

Most Palestinian Youth Complain of Abuse in Israeli Detention



Ramallah, December 22 (RHC)-- Most of the Palestinian minors arrested in 2017 have testified that they were subjected to violence and physical abuse by Israeli forces while in custody, a rights group says. Military Court Watch, which monitors the treatment of children in Israeli military detention, said that two-thirds of the 70 Palestinian minor prisoners aged between 12 and 17 had reported slaps, kicks, punches and blows with various objects.

The figure shows an increase when compared to those recorded in the previous years. The rights group said that 61 percent of the Palestinian minors had complained of being threatened by the Israeli soldiers and policemen, up from 47 percent in 2013 and 38 percent in 2014. It also said 93 percent of the Palestinian detainees had reported that they were handcuffed, 79 percent blindfolded and the same percentage forced to sign documents written only in Hebrew.

In 2013, the United Nations children's agency published a report on Palestinian children in Israeli custody, concluding that "the ill treatment of children who come in contact with the military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized throughout the process, from the moment of arrest to indictment of the child, the conviction and issuing of the verdict."

The UNICEF report confirmed that night arrests, cuffing and blindfolding, failure to inform detainees of the right to remain silent and denial of access to lawyers and parents prior to interrogation were part of the

routine treatment of the Palestinian children by Israeli soldiers.

Since the publication of the report, Military Court Watch has collected a total of 540 testimonies from children detained in the West Bank by the Israeli forces. The evidence indicates that the number of the Palestinian children reporting abuse has actually increased from 60 percent in 2013 to 64 percent in 2017.

Almost 6,280 Palestinians are currently being held in Israeli jails, 465 of them under the controversial administrative detention, according to figures provided by the Palestinian prisoners' rights group Addameer. Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes to voice their outrage at the administrative detention, which is a form of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate Palestinians for up to six months. Palestinian prisoners complain that they have been subjected to assault and torture at Israeli prisons.

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