

## Fact Sheet—Memorial: No Way to Treat a Child Protecting the Human Rights of Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation

### ELCA PEACE NOT WALLS INITIATIVE

Since 2005, when the ELCA adopted “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” Lutherans have focused on Awareness Building, Accompaniment and Advocacy, seeking “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land.” The ELCA has a relationship with Lutheran congregations in the Bethlehem area, Ramallah, and Jerusalem (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, ELCJHL), as well as seven schools and educational programs.



*Detaining Dreams – interviews with the children*

### TWO SEPARATE ISRAELI LEGAL SYSTEMS

Israel operates two separate legal systems in the Palestinian Territories. Since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, military law is applied to Palestinians in the West Bank. Jewish settlers, however, who reside within the bounds of the occupied West Bank (in violation of international law) are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework. Israel systematically prosecutes children in military courts that lack internationally recognized fair trial rights and protections—for example, children are routinely interrogated without the presence of a parent or legal counsel.

### CHILDREN’S EXPERIENCE OF DETENTION AND PROSECUTION

An estimated 500-700 Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military detention system. They commonly report being arrested in the middle of the night and typically arrive to interrogation bound, blindfolded, frightened, and sleep deprived. They often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, and physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture. Israeli military law provides no right to legal counsel during interrogation; 96% of children have no parents present during interrogation. Children in Israeli detention have experienced cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. They are placed in stress positions; they have endured hooding, death threats, coerced confessions, and denial of parental presence or legal counsel during interrogations. **Watch “Detaining Dreams”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rw69pLILqw>

On October 3, 1991, Israel ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states—in article 37(a), that “no child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.”

### U.S. FOREIGN AID TO ISRAEL

The United States provides more than \$3.8 billion dollars a year in foreign aid to Israel, primarily military aid.

### LEGISLATION IN THE U.S. CONGRESS

Rep. Betty McCollum (MN) will introduce a bill which will require the Secretary of State to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law. It will call for certification that existing U.S. law is not being violated in Israel’s use of U.S. foreign assistance. This bill will encourage the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; respect and ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; and abide by international juvenile justice standards, specifically the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Because of our Lutheran connection with the ELCJHL, it is important for us to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children—especially the treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military courts.

### Sources and Resources for education:

- Defense for Children International Palestine: *Palestinian Children in the Israeli Military Detention System*  
[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/1527/attachments/original/1460665378/DCIP\\_NWTTAC\\_Report\\_Final\\_April\\_2016.pdf?1460665378](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/1527/attachments/original/1460665378/DCIP_NWTTAC_Report_Final_April_2016.pdf?1460665378)
- *Children in Israeli Military Detention* (UNICEF report, February 2015):  
[https://www.unicef.org/oPt/Children\\_in\\_Israeli\\_Military\\_Detention\\_-\\_Observations\\_and\\_Recommendations\\_-\\_Bulletin\\_No.\\_2\\_-\\_February\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/oPt/Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_-_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_Bulletin_No._2_-_February_2015.pdf)
- B’Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights: “Unprotected: Detention of Palestinian Teenagers in East Jerusalem”  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201710\\_unprotected](https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201710_unprotected)
- DCI-Number of Palestinian Children in Israeli Detention: [https://www.dci-palestine.org/children\\_in\\_israeli\\_detention](https://www.dci-palestine.org/children_in_israeli_detention) and [https://www.dci-palestine.org/year\\_in\\_review\\_2018\\_reigned\\_deadly\\_force\\_on\\_palestinian\\_children](https://www.dci-palestine.org/year_in_review_2018_reigned_deadly_force_on_palestinian_children)
- “Detaining Dreams” – interviews with the children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rw69pLILqw> – 3.5 min. version of video: <https://youtu.be/g8RhyAqTS5I>
- “Imprisoning a Generation” – film by Zeldia Edmonds, Young Adult in Global Mission: <https://www.anemoia.net>