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Palestine

Israel targets and kills children

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Two damning reports show that, in both Gaza and the West Bank, Israel is deliberately targeting Palestinian children. [1]

At the end of June, the UN Human Rights Council's office [2] and B'Tselem [3], an Israeli NGO, each published a report: one on children killed in Gaza, the other on children killed in the West Bank. These two reports – lengthy and detailed, yet difficult to read due to the violence they describe – document Israel's deliberate intent to target and kill Palestinian children.

Are children a protected group?

International law grants children special protection in armed conflicts: priority access to humanitarian aid, guarantees regarding evacuation and family reunification, and so on.

Israel is therefore expected to treat Palestinian children as a group entitled to special protection. Their detention should only be an exceptional measure, justified by demonstrable and immediate security reasons, and not a tool for control, blackmail or collective punishment. Vague criteria such as 'security concerns', behaviour deemed suspicious or family ties do not fall within this category.

Clearly, nothing in international law authorises the killing of a child with a bullet to the head by a sniper positioned several hundred metres away. Yet this is the reality in Gaza.

In Gaza, 30 per cent of those killed are children

The UN report notes that between 7 October 2023 and 7 October 2025, at least 20,179 children were killed and 44,143 injured in Gaza. They account for 30 per cent of those killed and 26 per cent of those injured during this period. By way of 'comparison', children accounted for around 24 per cent of the deaths during the 2008–2009 and 2014 bombings.

Since 7 October 2023, at least 5,031 children under the age of five have been killed, of whom 1,029 were under one year old and around 420 were newborns. These figures are likely to be an underestimate, as a significant number of victims remain buried under the rubble.

The report details the brutality of the treatment inflicted on children and the lack of consideration shown to injured children. It documents several cases in which the Israeli army killed entire families in full view of the children, before leaving them to their fate. According to a doctor at the scene: "Given the concentration of injuries and the body parts targeted, I believe that Israeli soldiers deliberately shot at teenagers as if it were a shooting gallery — targeting a different part of the body each day... There is a very clear pattern suggesting that this involves deliberately targeting different parts of the body [of the children]." Shooting at children for fun...

The report could be cited on these pages: it brings together dozens of testimonies supporting this view, specifying in each instance which brigades were involved.

This is genocide

Regarding the West Bank, B'Tselem reports that over a period of two years and eight months, from 7 October 2023 to 7 June 2026, Israeli forces killed 235 Palestinian children and teenagers. Five others were killed by settlers. In 2025 alone, Israel killed 54 children in the West Bank.

This significant increase predates 2023: as early as 2022, the number of children killed in the West Bank rose from an average of 13 to 36 per year. In 2021, the rules of engagement were relaxed: throwing stones is now sufficient to justify opening fire, without there being any need for the forces to be in danger. The context of the war in Gaza has multiplied the opportunities to target and kill children, but this behaviour has long been documented and also occurs in the West Bank.

The targeting of children is a key element in establishing genocidal intent. Israel is indeed aiming to destroy the Palestinian people as a whole, both in Gaza and in the West Bank.

Israel is deliberately killing children. This is genocide.

8 July 2026

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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[1] Photo: The Palestinian children and teenagers killed by Israel in the West Bank in 2025. Photos courtesy of their families. B'tselem report.

[2] UNHRC, 23 June 2026 ["Israel continues to commit genocide and other atrocity crimes by deliberately targeting Palestinian children"](#).

[3] B'Tselem, 29 June 2026 ["Unshielded Childhood: Palestinian children and teenagers killed by Israel in the West Bank in 2025"](#).