

Statement on behalf of Defence for Children International (DCI)

ISRAEL'S ARMED FORCES AND GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Last year, Defence for Children International and other child rights organizations urged UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to include Israel's armed forces in his annual list of armed forces and groups that commit grave violations against children. While the Secretary-General's 2014 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict did not include Israel's armed forces in the annexed list for killing and maiming children or carrying out attacks against schools, the Secretary-General urged "Israel to take concrete and immediate steps" to protect children and stressed the importance of "ensuring accountability for perpetrators of alleged violations."

Despite the Secretary-General's urging, Israeli authorities have failed to take concrete and immediate steps to protect children, and have persistently failed to address accountability for grave violations against children. Instead, Israeli authorities have rejected the demands and actively worked to roll back protections for children during 2015.

In response to escalating violence, Israeli forces appear to be implementing a 'shoot-to-kill' policy, which in some incidents may amount to extrajudicial killings. Forty-one Palestinian children from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip have been [killed since October](#) as a direct result of intensified violence, all except one at the hands of Israeli forces. Of this number, 31 allegedly carried out knife or gun attacks.

Throughout 2015 and amid escalating violence in Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied West Bank, Israel has pushed forward a slew of harsh policies that target Palestinian children. On November 3, the Knesset passed a [series of amendments to the Israeli penal code](#) and youth law. They imposed 10-year prison sentences for throwing stones or other objects at moving vehicles with the possibility of endangering passengers or causing damage. Those convicted of throwing stones with the purpose of harming others would receive double the sentence.

In October 2015, Israeli authorities renewed the use of administrative detention for Palestinian children for the first time in nearly four years. At the end of 2015, Israeli forces held six Palestinian children in administrative detention. As escalations in violence continue into sixth month, it is clear that the status quo is not sustainable. The need for justice and accountability is urgent.

Defence for Children International urges all members of the Human Rights Council:

- To condemn Israeli forces' use of excessive force in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, against Palestinians;
- To urge the UN Secretary-General to list Israeli forces in the annex of his upcoming annual report on children and armed conflict; and
- To demand that Israeli forces at all times act in accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.