



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

**Palestine/Gaza - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 25 & Friday 26 April 2019
Information on the situation of children/particularly males in Gaza**

In April 2019 the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* states in a document that:

“From the start of the GMR until 31 March 2019, 199 Palestinians, including 43 children, were killed by Israeli forces and nearly 30,300 Palestinians injured, including 25 per cent wounded by live ammunition. The large number of casualties among unarmed Palestinian protestors in circumstances that did not appear to constitute an imminent threat of death or serious injury to Israeli soldiers behind the fence, has raised concerns about excessive use of force by Israeli forces and the lack of protection, especially of children” (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (15 April 2019) *Humanitarian Bulletin - occupied Palestinian territory - March 2019*, p.1).

This document also states that:

“Palestinians in Gaza already experience high levels of psychological distress in the context of an increasingly destabilized economy and weakened social fabric. Families’ resilience capacities are increasingly eroded, forcing households to adapt negative coping mechanisms and generating complex protection threats for individuals and households, including disproportionate impact on women, youth and children across Gaza. Children in particular are coping negatively and resorting to harmful practices: boys dropping out of schools and involved in child labour, while there are still high levels of adolescent girl child marriage. Children in Gaza are also affected by other forms of violence both in the public and private spheres. Many children with disabilities are also isolated and unable to access services such as education” (ibid, p.9).

In April 2019 *Education Cannot Wait* notes in a document that:

“...children in Gaza grow up in challenging conditions, frequently surrounded by poverty and violence...” (Education Cannot Wait (9 April 2019) *Providing educational opportunities for children in Gaza builds foundations for peace, security and prosperity*).

Save the Children in March 2019 states that:

“At least 49 children have been killed at the Gaza border fence since the start of the protests one year ago...” (Save the Children (30 March 2019) *Gaza: Number of children killed in protests reaches 50*).

This document also states that:

“The demand for specialist medical support has far exceeded Gaza's health system, which has been crippled by years of the blockade. According to WHO data, 80% of children injured at the protests who applied to leave Gaza to receive emergency

medical treatment in Israel over the last year have had their permits rejected or delayed..." (ibid).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

"Beyond their physical wounds, children's mental health in Gaza looks to be at an all-time low... Years of living in a humanitarian crisis has left many children feeling hopeless" (ibid).

A report published in March 2019 by the *Norwegian Refugee Council* states that:

"Children living in the Gaza Strip have experienced unusually high rates of psychosocial distress because of the violent response to the Gaza protests and daily attacks they witness" (Norwegian Refugee Council (25 March 2019) *Gaza children's mental health rapidly deteriorating*).

In March 2019 *Human Rights Watch* states in a report that:

"...the Islamic personal status laws, currently in force in the West Bank and Gaza, do not make the best interests of the child the primary concern when determining which parent the child should live with and which guardianship rights each parent should have" (Human Rights Watch (20 March 2019) *Submission by Human Rights Watch to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the State of Palestine*, p.7).

In March 2019 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* notes that:

"According to a 2018 Rand Corporation report, more than a quarter of all reported diseases in Gaza are the result of poor water quality and remote water supply access. It also noted that water-related diseases are the primary cause of child morbidity..." (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (15 March 2019) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, p.14).

A report issued in March 2019 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2018 states that:

"Child abuse was reportedly widespread. PA law prohibits violence against children; however, PA authorities and de facto authorities in Gaza rarely punished perpetrators of family violence" (United States Department of State (13 March 2019) *Israel and the Golan Heights 2018 Human Rights Report*, p.15).

This document also states that:

"There were reports Hamas trained children as combatants" (ibid, p.15).

A publication issued in November 2018 by *UNICEF* points out that:

"Unemployment rates are high: 32.4 per cent across the State of Palestine – 53.7 per cent in the Gaza Strip, one of the highest rates in the world, with unemployment reaching 60per cent of youth in the Gaza Strip, where 80per cent of the population relies on some form of humanitarian assistance. Coping mechanisms are eroding fast, with some children and families resorting to negative strategies like school drop-

out, child labour, substance abuse and early marriage” (UNICEF (November 2018) *Children in the State of Palestine*, p.3).

This report also points out that:

“In the Gaza strip, high rates of unemployment mean that many children live below the poverty line, affecting their access to quality educational or vocational training” (ibid, p.14).

In September 2018 the *United States Department of Labor* points out in a report that:

“Children in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in construction and illicit activities. Children also engage in child labor in street vending” (United States Department of Labor (20 September 2018) *2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - West Bank and the Gaza Strip*, p.1).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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