



July 29, 2021

The Honourable Minister Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
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RE: Canada must denounce the killing of Palestinian children and the 29 July 2021 Israeli military raid on the offices of human rights defenders Defense for Children International-Palestine

Dear Minister Garneau:

Greetings to you from The United Church of Canada.

It is with deepening sadness and concern that we write you once again, appealing for Canada to take urgent action in response to the intensifying threats on the lives of Palestinian children under Israeli military occupation.

In the past two days, two more children were killed by Israeli military forces, bringing the death toll of children killed in the West Bank this year to 11. Israeli soldiers [shot and killed 11-year old Mohammad Mo'ayyad Bahjat Abu Sara](#) yesterday while he was sitting in his father's car. On July 23rd, Israeli military shot [17-year old Mohammad Munir Mohammad Tamimi in the back](#). He died after hours of surgery.

Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIP), a United Church of Canada partner based in Ramallah painstakingly investigates, documents witness testimonies, and issues detailed reports of grave human rights violations against children¹. Under international law, intentional lethal force is only justified in circumstances where a direct threat to life or of serious injury is present. Investigations and evidence collected by DCIP regularly suggest that Israeli forces use lethal force against Palestinian children in circumstances that may amount to extrajudicial or wilful killings.

We are further alarmed to learn that today, around 5:00 am in Palestine, Israeli forces raided DCIP's main office in Al-Bireh, Ramallah after destroying the main door. During the raid, Israeli forces confiscated six computers and two laptops in addition to files concerning DCIP's legal representation of Palestinian children in the Israeli military courts. This is part of growing attacks against human rights defenders in Palestine and Israel by Israeli authorities.

¹ Since 1991, DCIP has provided legal services to children detained and prosecuted in Israel's military court system. Its team of lawyers, fieldworkers, social workers, and advocates document and expose grave human rights violations against Palestinian children and seek to hold Israeli and Palestinian authorities accountable to universal human rights principles.



We call on Canada to:

- Issue an immediate statement condemning the extrajudicial killing of Palestinian children, and of Israel's practice of detaining and prosecuting Palestinian children in military courts in violation of international law;
- appoint a Special Envoy to monitor and report on the human rights situation of Palestinian children living in the occupied Palestinian territories;
- hold Israeli military authorities accountable to their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The United Church has repeatedly urged the Government of Canada to take all measures possible to urge the Israeli government to end its occupation, which is the main obstacle to peace and a primary factor in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians, including children. Some Canadians have phoned, written numerous letters, visited with members of Parliament, and petitioned the Government of Canada to appoint a Special Envoy to monitor and report on the situation of Palestinian children held in Israeli military detention. [The Government of Canada's response to Petition E-2667](#), which was signed by over 2,400 Canadians calling upon the Government of Canada to, among other steps, "*ensure the human rights of Palestinian children are protected*" is highly insufficient in light of the growing number of Palestinian children killed by Israeli military forces, and the impunity enjoyed by Israeli settlers who commit acts of violence against Palestinian children.

We urge the government to respond quickly to this request so that no more Palestinian children become names on the growing list of fatal statistics.

We look forward to your favourable response.

Grace and peace to you in the important leadership you give.

Sincerely,



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