

"During interrogation, my statement was taped and also typed. When the interrogation was completed, one of the interrogators printed out papers written in Hebrew and ordered me to sign them." I.Z. signed the papers without being able to read or understand what they said.

A tall, thin man with glasses, named Daoud, approached I.Z.: "'If you want to go home, you have to work with us,' he said. 'And do what?' I asked. 'We need you to tell us about people who throw stones,' he replied. 'Lock me in forever then, because I won't work with you.' I said."

6 May 2009

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 18
 Name: M.K.
 Date of arrest: 26 March 2009
 Age: 16
 Location: Haris village, occupied West Bank

On 26 March 2009, a 16-year-old boy from Haris village, near Nablus, is detained by Israeli soldiers during a mass arrest and detention operation. During his interrogation, a soldier attempts to recruit him as an informant.

On the evening of 26 March 2009, the Israeli army imposed a curfew on the village of Haris, near Nablus. Sixteen-year-old M.K. recalls hearing soldiers move from house to house throughout the evening, finally arriving at his family home around midnight. "The soldiers banged on the door and my father answered. Around 20 soldiers entered our two-storey house," recalls M.K.



The soldiers ordered all of the men in the house to gather together downstairs and immediately arrested M.K.'s brothers. "I learned later that they took them to the village school that was taken over by the soldiers. The soldiers arrested people, took them to the school and interrogated them." Later on, M.K. was also arrested. "He [the soldier] tied my hands tightly behind my back with plastic cords and blindfolded me in front of my mother, father and my uncle's wife." He was photographed and taken to the village school.

"When we reached the school, the soldiers took me to one of the rooms. An intelligence officer speaking fluent Arabic was in the room. He ordered the soldiers to untie me. The soldiers quickly untied me and removed the blindfold. I saw the intelligence officer, who introduced himself. He was tall and blonde. He sat on a chair next to me. He was smiling at me. He asked me about my health. He was polite. He asked me to collaborate with him and work as an informant. 'All you have to do is tell me about those who carry out military activities targeting state security, especially people your age who throw stones and Molotov cocktails on the road that leads to Ari'el,' he said. 'I'm not a spy,' I said to him. He became angry and shouted at me 'You'll see what will happen to you, dog!' He called one of the soldiers and ordered him to tie me and take me out."

M.K. was taken to a different interrogation room where a policeman accused him of throwing stones at Israeli cars. "He shouted at me, saying 'If you don't confess, we won't allow your brothers to work in Burkan settlement.'" At this point, M.K. decided to confess. "I confessed, though I did not throw any stones. His threat scared me. I signed the statement that was written in Arabic by the policeman."

At around 4:00 am, M.K. was put into a military truck with the other arrested people from the village. They were kept in the truck, without being given any food or access to a bathroom, until 10:00 a.m. 'Inside the truck we were surrounded by the soldiers who kept shouting at us and making fun of us the entire time.'

M.K. was later sentenced to three months in prison and ordered to pay a fine of NIS 500.

20 April 2009

Recruitment of children by Palestinian armed groups

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 19
 Name: B.F.
 Date of involvement: 11 August 2011
 Age: 17
 Location: Gaza Strip



On 11 August 2011, a 17-year-old member of the al-Qassam Brigades, is killed when the explosives he was carrying exploded while performing surveillance tasks in south Gaza.

Seventeen-year-old B.F. lived with his family in Yabna refugee camp, Rafah, South Gaza. He was a member of the Al Qassam Brigades, and was killed while performing tasks for the armed group. His father recalls that on the day B.F. was killed: "At around 1:30 am on Thursday, 11 August 2011, I was sleeping and I woke up to the sound of a huge explosion that rocked the entire area. At first I thought the explosion was caused by Israeli F16 jets targeting the border line and the tunnels located about 150 metres south of my house. Israeli jets often attack that area."



Then, I heard youngsters from the neighbourhood running and heading to the east of the camps toward the alleys. I also heard ambulances heading toward the area near the UNRWA sanitation station. I became scared for my two sons [...] Both my sons are members of the Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, and they had been doing surveillance activities at night since the beginning of Ramadan, but I don't know where [...] I tried to call my son B.F. to check on him but he didn't pick up the phone. I thought he had it on silent so no one would bother him while he was doing surveillance tasks.

Later on, one of our neighbours knocked on our door [...] It wasn't a suitable time for a visit 'What's going on? Please tell me,' I said to him. He said that my son B.F. had been killed while doing surveillance tasks near the sanitation station [...] I performed Fajr prayer at the mosque and then headed to the hospital, where I found my son's body in the morgue. Both his legs and left arm were mutilated. His face was burned as well. The amputated parts were collected in a blue bag and put next to his body. I burst into tears. Then, I went back home. At around noon, we held the funeral.

As I understood from the police as well as members of the al-Qassam Brigades, B.F. was doing surveillance in a narrow alley about one metre wide when the explosives he was carrying detonated. No one knows what went wrong [...] He was alone in the street, so no one else was harmed.'

18 August 2011

Voices From The Occupation

Case study: 20
 Name: A.P.
 Date of Incident: 2006
 Age: 17
 Location: Gaza Strip



A 17-year-old boy describes how he came to be a member of an armed group in the Gaza Strip.

"I was 17-years-old when I became involved in military resistance as a member of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. I was invited by an active member in the group to join their resistance movement and I accepted. I was motivated by a strong sense of patriotism."



As part of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, I was asked to perform different tasks, such as: resist incursions; participate in launching rockets; and scout border positions. There is no minimum age to become a member of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and other children were also involved in armed resistance. Overall, however, I would say that the involvement of Palestinian children in armed resistance is very limited.

Being part of an armed resistance group as a child had a huge impact on my life. I had domestic problems with my parents and siblings; problems with friends and neighbours and low academic performance. After the fight between Hamas and Fatah, some units including mine were dismantled because the financial support was halted, so I stopped my involvement in military action and focused on my studies."

May 2011

I can't really give an estimate as to how many children are involved in armed resistance, but I think not too many. In prison I met others, but most of them were self motivated and not part of an armed resistance movement. There was a child from al 'Ain camp. His two brothers had been killed and he had decided to join an armed faction. Most of the children who decide to resist the occupation live in refugee camps and villages.

My involvement in an armed resistance movement greatly affected my family. When our group was arrested, our families were surprised about what we had been doing. I was sentenced by the Israelis to 15 months in prison."

24 May 2011

Voices From The Occupation



Case study: 21
Name: A.S.
Date of involvement: 2009
Age: 17
Location: Balata refugee camp,
Nablus, Occupied West Bank

A 17-year-old boy describes how he came to be a member of an armed group in the West Bank.

"I volunteered for al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in 2009. I was 17-years-old. I volunteered together with seven other children. We never dealt directly with the leaders of the Brigades; just with people that were low in the chain of command. I chose to join the group because of the general situation here, the national spirit to resist the occupation and the conditions in the refugee camp. Another reason was that 12 members of my extended family have been killed by the Israelis.



We would throw stones and Molotov cocktails in order to prevent the Israeli army from entering the camp. I only did this for two months before I was arrested. We just wanted to do what we could to fight the situation.

Annex 2 – Cases of children associated with Palestinian armed groups

Table 5 – DCI documented cases of the involvement of Palestinian children in armed groups since July 2004.

#	Name	Date	Age	Location	Group	Details
1	B.A.	2006	16	Gaza	PLF	B.A. volunteered for the group when he was 16 years, and performed scouting operations.
2	A.P.	2006	17	Gaza	al-Aqsa Brigades	A.P. was invited to join the group at 17 years, and resisted incursions, participated in launching rockets and scouted border positions.
3	B.E.	2007	14	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	B.E. and a friend were asked by the group to assist in launching a missile from Gaza.
4	A.J.	2009	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.J. was killed whilst participating in hostilities.
5	A.L.	2009	17	Gaza	Unknown	Evidence indicates that A.L. was killed whilst participating in hostilities.
6	A.G.	2009	15	Gaza	al-Quds Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.G. was killed while assisting members of the group.

#	Name	Date	Age	Location	Group	Details
7	A.A.	2009	17	Gaza	Unknown	A.A. was killed after leaving home with a rifle and bullets to give to his brother who was fighting Israeli forces during the ground invasion.
8	A.B.	2009	16	Gaza	Unknown	A.B. left his house to speak with four friends who were engaged in hostilities. Minutes later there was an explosion and A.B. was killed.
9	A.N.	2009	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.N. was participating in hostilities when he was killed.
10	A.H.	2009	17	Gaza	Unknown	Evidence indicates that A.H. was participating in hostilities when he was killed.
11	A.E.	2009	16	Gaza	Unknown	Evidence indicates that A.E. died from shrapnel wounds whilst taking part in hostilities.
12	A.F.	2009	15	Gaza	al-Quds Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.F. was helping injured combatants and preparing food for the group when he was killed.
13	A.I.	2009	16	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.I. was killed whilst he was with other combatants.

#	Name	Date	Age	Location	Group	Details
14	A.K.	2009	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.K. was killed whilst he was with other combatants.
15	A.M.	2009	16	Gaza	Unknown	Evidence indicates that A.M. was killed whilst fetching a rocket launcher for combatants.
16	A.C.	2009	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	A.C. was killed approximately one kilometre from the family home after the area was invaded by Israeli tanks.
17	A.O.	2009	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.O. was killed whilst operating as a scout in his neighbourhood.
18	A.D.	2009	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that A.D. was killed whilst taking part in hostilities.

#	Name	Date	Age	Location	Group	Details
19	A.S.	2009	17	West Bank	al-Aqsa Brigades	A.S. volunteered for the group in 2009 with seven other children. "I chose to join the group because of the general situation here, the national spirit to resist the occupation and the conditions in the refugee camp. Another reason was that 12 members of my extended family have been killed by the Israelis."
20	A.U.	2009	16	West Bank	Non-aligned	A.U. and four other children formed a small resistance group. "I decided to become involved because of the oppression of the occupation. My uncle and two of my cousins were killed and 27 members of my extended family have been injured. Our home was demolished in 2002."
21	A.Q.	2010	15	West Bank	al-Aqsa Brigades	A.Q. volunteered for the group when he was 15 and was involved in making Molotov cocktails. A.Q. suspects that the person who gave him his instructions was a collaborator.

#	Name	Date	Age	Location	Group	Details
22	A.R.	2010	16	West Bank	al-Aqsa Brigades	A.R. volunteered for the group in 2010 with 15 friends. “The stress, oppression and restrictions on movement as a result of the occupation, and the fact that my cousins were in prison all motivated me to join.”
23	A.T.	2010	16	West Bank	al-Aqsa Brigades	A.T. volunteered for the group in 2010 with 15 friends. “I joined because my cousin was a member and he invited me [...] Generally, children get more involved in resistance when there is an Israeli military incursion.”
24	A.Y.	2010	17	Gaza	Unknown	A.Y. and A.Z. took an assault rifle to the border fence with Israel and were killed.
25	A.Z.	2010	17	Gaza	Unknown	A.Z. and A.Y. took an assault rifle to the border fence with Israel and were killed.
26	B.F.	2011	17	Gaza	al-Qassam Brigades	Evidence indicates that B.F. was killed while conducting a surveillance operation near the border with Israel when the explosives he was carrying detonated.

Annex 3 – Palestinian Parties and Factions – Honour Code: No to Child Recruitment

“Believing that resistance is a natural, legitimate, ethical and cultural response to occupation; that the right of resistance and the legitimate use of force in all forms and manifestations are a practical way to end occupation, to exercise the right to self-determination, to preserve dignity, and to restore land, property, and usurped rights to their rightful owners;

Committing to the international legal principles that restrict the use of force, and the guarantees established for the protection of human rights, particularly those of children, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention, the two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, which state that armed groups which are distinct from the armed forces of a State should not, under any circumstances, recruit or use in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years;

Safeguarding the best interests of the Palestinian people, and the image of the Palestinian national struggle, which the Israeli media is trying to distort by highlighting some individual practices, or through fabricating stories affecting the values and principles of the Palestinian national and Islamic movement;

We, the national and Islamic forces, declare our commitment to the following terms of the Honour Code:

1. We confirm the Palestinians’ solid right to resist the occupation, to counter aggression and to liberate the land. We also confirm the Palestinians’ solid right to self-determination, statehood, and independence through various means, including armed struggle in line with international norms and conventions.
2. We emphasize our commitment to respect and honour all human rights international agreements and instruments, most notably the international legal mechanisms that safeguard the protection of children and their safety at times of armed conflict and under occupation; to work on strengthening the norms and standards of child protection; and to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of children affected by the armed conflict.
3. We condemn the targeting of children in armed conflicts, and direct attacks against targets protected under international law, including places in which children are often present in considerable numbers, such as schools, hospitals and shelters.

4. We consider the involvement of children, whether individually or within groups, in armed conflict a grave violation of their fundamental rights. We therefore must raise the community's awareness of child rights and the implementation of articles in this relevance, and promote the child's best interest. This also requires raising awareness about the involvement of children in armed conflict.
5. We stress the fact that effective child protection from the impact of armed conflict is achieved through our unconditional commitment which acknowledges that children have no part to play in armed conflict. We shall therefore take all feasible measures to ensure that children under the age of eighteen years will not be directly involved in hostilities.
6. Despite the emphasis on non-involvement of children in armed conflict to ensure their protection, we recognize their right to participate in political life in their communities by involving them in student unions, in line with the principles of citizenship, freedom, responsibility, and equal rights.
7. We call on the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] to take measures to promote physical, psychological, and emotional rehabilitation as well as social integration of child victims of the armed conflict and children recruited by Israel as informants working against their own people.
8. Despite our emphasis that Palestinian organizations have no intention to recruit and use children in armed conflict, we are aware of some individual cases of children being used in some military actions. We affirm our commitment to prevent any future attempts to use children in armed conflict, and call for those responsible to be held accountable.
9. We call on the PNA and its security forces to uncover cases of children recruited as informants by Israeli Intelligence Services, and deal with those children as victims of the occupation policies in need for rehabilitation. We also call for the formation of legal committees to expose the practices of the Israeli occupation and its violations of international norms and conventions, which safeguard the right of the children to protection from exploitation and recruitment.
10. We hold the Israeli authorities responsible for attempts to recruit hundreds of Palestinian children as informants, under pressure, threats, and coercion."

National and Islamic Forces
4 May 2010

END NOTES

1. DCI-Palestine, Use of Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories – Perspective on Child Soldiers, July 2004, available at: <http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/childrenperspective.pdf>
2. See UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005); and Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in collaboration with UNICEF, Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review: Children and conflict in a changing world, 2009, available at: http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_49985.html
3. See Physicians for Human Rights (Israel): 'Use and Lose: Israel's Palestinian collaborators,' available at: <http://www.phr.org.il/default.asp?PageID=184&ItemID=636>
4. The Paris Principles, UNICEF, February 2007, available at: http://www.un.org/children/conflict/_documents/parisprinciples/ParisPrinciples_EN.pdf
5. Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts – Article 77(2): "The Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible measures in order that children who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities and, in particular, they shall refrain from recruiting them into their armed forces." This rule also forms part of customary international humanitarian law – See: ICRC, Customary IHL data base – Rule 136. See also the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – Article 38: "States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities."
6. Cape Town Principles and Best Practices (1997), UNICEF – Adopted at the symposium on the prevention of recruitment of children into the armed forces and on demobilization and social reintegration of child soldiers in Africa. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/Cape_Town_Principles\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/Cape_Town_Principles(1).pdf). See also The Paris Principles (2007) – The principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces and armed groups. Available at: http://www.un.org/children/conflict/_documents/parisprinciples/ParisPrinciples_EN.pdf
7. Fourth Geneva Convention – Articles 28, 31, and 51. Article 28 states that: "The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations." Article 51 states that: "Protected persons may not be compelled to undertake any work which would involve them in the obligation of taking part in military operations." Article 51(7) to the First Additional Protocol to the Fourth Geneva Convention further states that: "Parties to the conflict shall not direct the movement of the civilian population or individual civilians in order to attempt to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield military operations." Although Israel has not ratified this Protocol, this provision does reflect customary international law on the issue, which is binding. See: ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I (2005) page 572. Available at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/customary-international-humanitarian-law-i-icrc-eng.pdf> Finally, under Article 8(2)(b)(xxiii) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the use of human shields is a war crime. Although Israel has yet to join the 108 nations that have ratified the Rome Statute, this article does reflect customary international law: See Jean-Marie Henckaferts and Louise Doswald-Beck, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I, Cambridge University Press, 2005, at page 572. Available at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/customary-international-humanitarian-law-i-icrc-eng.pdf>
8. See OPAC – Article 2: "States Parties shall ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces."

9. Israel ratified OPAC in 2005. Although the Palestinian Authority is not a sovereign state, the Palestinian Authority has made a number of public commitments to various international treaties and conventions, including the CRC (see: Statement by Dr. Emile Jarjou'I, Head of Delegation of the Observer Delegation of Palestine, on the occasion of the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, New York, 9 May 2002, available at: <http://www.un.org/ga/children/palestineE.htm> Furthermore, the international legal framework has been incorporated into the Palestinian domestic law by virtue of the Palestinian Child Law (2004).
10. In *Adalah v Military Commander of the West Bank (HCJ 3799) (2005)*, the then Chief Justice, Aharon Barak, stated at paragraph 24.
11. See Palestinian Child Law (2004) – Articles 1 and 46.
12. *Breaking the Silence, Soldiers' Testimonies from Operation Cast Lead, Gaza 2009*, pages 7, 46 and 107 - Available at: http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Operation_Cast_Lead_Gaza_2009_Eng.pdf
13. Fourth Geneva Convention – Article 31: “No physical or moral coercion shall be exercised against protected persons, in particular to obtain information from them or from third parties.”
14. ICRC commentary on the Fourth Geneva Convention (1994) – pages 219 to 220. Further, the prohibition against compulsorily recruiting persons under 18 years into the armed forces is arguably sufficiently wide to include the recruitment of persons as informants for the purpose of Article 2 of OPAC. This latter provision does not require an element of coercion.
15. In *Adalah v Military Commander of the West Bank (HCJ 3799) (2005)*, the then Chief Justice, Aharon Barak, stated at paragraph 24.
16. See DCI-Palestine, *In their own Words: A report on the situation facing Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military court system (19 July 2011)* - Available at: <http://www.dci-palestine.org/documents/submission-situation-facing-palestinian-children-detained-israeli-military-detention>
17. Both the UN Committee Against Torture and the Human Rights Committee have recommended that all interrogations of Palestinian children held in Israeli custody be audio-visually recorded. See the UN Committee Against Torture, *Concluding Observations, Israel (14 May 2009)*, CAT/C/ISR/CO/4 – paragraph 16; and the UN Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations, Israel (29 July 2010)*, ICCPR/C/ISR/CO/3 – paragraph 22.
18. UN Committee Against Torture, *Concluding Observations, Israel (14 May 2009)*, CAT/C/ISR/CO/4; UN Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations, Israel (29 July 2010)*, ICCPR/C/ISR/CO/3; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, 10 January 2011, A/HRC/16/72 – Available at: http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/un_report_jan_2011_abuse_of_children.pdf; Under Occupation: A report on the West Bank, Spring 2011, Britain Palestine All Party Parliamentary Group – Available at: <http://www.caabu.org/sites/default/files/resources/Under-occupation.pdf>; No Minor Matter: Violation of the Rights of Palestinian Minors Arrested by Israel on Suspicion of Stone Throwing, July 2011, B'Tselem – Available at: http://www.btselem.org/download/201107_no_minor_matter_eng.pdf; In their own Words: A report on the situation facing Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military court system (July 2011), DCI-Palestine, page 7 – Available at: http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/un_sp_-_detention_-_west_bank_-_july_2011.pdf; All Guilty! Observations in the Military Juvenile Court (April 2010 – March 2011), No Legal Frontiers – Available at: http://nolegalfrontiers.org/images/stories/report_2011/report_en.pdf; Britain and Palestine: A Parliamentary Focus, Autumn 2011, MAP and CAABU – Available at: <http://www.caabu.org/sites/default/files/resources/Caabu-parliamentary-focus-palestine.pdf>; Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, 13 September 2011, A/66/358 – Available at: <http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/unsropt.pdf>.
19. DCI-Palestine, *Use of Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Perspective on Child Soldiers (July 2004)*, page 29. Available at: <http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/childrenperspective.pdf>
20. Interviews conducted by DCI with six ex-child detainees at the YMCA rehabilitation centre in Beit Sahour on 17 November 2011. See also Physicians for Human Rights (Israel): ‘Use and Lose: Israel’s Palestinian collaborators,’ available at: <http://www.phr.org.il/default.asp?PageID=184&ItemID=636>; and Jonathan Cook, *Israel and the Dark Arts*, September 2008, available at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/cook09122008.html>
21. DCI-Palestine, *Use of Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories – Perspective on Child Soldiers, July 2004*, available at: <http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/childrenperspective.pdf>. See also: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report on Child Soldiers 2004*, available at: http://www.child-soldiers.org/library/global-reports?root_id=159&directory_id=165
22. According to a May 2010 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Israeli targeted killings have targeted ‘members of various groups, including Fatah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, who, Israeli authorities claimed, were involved in planning and carrying out attacks against Israeli civilians. Means used for targeted killings include drones, snipers, missiles, shooting from helicopters, killings at close range, and artillery. One study by a human rights group found that between 2002 and May 2008 at least 387 Palestinians were killed as a result of targeted killing operations. Of these, 234 were the targets, while the remainders were collateral casualties.’ See Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, *Study on targeted killings*, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/A.HRC.14.24.Add6.pdf>. See also the article by Physicians for Human Rights (Israel), *Use and Lose: Israel’s Palestinian collaborators* – Available at: <http://www.phr.org.il/default.asp?PageID=184&ItemID=636>
23. The Paris Principles, UNICEF, February 2007, available at: http://www.un.org/children/conflict/_documents/parisprinciples/ParisPrinciples_EN.pdf
24. UN Commission on Human Rights, *Question of the Violation of Human Rights in the Occupied Arab Territories, including Palestine, Report of the human rights inquiry commission established pursuant to Commission resolution S-5/1 of 19 October 2000*. The Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate violations of human rights during the first Intifada, and stated that: “Stone throwing by youths at heavily protected military posts hardly seems to involve participation in hostilities” – page 14. Available at: [http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridocda.nsf/0/19cfafb52ab5fc2bc1256a11005de32c/\\$FILE/G0111872.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridocda.nsf/0/19cfafb52ab5fc2bc1256a11005de32c/$FILE/G0111872.pdf). The generally spontaneous and unplanned nature of incidents of stone throwing by Palestinian youths is supported by statements made by the former President of the Military Court of Appeals, Colonel Shaul Gordon, who said: “In this kind of offense, the persons involved do not have to prepare and plan. Stones are everywhere, and to complete the offense, the only thing they need is hands.” – Appeal (Judea and Samaria), 225/01, Military Prosecutor v ‘Abd a’Latif Rajeh Musa Samhan. This view is also supported by hundreds of testimonies collected by DCI-Palestine which indicate that incidents of stone throwing appear to be unplanned or directed, but rather spontaneous act arising out of prolonged military occupation.

25. The report adopts the international legal definition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.
26. 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.
27. B'Tselem Statistics – Fatalities. Available at: <http://old.btselem.org/statistics/english/Casualties.asp>
28. Linda M. Pitcher, "The Divine Impatience": Ritual, Narrative, and Symbolization in the Practice of Martyrdom in Palestine, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, Volume 12, No. 1, March 1998.
29. See BBC, Palestinian rivals: Fatah & Hamas, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5016012.stm
30. Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), Diary 2011.
31. Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), Diary 2011.
32. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel - Palestinian Negotiations, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Palestinian%20Negotiations>.
33. See "Palestine, Who's in charge?" *The Economist*, 11 March 2004, available at: http://www.economist.com/node/2502873?story_id=E1_NVDNRSP
34. See Donald Macintyre, "Zacharia Zubeidi: The marked man," *The Independent*, 28 May 2004, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/zacharia-zubeidi-the-marked-man-564957.html>; and "Israel asked Palestinian Authority to kill al-Aqsa commander," *The Guardian*, 25 January 2011, available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/25/israel-asked-palestinians-assassinate-militant>.
35. Spencer Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, page 70.
36. Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/node/77214/section/1>
37. Cited in Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/node/77214/section/1>
38. See Abdelaziz Ayyad, *Arab Nationalism and the Palestinians (1850-1939)*, available at: http://www.passia.org/publications/research_studies/books/arab_nationalism/index.html
39. Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, page 88, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/ISRAELPA1002.pdf>
40. Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, page 88, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/ISRAELPA1002.pdf>; see also Edmund L. Andrews and John Kifner, "George Habash, 82, founder of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," *The New York Times*, 27 January 2008.
41. Michael Hudson, 'The Palestinian Arab Resistance Movement: Its Significance in the Middle East Crisis,' *Middle East Journal*, Volume 23, No.3, Summer 1969, pg. 299. See also: "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," BBC, 26 January 2008, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1604540.stm
42. See History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, available at: <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=799>
43. Khalid al-'Ayid's interview with Ramadan 'Abdallah Shallah, *The Movement of Islamic Jihad and the Oslo Process*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Summer, 1999, pg. 62.
44. Cited in Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/node/77214/section/1>
45. Cited in Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/node/77214/section/1>
46. Khalid al-'Ayid's interview with Ramadan 'Abdallah Shallah, 'The Movement of Islamic Jihad and the Oslo Process,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Summer, 1999, pg. 62.
47. Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment*, October 2002, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/node/77214/section/1>
48. Yuval Azoulay et alia, "Jihad claims responsibility for Qassam attack on Sderot," *Haaretz*, 14 September 2008, available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/video-jihad-claims-responsibility-for-qassam-attack-on-sderot-1.253759>.
49. See Abdul-Hadee Aoukal, "Al Quds Brigade: Urban Battle yet to Begin," 15 January 2009, *Asharq Al-Awsat* (English edition), available at: <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=15384>
50. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin was assassinated by Israeli forces on 22 March 2004. His successor as Hamas leader, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, was killed by an Israeli missile strike the following month, on 17 April 2004. For more information on Sheikh Yassin see David Hirst, "Obituary - Sheikh Ahmed Yassin," *The Guardian*, 23 March 2004, available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2004/mar/23/guardianobituaries.israel>
51. Are Knudsen, 'The Hamas Enigma,' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 8 2005.
52. See "Sheikh Yassin: Spiritual figurehead," BBC, 22 March 2004, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1695470.stm
53. See Ezzedeen Al Qassam Brigades website, available at: <http://www.qassam.ps/aboutus.html>
54. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: Forum on armed groups and the involvement of children in armed conflict (2006), Catherine Hunter, page 7, citing Coalition interviews with Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abd al-Rahman a-Ramahi and Ahmed Abd al-Aziz Mubarak, Ramallah, 7 February 2006.
55. In 15 out of the 26 cases (58 percent) documented by DCI, the children were involved with Palestinian armed groups during Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip in December 2008 to January 2009 (Operation Cast Lead), in which 352 Palestinian children were killed.
56. In four cases documented by DCI, the children report that they were contacted by telephone by somebody from Gaza who claimed to be from the al-Aqsa Brigades. However, the children told DCI that they suspected this person to be an informant, and not from the al-Aqsa Brigades. Accordingly, DCI can only confirm one out of 26 cases in which a child under the age of 18 was recruited by the al-Aqsa Brigades.
57. For example, children's television programmes which include political content and the glorification of armed struggle. See: 'Farfour dies in last episode,' *Jerusalem Post*, 29 June 2007, available at: <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=66754>. See also 'New hit song for Palestinian children: When we die as martyrs,' *Haaretz*, 22 June 2010, available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/new-hit-song-for-palestinian-children-when-we-die-as-martyrs-1.297731>.
58. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report on Child Soldiers 2008*, available at: <http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/>

59. Interview conducted by DCI with the Head of Public Relations of the Palestinian Civil Police, Mr. Yousif Usrael, in Ramallah, on 22 August 2011. Interview conducted by DCI with the Attorney General in the West Bank, Mr. Ahmad al-Maghani, in Ramallah, on 25 August 2011.
60. The Palestinian National and Islamic Forces are comprised of the following political factions: Arab Liberation Front; Democratic Front for Liberation of Palestine (DFLP); Fatah; Hamas; Islamic Jihad; AL-Mubadara- Palestinian National Initiative; Palestine Arab Front; Palestine Democratic Union (FIDA); PLF; Palestine People's party (PPP); Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) (Nidal Front); PFLP; PFLP-GC; and the Popular Liberation War Pioneers (Sa'iqa).

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الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال | فرع فلسطين
Defence for Children International | Palestine Section

Sartawi Building
Sateh Marhaba
Ramallah

Tel: +972 (0) 2 2427530

Fax: +972 (0) 2 2427018

Email: info@dci-pal.org

www.dci-pal.org