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By Humaira Ahad / PRESS TV

Taqwa Ghazawi, a 12-year-old Palestinian girl, was abducted by Israeli occupation forces in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) on March 6 as she left her school.

Ghazawi was charged with drawing and writing Palestinian national slogans. Her artwork included a watermelon symbol painted in the colors of the Palestinian flag, an emblem of Palestinian identity. She also depicted an inverted triangle, a symbol used by the al-Qassam Brigades in their operational videos, expressing her support for the Palestinian resistance movement.

As an expression of Palestinian culture and identity, her drawings were perceived as a threat by the occupying regime, which has unleashed horror on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

"They put handcuffs on my hands and squeezed them tightly, leaving a visible mark on my hands. I was strip-searched, asked to remove all my clothes, and threatened to be hung from the ceiling. I went without food for four days, drinking only water," Ghazawi was quoted as saying, narrating the details of her horrific ordeal.

Her father, Omar Ghazzawi, expressed shock at the trivial reason for his daughter's arrest.

"What happened to my daughter is a crime against childhood and children in the city of Al-Quds (Jerusalem), and it violates all international rights for children worldwide. And this happened because of a child's scribbles," the father said.

Ghazawi was released under severe conditions, including house arrest, a one-month ban from returning to her family home, a fine of 3,000 shekels (\$818), and a third-party guarantee.

The schoolgirl has been confined to her grandmother's house in the Al-Thawri area, south of occupied Jerusalem al-Quds.

The Israeli regime court ruled that she must remain under house arrest, separated from her parents. The regime has even barred her from attending school.

Israeli occupation authorities have intensified their clampdown on Palestinian festivals, performances, and artistic gatherings in the occupied territories, coinciding with the genocide of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Last month, Israeli regime police raided a long-established Palestinian-owned bookstore in occupied East al-Quds, detaining the owners and confiscating books about the Israeli occupation.

Israel has killed nearly 17,900 children in Gaza since October 2023. In addition to committing genocide, the Zionist regime systematically prosecutes Palestinian children in military courts.

Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP), an NGO advocating for Palestinian children's rights, has documented the illegal detention and prosecution of 500 to 700 Palestinian children each year.

Many of these children are held indefinitely under so-called administrative detention orders without being formally charged.

According to a March 2025 DCIP report: "In 2025, Israeli forces continue to arrest children as young as 10, often during night-time raids, and subject them to physical violence, psychological abuse, and coercive interrogations."

Testimonies collected by DCIP lawyers reveal the dire conditions inside Israeli prisons.

"The prison conditions have deteriorated significantly, with Israeli prison guards regularly serving rotten food, denying access to toilets and showers, and crowding cells with twice the appropriate number of children."

Since launching its genocidal war on Gaza in October 2023, Israel has imposed severe restrictions on prison access as well. Visits from lawyers representing detainees have become extremely difficult, while family visits have been completely stopped.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has during this period reported a sharp increase in the illegal detention of Palestinian children.

"Since 2023, there has been a marked increase in the arrest and detention of Palestinian children, many of whom are subjected to violence and denied basic rights," the agency stated in its February report.

Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem has also documented the systemic torture of Palestinian children in Israeli occupation prisons.

"The Israeli military detention system is designed to intimidate and control the Palestinian population, with children being particularly vulnerable," it noted in a December 2024 report.

Despite mounting international condemnation, the Israeli occupation continues its brutal policies against Palestinian children, seeking to silence even the simplest expressions of their identity and resistance.

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