تمكين
TAMKEEN
fields for aid | للدعم و المساندة

Children of Gaza War Crimes Confronted By Global Silence

© جميع الحقوق محفوظة لتمكين
للدعم والمساندة

2023

On World Children's Day, which falls on November 20th each year, Palestinian children endure all forms of suffering as a result of the Israeli occupationcrimes against them, which range from murder to imprisonment and torture.

The United Nations inaugurated World Children's Day in 1954, as an occasion to be celebrated globally on November 20th each year, coinciding with the date on which 192 countries signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.[1]

World Children's Day approaches amid the exposure of children in the Gaza Strip to ongoing crimes committed by the Zionist occupation forces, including killing and forced displacement. While most children worldwide exercise their natural rights, the Zionist occupier has disregarded international conventions and protocols without exception; namely, its war has entailed the targeting of children in their homes throughout its bombing campaigns, killing and depriving them of the most basic of rights.

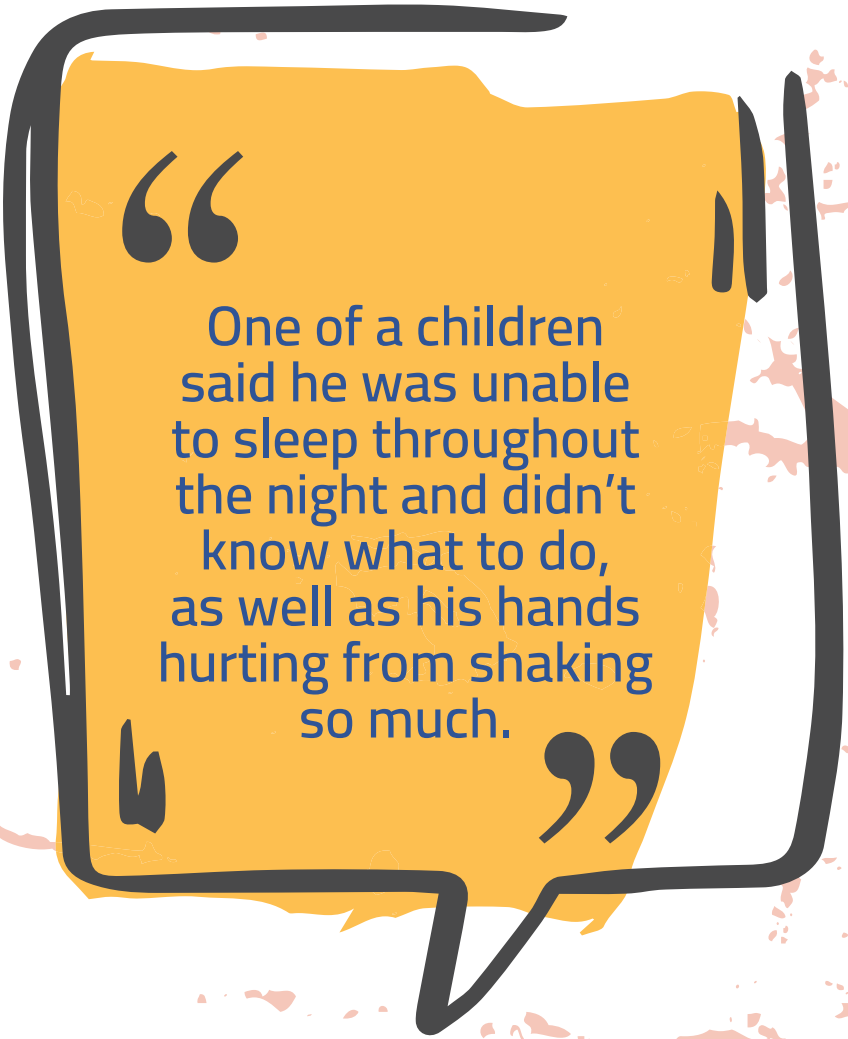
Just prior to the onset of the war, a third of the children of Gaza were in need of assistance to address the conflict-related trauma.[2] Undoubtedly, the children's need for mental health services and psycho-social support has increased dramatically. Simultaneously, the collapse of Gazan water-production capabilities due to electricity shortages means that tens of thousands of children will require humanitarian aid to secure potable water and basic sewage services. Furthermore, the most represented mental illnesses amongst the children of Gaza–owing to consecutive wars–are "nightmares, eating disorders, intense fear, and involuntary urination."

The continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and children's rights in particular, combined with the continued enforcement of the Israeli occupation's suffocating blockade dating back more than 16 years, has contributed to a decline in Palestinian children's ability to exercise rights afforded to them by international law. The war–waged by the Zionist occupation for over a month without any regard for international law, UN resolutions, or the ethics of war– has constituted an enormous blow to the psyche of Gazan children.

On this day, Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights aims to shed light on the degree of suffering faced by Palestinian children amid the occupation. They face physical violations that have led to dozens being martyred in the Zionist aggression escalations and military occupation, while others have died as a result of treatment deficit and other consequences of the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

1 United Nations Website. https://bit.ly/3u8oAX7

2 Palestinian Journalist, Fadi Ahmad, UNICEF – Gaza.


One of a children said he was unable to sleep throughout the night and didn't know what to do, as well as his hands hurting from shaking so much.

The Children of Gaza Strip

Children make up 47% of the Gaza Strip's population of 2.2 million. 6 children are martyred every hour. Thus, the number of children martyred after more than one month of the war amounts to nearly 5 thousand of the total number of martyrs, which exceeds11,000 , on top of the more than 15,000 wounded children, most of whom are seriously injured and susceptible to long-term disabilities.

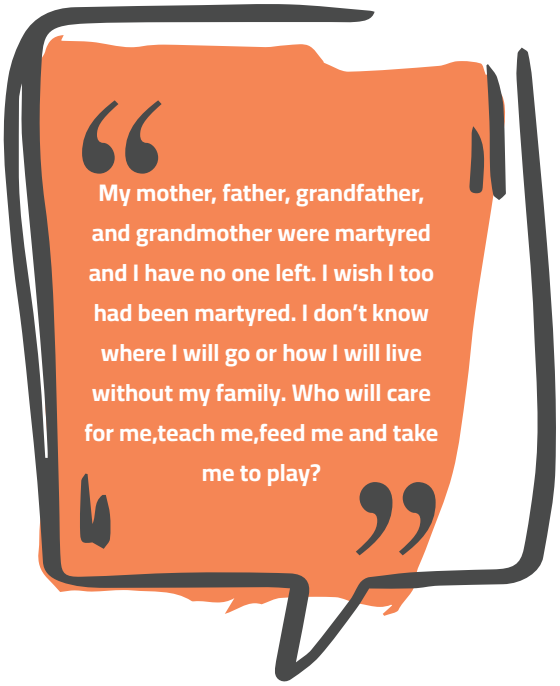
Additionally, there are many missing persons under the rubble who remain beyond reach due to ongoing bombardment, equipment shortages, and the preoccupation of (emergency services) with rescue operations.[3] Many have managed to survive but are injured and require treatment, in addition to those who have survived without injury but are nonetheless subjected to a reality absolutely unacceptable for someone their age–one characterized by displacement without refuge, deprived from the most important of life's fundamental requirements.

In the same vein, the number of homes completely destroyed is estimated at 43,000 housing units, in addition to 225,000 homes with partial demolition, and with the estimated number of displaced persons exceeding 100,000, and more than a million persons in Gaza without refuge, most of them women and children living in inhumane conditions in UNRWA schools and in the surroundings of hospitals and churches. Reports indicate that nearly 100 people share one room in the wake of the water shortage and the cutting of electricity, not to mention the inability to guarantee suitable food, especially for infants.

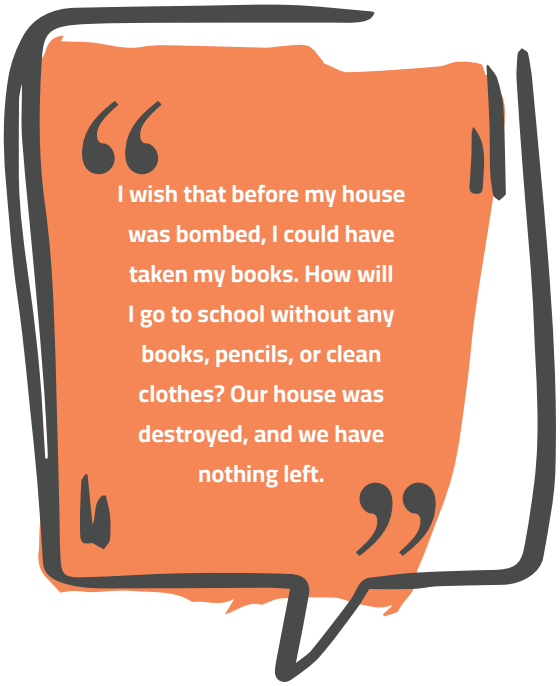
According to numerous stories received by Tamkeen from journalists in Gaza, specifically from Al-Shifa Hospital, Jabalia Camp, and Khan Yunis, there are childbirths taking place under difficult conditions without anesthetics, painkillers, or even the presence of family, as several hospitals are out of service, evacuated, and others face imminent threat of evacuation.

3 Ministry of Health, Gaza Strip.

In addition, the war conditions prevent the children of Gaza from being with their families, as many children have been forcefully separated from their relatives, owing either to hospitalization or being martyred. As a result, these children face an uncertain future with no family to take care of them and make them feel safe. They feel safer with the presence of their family.

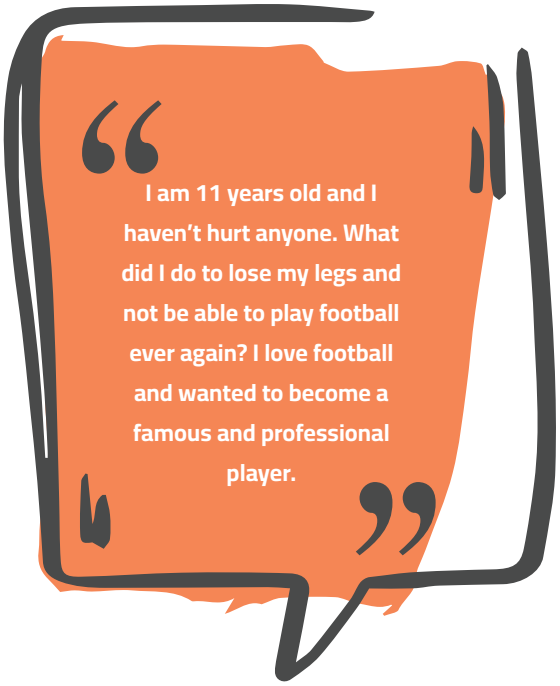


Children are also denied an education; the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) has announced that 300,000Gazan children have been deprived of an education due to the war that is being waged by the Zionist Occupation on the Gaza Strip.[4]

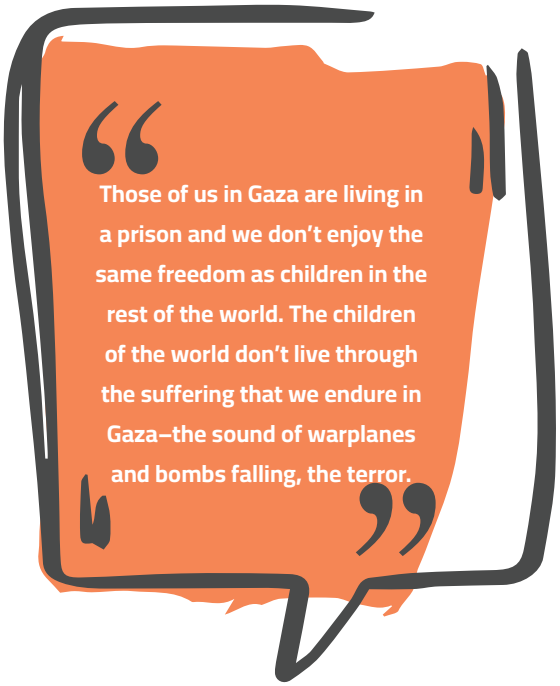


4 Statements issued by UNRWA, 9/11/2023.

In addition, the children of Gaza are deprived of continued healthcare across a period, in which those with more immediate health issues receive treatment and those in need of sustained care either don't receive it or are forced to leave the Strip, the latter case being incumbent upon a permit to be granted by the Zionist authorities. The approval to exit the Strip is a difficult process which typically culminates in rejection.



Additionally, the children of the Gaza Strip are entitled to live freely with dignity like the rest of children in the world who enjoy the full extent of their rights, as well as to education, play, and the realization of their lifelong dreams without war, blockade, and human rights violations which endanger their lives and lead directly to their death.



As for the Palestinian condition more broadly, children in the West Bank and Occupied Jerusalem suffer exceedingly under cruel living conditions as the Occupation Forces continue their abuses of Palestinians. These abuses reflect on Palestinian children who are prevented from receiving essential services due their isolation amid the ongoing closure of residential areas and the imposition of restrictions upon their freedom of movement.

In addition to the execution of consecutive military operations and raids throughout Palestinian cities and villages, characterized by the use of excessive force, has resulted in the martyring and injury of dozens of Palestinians, among them children. Furthermore, these children's arrest and mistreatment by the Zionist Occupier has resulted in a number of child prisoners no less than 17,000 across the span of 2000 to 2022, ranging between 12 and 18 years old. As such, in many recorded cases of arrest and detention, children have been as young as 10 years old. In 2022, the Occupation authorities arrested approximately 882 Palestinian children, 654 of them being Jerusalemites.

Jerusalemites make up the vast majority of total Palestinian children arrested (74.1%) in 2022, not accounting for those children in Jerusalem who are detained and held in dedicated social centers due to them being younger than 14 years old.[5] It has been confirmed by the Committee for Detainee Affairs that, in 2023, prior to September, the Occupation authorities extended the detention of nearly 200 children, distributed across the Ofer, Megiddo, and Damon detention facilities, which lack the minimal living necessities and humane treatment.

These children face torture and are mistreated, as well as facing unjust rulings which violate their basic rights and threaten their future. These violations contravene international law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the most prominent examples of the abuses faced by child prisoners being deprivation from sufficient and quality food, lack of cleanliness, lack of clothing, and the denial of their education throughout their detention for months and years at a time. Furthermore, children have been denied visits to their relatives under the pretextof security concerns and prohibitions.There has been an escalation in raids and inspections in their living quarters and rooms, not to mention medical neglect and denial of care. Setting a dangerous precedent, the Occupation courts has begun to rule against children younger than 18, giving wider clearance for judgements against child prisoners; at times, trials are delayed for years until the child's age surpasses the threshold for legal prosecution, putting these children's future at severe risk.

5 Reports released by Detainees related institutions, (The Commission of Detainees, Palestinian's Prisoner Society, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Wadi Hilweh Information Center - Jerusalem)

Taking a look at the rulings imposed upon child prisoners, it is evident that the Occupation authorities do not engage with the arrest of children as a last resort. For example, one child was sentenced to a life sentence in prison, and three children were sentenced to 15 years. Four others were sentenced to 5-9 years and still more children were sentenced to 1-3 years for allegations of belonging to Palestinian associations. These sentences are typically accompanied by high fines.[6]

In the same context, numerous Palestinian human rights reports related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the living conditions of children, indicated that the Palestinian government is unable to create the conditions to allow Palestinian children to exercise the rights guaranteed to them by international law. In addition to psychological and health-related repercussions, Palestinian children are vulnerable to varied crises, among them the aftermath of economic collapse which has taken its toll at the level of basic living needs such as nutrition, stemming from pervasive poverty and high unemployment.

Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights expresses its utmost condemnation for the continued and escalating Zionist violations of children's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and expresses its deep sorrow for the international community's falling short of its legal commitments according to international humanitarian law and the principles of international human rights law, as well as the international community's failure to intervene against the escalating Zionist violations to ensure the Occupation forces' legal compliance.

Moreover, Tamkeen demands that the international community move urgently and effectively to end the war on Gaza and stop the targeted abuses of Palestinian children, as well as protect them from the fallout of Zionist actions which deprive them of their rights. What's more, Tamkeen demands that the international community work to advance the lifting of the blockade on Gaza Strip and to ensure adherence to the rules of international humanitarian law.

Tamkeen emphasizes that World Children's Day must serve as an occasion for the international community, at the level of each nation, to stand by its duties and legal and moral commitments against the discriminatory practices and rights violations against children, especially in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

6 Ibid

E-mail: Media@tamkeen-jo.org
www.tamkeen-jo.org

Al-Madina Al-Munwra St,
Building #197 | 3rd Floor

Tel:+ 962 5539501
Mobile: + 962 797847997