

Defence for Children International / Palestine Section

Israel's Violations of the Right to Life: Palestinian Child Fatalities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory during 2006

Article 3 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 6 Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. States Parties recognise that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Introduction

Throughout the second Intifada, beginning in September 2000, Israel has engaged in gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Israeli military activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) has been excessive and disproportionate. Routinely employing sophisticated military weaponry, including missiles and F16 war planes, Israeli forces have acted with insufficient, or no, regard for the lives of civilian residents of the OPT resulting in particularly high numbers of civilian casualties.

During this period Palestinian children have suffered countless violations of their rights, including violations of the right to life. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2006 there were an estimated 2.1 million children living in the OPT. These children constitute over half (52.3%) of the Palestinian population in the OPT.¹ Their right to life, survival and development is the most fundamental of all human rights of the child.² In spite of this, Israel has repeatedly and arbitrarily deprived Palestinian children of the right to life, in violation of article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which it is a State Party.

In 2006, the Israeli military's lack of respect for Palestinian human rights and for the guidelines that seek to protect civilians in periods of armed conflict (as embodied in international humanitarian law) continued. Throughout the year, the Israeli military employed violent, excessive and disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians. This was evident in the bombardment of civilian houses and infrastructure; the extrajudicial killing of Palestinian activists resulting in the killing of civilian by-standers; and the opening of random gunfire leading to the deaths of children either whilst inside their homes or playing near them. Despite Israel's withdrawal of troops and settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the territory remains occupied. As a result Palestinian civilians, including children, were exposed to numerous violations of international humanitarian law in 2006. Two massive Israeli military offensives in the Gaza Strip during 2006 resulted in high civilian casualties and wide-scale targeting of civilian infrastructure.

¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (20 November 2006): *"On the Occasion of 'International Child Day'"*

² In accordance with definition set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a "child" is anyone under 18 years of age.

In total, Israeli military forces killed 124 Palestinian children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during 2006. This figure brings the number of child deaths caused by military or settler violence during the second Intifada to 852. The number of Palestinian children killed in 2006 is more than double those killed in 2005, when a total of 52 children were killed. Eighty-five percent (85%) of child fatalities in 2006 occurred in the Gaza Strip.

Child Fatalities by Age³

Of the 124 Palestinian children killed in 2006, 31% were aged 12 years and younger, constituting an increase over the previous year. In 2005, 23% of children killed, or 12 out of 52, were aged 12 or younger. Of children killed in 2006, 69% were aged between 13 and 17 years.

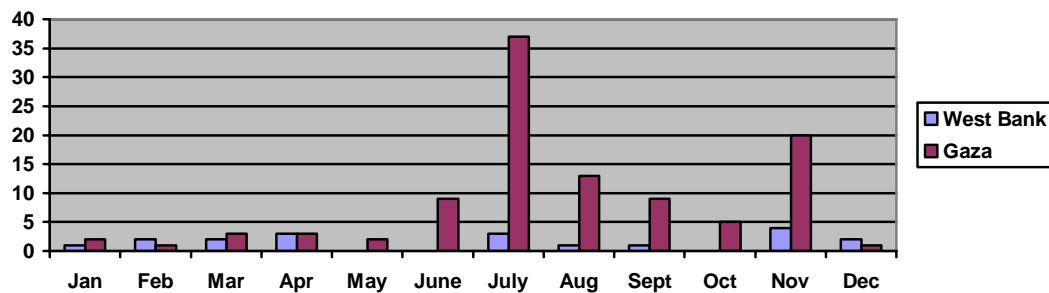
Table 1: Distribution of Child Fatalities in 2006 by Age

Age	0-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	Total
West Bank	1	0	6	12	19
Gaza	25	12	34	34	105
Total	26	12	40	46	124

Child Fatalities by Month

Not a single month passed in 2006 in which a Palestinian child was not killed as a result of the actions of Israeli military forces. On average, ten child fatalities occurred per month. The number of child deaths was exceptionally high in July, during which 40 children were killed, accounting for almost one third of all child fatalities during the year.

Chart 1: Distribution of Child Fatalities in 2006 by Month



Child Fatalities by Geographic Region

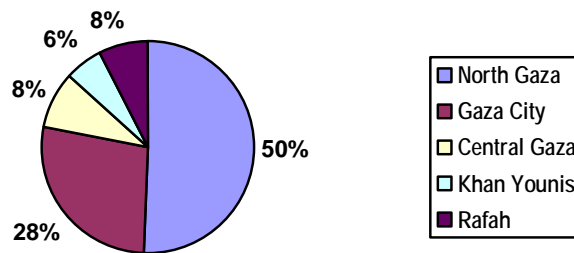
Just over two-thirds of the 2.1 million Palestinian child residents live in the West Bank, with the remaining 821,000 living in the Gaza Strip. Israeli military operations conducted in 2006 affected children throughout both of these areas.

³ The information on child fatalities compiled in this report is provided by the DCI/PS Monitoring and Documentation Unit. To ensure accuracy, DCI/PS fieldworkers collect information from a variety of sources. Eye witness statements and sworn affidavits are taken. Information is corroborated and cross-checked with other human rights organizations, journalists, medical professionals and institutions, local officials, or Israeli government statements.

Of the 124 Palestinian children killed in 2006, 85% of deaths occurred in the Gaza Strip, while 15% occurred in the West Bank. This pattern follows that of previous years; each year since 2003, the majority of child deaths have occurred in the Gaza Strip (see Table 10 below).

In 2006, the majority of child deaths in the West Bank occurred in the districts of Nablus and Jenin, with 47% and 21% of West Bank child deaths, respectively. Of the 105 Palestinian children killed in the Gaza Strip in 2006, 53 were killed in the Northern Gaza district and 29 were killed in Gaza city.

Chart 2: Distribution of Child Fatalities by Region in the Gaza Strip in 2006



Case Study

Haitham Ali Issa Ghalia, 4 months
Hanadi Ali Issa Ghalia, 1 year old
Ilham Ali Issa Ghalia, 5 years old
Sabrina Ali Issa Ghalia, 4 years old

I was sitting with my father, Ali Ghalia, my mother, Hamida, my father's [second] wife Ra'isa, and my 8 siblings. My eldest sister, Amani, and her husband came to visit us on Friday, 9 June 2006, at around 08:00 in the morning. She informed us that she wanted to go to the sea that day with her husband, Anan, and her children. My sister, Sabrina, who is no more than 4 years old, asked my father to allow us to go to the sea with my sister's family. At that time, we had just finished our exams and so we wanted to take a picnic to the sea. At first my father refused, but we insisted so he agreed.

At around 14:00, or perhaps 14:20, after my father had arrived back from Friday prayers, we went to the beach in Al Sudaniya, near Al Waha hotel on Beit Lahiya beach. ... After we reached the beach, we were very happy because we hadn't seen the beach for over one year. My siblings Sabrina, Latifa, Hadeel, Adham, and Ilham, and I rushed to the sea to swim. My father and my mother, and my father's wife, and my sister, and her husband, started to arrange our things. They were about 10 metres away from me and my siblings. We swam a lot. There were other families on the beach. They were also swimming and playing, or sitting quietly.

While I was swimming with my siblings I heard the sound of an explosion. I looked to the north and saw dust blowing approximately 100 metres away. My father started shouting to us "Get out of the sea quickly! We want to go back." So we rushed to my father and my mother and started to change our clothes which were full of salt water. The cold air started to penetrate my body to the extent that I began to shiver. We were sitting in a circle. To my left was my sister Amani, and to my right, Ilham and my baby brother Haitham- my

father's wife was holding him and feeding him. Next to them sat my mother with Hanadi who was sitting on her knee. Adham and Latifa sat next to them. My father was standing with Anan, my sister's husband, with their sons Saber and Mohamad. They were about two metres away from us. I took a blanket and put it around myself because I was feeling cold and I then sat on a chair.

Then about another four shells fell, the second of which was about 100 metres away from us- closer than the first one. We were confused. Some of the ships were approaching the beach. The fourth artillery fell while I was sitting on the chair. I couldn't move and I didn't know what was going on. It fell amongst us. I didn't see anything because there was dust everywhere.

I rushed towards my mother. She was running with Hanadi in her arms. My mother went to my brother, Adham. I was following her and she was screaming and telling people who were trying to approach her "Carry my son, I am ok." She was feeling pain and did not realize that my sister Hanadi, who was in her arms, had died. I went to my sister Ilham and I saw her head from the back. It was totally open and her brains were outside. Sabrine's mouth had been blown away, and Hanadi's head and hand were separated from her body. I saw these body parts near her and she was not moving. The nose and mouth of my father's wife, Ra'isa, were full of blood and many of her facial features were lost. My brother Haitham's head was covered in blood. My sister Amani's hand had been blown away and her intestines were outside her abdomen. My older sister Alia was screaming "Help me! Help me!" And my sister, Iham, was saying in a weak voice "Wipe the blood from my face".

At that time people started to carry my siblings. I looked towards the place where my father had been standing with my brother in law. There was a small hill to the south. I looked towards it and I saw my father lying on the ground. It looked like he was sleeping so I rushed towards him. I was trembling not because of the cold but because I was so scared. I saw his intestines outside his stomach. At that time, other people who had been picnicking by the sea arrived, and they started to carry my siblings. The ambulances also arrived and evacuated my siblings, my father, my mother, and my sister, and also myself. I was injured slightly in my thigh and in my head, but I didn't feel the pain because of the difficult injuries which my siblings and family had sustained.

I went to Kamal Odwan Hospital where I realized that my father, and his wife Ra'isa and my sisters Alia, Ilham, Sabrine, Hanadi, and my brother Haitham, had died. My brother, Adham, and my sisters Amani and Iham were critically injured. They transferred my mother to Al Shifa hospital with Latifa, and Hadeel.

The most difficult scene I saw in my life was on the next day when I looked for the last time at the bodies of my five siblings, and my father, and my father's wife. Since that day I see these scenes in my dreams and in these dreams I hear the voice of my sister Alia saying "Help me! Help me!" After that she died. I also hear the voice of my mother saying "I am ok. Carry my son." [In these dreams] I also see the body parts and the blood scenes. They fill my eyes.

Circumstances Surrounding Child Fatalities in 2006

Of the 124 Palestinian children killed during 2006, 53% were killed during or as a result of air, ground, or sea attacks launched by the Israeli military. All of these deaths occurred in the Gaza Strip. Roughly 18% of child deaths in 2006 were the result of random gunfire from the Israeli military, with an additional 18% of child deaths occurring as a result of an assassination attempt by the Israeli military. In the West Bank, Palestinian children were killed, primarily, during stone

throwing incidents or when there were nearby clashes with the Israeli military (47%) or as a result of random gunfire from Israeli military forces (42%).⁴

The year 2006 witnessed the greatest number of Palestinian children killed, since the beginning of the second Intifada, as a result of Israel's policy of assassinating Palestinians allegedly involved in resistance activities.⁵ Twenty-two children were killed in this way in 2006, representing some 18% of children killed during the course of the year. None of these children was the target of an assassination attempt; rather, they were simply present in the area, not an uncommon occurrence given that Israel routinely carries out these assassinations in public and often heavily populated areas.

Approximately 43% of Palestinian children killed in 2006 died as a result of sustaining wounds from a missile or missile shrapnel, while 31% of children killed in 2006 died after sustaining gunshot wounds from live rounds or rubber-coated steel bullets.

Table 2: Circumstance Surrounding Child Fatalities

	Clashes and Stone Throwing	Air, ground and sea attacks	During an assassination attempt	Random gunfire	Unexploded Ordnance	Total
West Bank	9	0	2	8	0	19
Gaza Strip	1	66	20	15	3	105
Total	10	66	22	23	3	124

Table 3: Type of Ammunition Causing Child Fatality

	Bullets*	Tank shells & shrapnel	Missile & shrapnel	UXO	Other	Total
West Bank	19	0	0	0	0	19
Gaza	19	26	53	3	4	105
Total	38	26	53	3	4	124

*Live or rubber-coated steel bullets

Table 4: Distribution of Child Fatalities by Location of Injury

	Head	Neck	Chest	Back	Asphyxiation	Abdomen	Waist	More than one place	Total
West Bank	9	0	2	1	0	1	1	5	19
Gaza	16	3	7	1	1	1	0	76	105
Total	25	3	9	2	1	2	1	81	124

Case Study

Ibrahim Mohammed Ibrahim Sanajreh, 16 years old

⁴ "Clashes" refer to situations where Israeli soldiers were engaged in combat with Palestinian adults, but children were caught-up in the middle of this.

⁵ For a breakdown of Palestinian children killed during assassination attempts between 2000 and 2005, see DCI/PS publication, *Sustained Occupation, Suspended Dreams: An Analysis of Human Rights Violations Against Palestinian Children in 2005*, p.25. Available at <http://www.dci-pal.org>.

In the early hours of Friday, 3 November 2006, Ahmad Sanajreh, a man wanted by the Israeli authorities, was killed in Balata Refugee Camp near Nablus. Shortly after his death, Ahmed's 16 year old brother, Ibrahim, went with his cousin, Ihab, and a few of their friends in search of some of Ahmad's possessions on the street where Ahmad was injured. Ihab recounted to DCI/PS on 8 November 2006 what happened next:

Ibrahim asked me to go to the place where Ahmad, his brother, had been injured. Five of us went there. When we got to the Shtiwi family house, which is about 15 metres away from where Ahmad was injured, we met Walid Al Hamami, who lives in that house. He told us not to go further into that area, fearing that there was a hidden Israeli military point somewhere nearby. He was not exactly sure where. I asked Ibrahim to stop, but he wanted to continue. He proceeded towards where his brother had been injured to see the place and to look for some of his brother's possessions, such as his mobile telephone. He walked forward, about 7 metres in front of us, but he could not see any of Ahmed's things. We tried to call him back and then he started to cry. We went further to approach him, and at that time Ibrahim turned round to face us.

Suddenly there was shooting towards us coming from behind Ibrahim. I tried to hide and some of the other guys did the same, but Ibrahim had been injured. He threw himself towards one of our friends. I tried to pick Ibrahim up and hold him. Without realising, I put my hand on his thigh, which was where he was injured. Ibrahim screamed loudly.

We carried him and ran towards the Shtiwi family house which was only a few metres away. A member of the Shtiwi family came towards us to help. When we got to the Shtiwi house I fell down with exhaustion and I didn't know what was happening. It was a long time before an ambulance came. Ibrahim kept bleeding and some of the guys tried to give him first aid. His face had turned yellow. The ambulance eventually arrived. The paramedics refused to let us go in the ambulance because they were afraid of the Israeli army. They drove him away with his mother- she had come to that place after he was injured.

Early the next morning, I found out that he was dead.

Child fatalities during Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, "Summer Rains" and "Autumn Clouds"

In the second half of the year 2006 Israel conducted two massive military campaigns in the Gaza Strip, codenamed "Summer Rains" and "Autumn Clouds". Both of these campaigns were extremely destructive and resulted in high numbers of Palestinian child casualties.

During these operations, the Israeli army terrorized the civilian population by attacking residential areas and repeatedly flying war planes over the area. The Israeli military launched a new practice of telephoning Palestinian homes, informing residents that their house was about to be bombed. Additionally, the army created a humanitarian crisis by bombing civilian infrastructure, including the Gaza power station and main roads and bridges.

The Israeli military launched the first of these two military offensives, "Summer Rains," in late June 2006. Although clashes and small-scale incursions into the Gaza Strip by Israeli forces had occurred during the first half of 2006, operation "Summer Rains" was the first major Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip since the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlers from the territory in August to September 2005.

The operation officially began on 28 June 2006 following the 25 June capture by Palestinian groups of an Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. Operation "Summer Rains" was an intensification of the Israeli military's ongoing siege of the Gaza Strip. During the first few weeks of June, prior to the capture of the Israeli soldier, Israeli military attacks on the Gaza Strip had resulted in the deaths of 9 Palestinian children.

After "Summer Rains" was launched, Palestinian civilians became the victims of military attacks on a near-daily basis. The military offensive had a severe impact on public health and safety. Water pipes were damaged causing water shortages, and the flooding of untreated sewerage in turn contaminated remaining drinking water. The UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland observed "We are appalled by seeing how they're playing with the future of defenseless civilians, including children," and warned that, as of 29 June, Gaza was three days away from a humanitarian crisis.⁶ Israeli military operations in Gaza were intensified again on 1 November 2006 in an operation codenamed "Autumn Clouds".

Palestinian civilians and children in particular, bore the brunt of the bombardments and the invasions conducted by the Israeli military during these two operations. Throughout the period of these military campaigns, the Israeli military displayed insufficient regard for the safety of civilians. This was evident through repeated attacks on densely-populated civilian areas and through attacks on civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, ambulances and schools. Moreover, the Israeli military's use of disproportionate force and its choice of extremely destructive military hardware in civilian areas made it foreseeable that civilian deaths and injuries, including among children, would ensue. The reasons offered by Israeli officials to justify the military attacks (such as to secure the release of the Israeli soldier, or put an end to the launching of home-made missiles towards Israeli towns) do not excuse Israel from its obligation under international law to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

Case Study

Mahfouz Farid Nasser, 16 years old
Ahmed Fathi Shabat, 17 years old
Ahmad Ghaleb Abu Amshah, 16 years old
Raji Omar Deif Alla, 17 years old

Having arrived together at the mosque for prayers, at around 16:00 on 10 July 2006, Mahmoud Farid Nasser separated from his 16 year old brother Mahfouz and went to meet his friends in the mosque. Mahfouz met his own friends Ahmad Shabat, Ahmad Abu Amsha, Raji Deif Allah, and Mohamad al Athamneh. The two groups prayed separately. After prayers, Mahmoud went to his friends' house. They drank tea as they sat on a gate overlooking the agricultural school in Beit Hanoun, northern Gaza. Mahmoud recalled what he witnessed to DCI/PS on 31 July 2006:

...I saw my brother, Mahfouz, pass by with his friends. They were on their way to the agricultural school to play football. They were wearing their sports clothes. My friend and I sat in front of his house for about one and a half hours.

⁶Financial Times (28 June 2006): "Israel steps up Gaza airstrikes."

At around 19:30 I heard the sound of two missiles launched by Palestinian combatants from Shawa Farm, located to the north of the agricultural school. I stood on the chair to see the white smoke coming from the missiles. Meanwhile, there was a drone [flying above]. The sound of the drone became louder after the missiles had been launched.

I saw Mohamad Naseer and Khalid Hamad return from playing football. They had been playing with Mahfouz in the same school so I tried to see whether he and his friends, had also left.

Then, I heard the sound of a missile being launched from the spy plane towards the school. This was far from the place where the two missiles had been launched - about 350 metres away, so I started running towards the school to find out about Mahfouz.

When I reached the school I saw that some of my other neighbours were there. I heard them saying that the school had been hit. They said that the school was empty, but I saw Mohamad al Athamneh approaching the destroyed wall of the school carrying Ahmad Shabat. I ran outside towards the destroyed wall and I saw Ahmad Abu Amsha bleeding on the floor. I saw that Raji Deif Allah had been injured in his neck and he was bleeding too. I didn't see Mahfouz. There were pieces of flesh everywhere. Then I saw Mohamad al Athamneh screaming. He was saying that these body parts, without a head and without limbs, belonged to Mahfouz. I kept saying "No! How do you know?" I was crying but I refused to believe what Mohamad al Athamneh was saying. He was shaking like me. As he was screaming, he told me that the white long shorts [lying in front of us] belonged to Mahfouz. I collapsed because the scene was overwhelming. I closed my eyes because I did not want to see my brother in this way.

The ambulance crew, and other people, collected the pieces of his scattered body and put them into sacks.

Mahfouz Farid Nasser, Ahmad Fathi Shabat and Ahmad Abu Amshah were killed on 10 July 2006. Raji Omar Deif Alla was critically injured and died on 13 July 2006

Circumstances surrounding Child Fatalities during "Summer Rains" and "Autumn Clouds"

The Israeli military offensives "Summer Rains" and "Autumn Clouds" resulted in significantly high numbers of child deaths, particularly in northern Gaza and Gaza City. Of the child fatalities that occurred in July 2006, 37 (97%) took place in Gaza Strip, corresponding with the upsurge in violence resulting from "Summer Rains". In November 2006, following the onset of "Autumn Clouds", there were 24 child fatalities in Gaza Strip. From the beginning of operation "Summer Rains" on 28 June 2006 to the ceasefire agreed on 26 November 2006, 84 children were killed as a result of Israeli military attacks on Gaza Strip.

In 42 out of 84 cases (50%) children were killed as a result of being hit directly by Israeli ammunition. These children were hit either in the upper body or head by sniper bullets or other gun fire; or by missiles that directly hit the children resulting in the fragmentation the child's body.

In the case of the remaining 42 child fatalities, the children died as a result of being hit indirectly from shelling or other artillery. Within this category, 13 children were killed during the targeted assassination of another Palestinian. These children died when they were either in the same building shelled, or hit by a missile, in order to assassinate another target; or were outside and were killed by shrapnel artillery from a targeted assassination. One child within this category was

killed by an Israeli UXO (unexploded ordnance) and two children were killed from other circumstances as they fled from the shelling of civilian areas.⁷

Case Study

Shahed Sameer 'Aocal, 7 months old

Maria Sameer 'Aocal, 5 years old

Sumaia Sameer 'Aocal, 14 years old

On 26 July 2006, the Sameer 'Aocal family were sitting in the courtyard outside their house in the Al Qerm neighbourhood, east of the town of Jabaliya in the Gaza Strip. An Israeli military offensive was taking place at that time on Al Rayes Mountain, about 800m from their house. At around 18:50, the father heard a commotion outside their front door and went to investigate. He opened the door to see an Israeli tank firing a shell at the wall surrounding his house. His wife, and daughters Maria, 5 years old, and Shahed, 7 months old, were killed instantly. His other two daughters, Amani, 4 years old, and Sumaia, 14 years old, suffered serious shrapnel injuries. Sumaia died from her injuries on 1 August 2006. Nine-year-old Mohamed Sameer 'Aocal spoke to DCI/PS fieldworkers on 7 August 2006:

....At around 18:00, my mother asked me to go in to look for her nail clippers and so I went inside. I did not know where the nail clippers were, but it was an opportunity for me to go into the house to see where the vehicles were [on the hill]. My sister Heba followed me inside to help me search for the nail clippers.

All of a sudden I heard the sound of a shell hitting our house. It was terrifying. I was very scared. The shell was very close to us. I didn't know where exactly, but it was in our house, or in front of our house in the street The dust entered the room to the extent that I became unable to see. I could hear my sister, Heba, screaming. The dust increased to the extent that I felt that I was suffocating. Then I saw my father screaming and entering the house carrying my sister Amani. I was crying and screaming. My father's face was covered with dust. My sister Amani was bleeding from her foot. My father took hold of me and my sister Heba after he realised that we were ok. He got us out of the room and out of the door to the house, which leads to the courtyard,

I saw that most of my family had died. My sister Maria had fallen on the ground. Her face and head were bleeding. The chairs that we were sitting on were broken into pieces and had fallen on top of her. Then I saw that my mother was also on the ground. Blood was leaking on the tiles of the courtyard. Beside her I saw Shahed lying on her face. She was not moving. Then I saw Sumaia on the ground and saw that she was bleeding from every part of her body. The swing and the swing frame had fallen on her head. Then I saw that the wall around the courtyard had been damaged and it was now possible to see into the street. Stones were scattered all over the courtyard.

After that I heard my father calling "Ambulance! Ambulance!" to our neighbours. He was shouting as loud as he could. I completely broke down. This scene was the most difficult that I have ever seen in my life. My neighbours and my uncle's sons entered through the courtyard and carried me and Heba to my uncle's house. I was crying and shaking. My sister Heba lost consciousness at this time. I wanted them to take me to my mother and siblings, but my uncle's wife and daughters would not let me go.

⁷ In one case, a grandmother tripped as she ran to escape shelling, dropping her grandchild, ultimately leading to the child's death; in the second case a loose pole from a swing-frame fell on a child's head as the result of shelling nearby.

Shahed and Maria were dead and my mother died later that evening. My sister Sumaia was critically injured and she died 5 days later on 1 August 2006.

Child Injuries in 2006

For every child killed by the Israeli military, many others have sustained physical injury and many more suffer psychological trauma. Some of these children will never fully recover from their wounds and will suffer from permanent pain and disabilities.

Due to the volume of injury, DCI/PS is unable to systematically document all incidents of child injury. However, drawing on its own fieldwork in addition to information collected from the Ministry of Health, hospitals and by other human rights organisations working in the OPT⁸, DCI/PS estimates that over 400 children were injured as a result of the Israeli occupation in 2006.⁹

Case Study

Sameh Nizar 'Adel Al Shafi'e, 17 years old

On 6 April 2006, 17 year old Sameh Nizar 'Adel Al Shafi'e was walking with a friend through a garden in Nablus. An Israeli military incursion was going on at the time, but these boys were unarmed and were not taking part in any hostility. A paramedic, who was near the boys, saw an Israeli military jeep drive between his ambulance and the boys. He was no longer able to see the boys, but heard a gunshot. He recounted what happened next to DCI/PS on 11 April 2006:

... After hearing the shot we went immediately, to find out where the bullet had been directed and to whom. I asked a bystander where the two boys were or if they had run away. One of the boys had run away; we could not see the other. We then heard a woman shouting "Injured! Injured!" from one of the buildings and we ran immediately towards where she was pointing. We were afraid that the military would shoot us but we ran quickly without paying attention to our fear. We found a boy injured on the ground. It sounded like he was snoring and he was making strange sounds. He had been hit by a bullet in the head and had fallen down banging the back of his head on a stone when he fell. I thought that he was going to die. I moved him from the area where he was lying. The ground was rough so I had to start giving him first aid on uneven ground. Blood covered all of his face.

It was very hard for the ambulance to arrive in the garden where we were because the ground was very rocky and the land was uneven. We had to push the ambulance because the ground was so rough. We then started to transfer the boy from where he was lying into the ambulance. He was then immediately transferred to the hospital. The other boy had run away, and disappeared from the place. We did not see any school bags with the boys, but I think they were students.

No conflicts were taking place in the area where the children were walking and nobody was throwing stones in the area either. After the shot was fired people began to throw stones.

⁸ Including Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), PLO Negotiations Affairs Department Palestinian Monitoring Group and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA oPt).

⁹ Figure excludes incidents of psychological trauma.

... Sameh died from his injuries from this incident on 9 April 2006.

Child Injuries during “Summer Rains” and “Autumn Clouds”

During the military offensives in the Gaza Strip between the end of June to 26 November 2006, it is estimated that for every child killed, at least four were injured. July and November 2006 experienced the highest numbers of child injuries, which correlates with the highest months for child fatalities.

From 28 June to 26 November 2006, Israeli military attacks on the Gaza Strip resulted in injury to over 360 Palestinian children. Of these, 45% occurred in the district of Northern Gaza and 23% occurred in Gaza city.

DCI/PS has received information on the age of almost one third (110) of the children injured in Gaza from 28 June to 26 November. Of this sample, 47% of the injured children were below 13 years of age. This is higher than the percentage of children in the same age group who were killed during this period (32%).

DCI/PS has also confirmed the circumstances surrounding the injury of 298 children, some 82% of the children injured in the Gaza Strip from 28 June -26 November 2006. Of these, 75% were injured as a result of sea, ground and air attacks. This was also the largest cause of death amongst children during this period (64%).

Table 5: Distribution of Child Injuries in the Gaza Strip, 28 June and 26 November

	June*	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov*	Total
Gaza Strip	3	148	50	27	16	119	363

* Note: June figure includes injuries from 28-30 June; November figure are for 1-26 November.

Table 6: Distribution of Child injuries in the Gaza Strip by Age, 28 June – 26 November 2006

	0-3	4-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	u/c*	Total
Injuries	12	16	24	31	27	253	363

*This column represents data on injured children for which DCI/PS is unable to obtain confirmation

Table 7: Distribution of Child Injuries in the Gaza Strip by Region, 28 June – 26 November 2006

	Northern Gaza	Gaza City	Central Gaza	Khan Younis	Rafah	u/c*	Total
Injuries	164	84	49	9	55	2	363

*This column represents data on injured children for which DCI/PS is unable to obtain confirmation

Table 8: Distribution of Child Injuries in the Gaza Strip according to Circumstances Surrounding Injury, 28 June – 26 November 2006

	Clashes	Sea, Ground and Air Attacks	During Assassination Attempts	Random open gunfire	UXO	u/c*	Total
Injuries	0	223	5	66	4	65	363

*This column represents data on injured children for which DCI/PS is unable to obtain confirmation

Child Fatalities since the Beginning of the Second Intifada

From the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000 until the end of 2006, Israeli military, police and settler presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory resulted in the deaths of 852 Palestinian children.

With the exception of November 2000, when 45 Palestinian children were killed by the Israeli army, July 2006 was the deadliest month for Palestinian children since the beginning of the second Intifada, recording 40 child fatalities.

Child fatalities in the Gaza Strip have accounted for 62% of all child fatalities in the OPT since the beginning of the second Intifada in 2000. In the West Bank, the Nablus District has been the location of the greatest number of child deaths since September 2000, with 28% of child deaths. The second greatest number of child deaths in the West Bank occurred in the Jenin District, with 22% of child deaths since the beginning of the second Intifada occurring there.

Table 9: Distribution of Child Fatalities by Month since September 2000

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	35	45	11	94
2001	3	3	8	12	9	5	8	8	12	6	9	15	98
2002	3	9	35	36	15	10	13	10	12	19	16	14	192
2003	11	12	18	14	17	8	1	6	7	15	9	12	130
2004	6	3	15	14	36	8	13	9	25	21	6	6	162
2005	20	4	2	3	2	1	6	6	3	4	1	0	52
2006	3	3	5	6	2	9	40	14	10	5	24	3	124
Total	46	34	83	85	81	41	81	53	72	105	110	61	852

Table 10: Distribution of Child Fatalities by Area since September 2000

Region	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
2000	50	43	94*
2001	34	64	98
2002	108	84	192
2003	56	74	130
2004	32	130	162
2005	24	28	52
2006	19	105	124
Total	323	528	852

* Note: Included in the total for 2000 and the overall total is one child who was killed in Israel.

Case Study

Khitam Mohamed Tayeh, 11 years old

On 24 July 2006, 11 year old Khitam Mohamed Tayeh was playing with her 13 year old sister, Noha. They were going to a shop in the closed market near their house west of Izbeit Beit Hanoun, Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, to buy a game. The market is near building No. 10 in the area of Abraj Al Nada, which had

suffered heavy shelling earlier that day. As the girls arrived at the shop, at around 18:15, the market was hit by a shell from an Israeli tank. Khitam sustained serious injuries to the head and died 15 minutes after arriving at Shifa hospital. Noha was injured by shrapnel in her right leg. She gave an affidavit to DCI/PS on 14 August 2006:

In the evening of Monday, 24 July 2006, at around 18:00, my sister Khitam, 11 years old, and I took our pocket money from our father My sister Khitam and I soon agreed that we would buy the board-game "Snakes and Ladders" and some sweets.

So we went to buy "Snakes and Ladders" from Abu Isma'il in his shop no more than 20 metres away from our house. Our house is situated in the centre of Izbeit Beit Hanoun, Beit Hanoun, near Abu Baker Al Sadiq mosque.

We didn't find "Snakes and Ladders" at Abu Isma'il's shop, so we agreed to go to Abu Safi's shop which is located near building No. 10 in Abraj Al Nada. It is far away from our house, about 600 metres. My sister Khitam had seen this game in Abu Safi's shop [before]. So we went together to Abu Safi's shop. I was scared as I was walking because shells were falling near Abraj Al Nada building No.10, near the shop [we were going to], and on that day, three men had been killed in that area.

When we approached Abraj Al Nada buildings I walked even closer to Khitam. There were only a few children who were in the area. When Khitam and I came close to the shop, about 20 metres away, we saw that it was closed. Khitam and I were sad because we couldn't buy the board-game. So we turned around to go back home. At that time I heard the sound of an explosion far away. Then I heard a sound in the air passing above our heads so we ran faster, and all of a sudden a huge explosion took place. At that time I was unable to see anything. I fell on the ground because of the explosion. I could not see Khitam near me. When the dust settled, I felt a pain in my right thigh. A young person came and carried me in his arms towards a yellow taxi. They took me to Balsam military hospital which is near Abraj Al Nada.

I did not know what had happened to Khitam, but when I left the hospital I heard that she had died, without playing "Snakes and Ladders."

Conclusion

Throughout 2006 Israeli military forces have arbitrarily deprived Palestinian children of their right to life. This rights violation has occurred in the midst of numerous violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The use of excessive and disproportionate force was a key characteristic of many of Israel's military operations in the OPT during the year. Such force included the use of military weaponry designed for warfare in densely-populated residential areas, where it would be easily foreseeable that civilian casualties would likely result. In 2006, Israel's ongoing policy of assassinating Palestinian political activists in civilian areas resulted in the greatest number of innocent Palestinian children killed in this manner during the second Intifada.

Collective punishment formed a key element of Israeli military action in the OPT in 2006. Not only did the Israeli military repeatedly fail to take sufficient measures to protect the civilian population, in numerous instances it actively acted to ensure that the entire civilian population suffered as a result of its military actions. This was particularly evident in late June 2006 when the Israeli military

launched a major offensive against the Gaza Strip. The first few days of this offensive were marked by Israel's destruction of the Gaza power station and key roads and bridges throughout the Gaza Strip, along with repeated breaking of the "sound barrier", causing sonic booms that shattered windows and created a perpetual state of panic among the civilian population

Israel's greater use of military force in 2006 resulted in the death toll among Palestinian children doubling from 2005 to 2006. However, Israel's use of excessive military force against the Palestinian civilian population is not a new phenomenon. Israel has consistently used violent tactics against the civilian population during the course of its occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. Such violent measures have been utilized in order to control the lives of millions of civilians and quash any resistance to Israel's oppressive, discriminatory military rule. In 2006, as in years past, it is Palestinian children, and their rights, that have borne the brunt of Israel's violence.