

Israel Approves Legislation Putting Minors in Prison



Tel Aviv, August 4 (RHC)-- The Israeli parliament has approved a controversial bill that enables the regime to jail children as young as 12 convicted of alleged "terrorist offenses" amid growing acts of violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories.

In an English-language statement, the legislature said the "Youth Bill" passed its second and third readings. The contentious measure "will allow authorities to imprison a minor convicted of serious crimes such as murder, attempted murder or manslaughter even if he or she is under the age of 14." And the statement adds: "To those who are murdered with a knife in the heart, it does not matter if the child is 12 or 15."

The statement went on to claim that alleged recent incidents against Israelis require "a more aggressive approach, including toward minors." It further quoted Israeli MP Anat Berko as claiming that the legislation "was born of necessity."

The "Youth Bill" was initially brought before a ministerial committee last year. At the time, Ayelet Shaked, the Israeli minister of judiciary affairs, voiced his full support for the measure.

Knesset member Yousef Jabareen, however, criticized the bill as an affront to international law, adding that it targets Palestinian children. The Israeli regime "is attempting to oppress and suppress the

Palestinian resistance, but everybody knows that without a serious proposal for advancing the political process, they are doomed to fail,” Jabareen said in March.

The occupied Palestinian territories have been the scene of heightened tensions since August 2015, when Israel imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem al-Quds in an alleged bid to change the status quo of the Muslim site.

More than 220 Palestinians, including children and women, have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in what is regarded as the third Palestinian Intifada (uprising) since the beginning of last October.

The Israeli regime's recent surge of violence against Palestinians comes as over 7,000 Palestinian prisoners, among them minors, are currently held in some 17 Israeli jails. Many of the detainees are held under the so-called administrative detention, which is a sort of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate Palestinians for up to six months.

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