

2025

A specialized analytical study on the reality of the child protection sector in Jerusalem Governorate:

# ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE, TORTURE, ILL-TREATMENT, AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS



الرؤيا الفلسطينية  
PALESTINIAN VISION



**A specialized analytical study on the reality of the  
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**Root causes of violence, torture,  
ill-treatment, and Future Aspirations**

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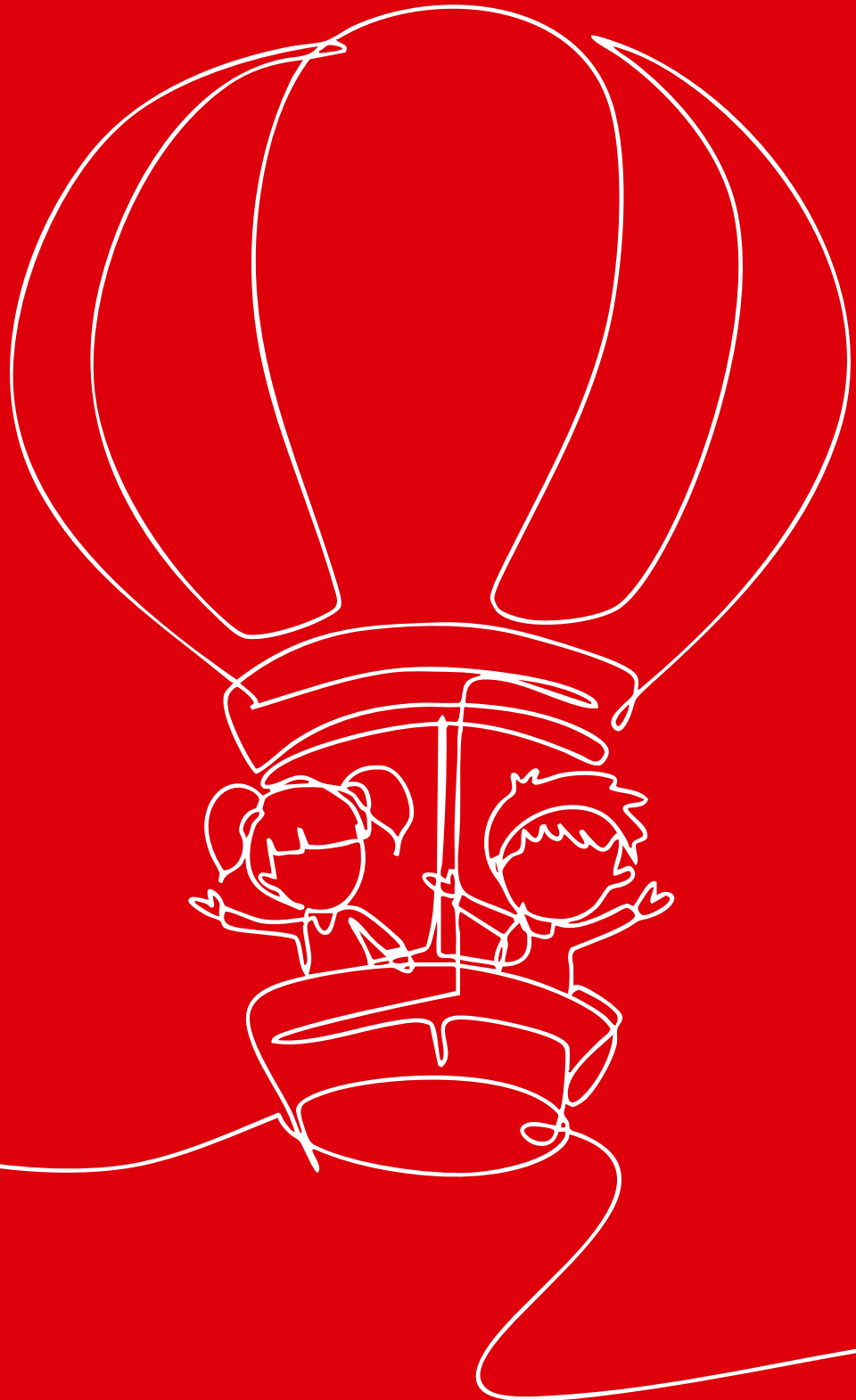
**October 2024**

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# Executive Summary



1. This study provides a comprehensive and specialized analysis of the reality of children in the Jerusalem Governorate. It is the first of its kind in terms of holism and specialty, highlighting the most critical patterns of grave violations and international crimes perpetrated against Jerusalemite children, their families, in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The study draws on the researcher's practical experience. It incorporates insights from civil society organizations, human rights bodies, grassroots actors, and official and non-official stakeholders alike, working within and beyond the Separation Wall, including international entities. The analysis focuses on key issues such as the intentional killing and physical harm of Palestinian children in Jerusalem, repeated arbitrary detentions, house arrest policies, collective punishment, and other forms of violence, torture, and ill-treatment. It also explores these violations' profound social, economic, cultural, and psychological impacts on children and their families. The study further examines the highly complex and challenging operational environment in Jerusalem, shaped by the ongoing colonial occupation and apartheid system. These dynamics, which have intensified over time, contribute to a growing sense of alienation between the State of Palestine, the occupied city of Jerusalem, and its indigenous children, posing an imminent threat to the resilience and cohesion of the community.

2. This specialized study provides a focused and in-depth analysis of the grave violations and international crimes targeting Palestinian children in Jerusalem by the Israeli Armed Forces, which have escalated at an unprecedented rate since October 7, 2023 (**the deadliest year for children in Jerusalem**). The analysis is framed within the context of international humanitarian law, particularly the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention, both of which apply to armed conflicts and situations of military occupation. It also draws on international human rights law, specifically the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT), which are essential to the protection of Palestinian children in Jerusalem. The study further examines international criminal law, particularly the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in classifying and prosecuting international crimes committed against Palestinian children in Jerusalem. In addition, it considers the role of international adjudication, particularly the International Court of Justice (ICJ), as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. This includes the ICJ's 2004 advisory opinion on the legality of the Separation Wall and its 2024 advisory opinion on the illegality of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. It also references the 2024 United Nations General Assembly resolution on the ICJ's advisory opinion and its mechanisms, as well as the ICJ's provisional measures in the case filed by South Africa against Israel. The researcher finds strong and credible evidence, based on the analysis and legal comparisons, of the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide targeting Palestinian children in Jerusalem.

3. The legal analysis examines the situation of children in the Jerusalem Governorate within the framework of Palestinian legislation, specifically the amended Palestinian Basic Law of 2003 and its subsequent amendments, the Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 and its amendments, and the Capital Law No. 4 of 2002, along with its associated obligations. It also addresses recent laws by decrees published in the official gazette concerning the ratification of international conventions, as well as the 2024 Emergency Plan currently under development by the new Palestinian government, highlighting its provisions related to the child protection sector in Jerusalem. Furthermore, the analysis investigates the obligations and responsibilities of the State of Palestine, both at the official and non-official levels, regarding the rights and welfare of Palestinian children in Jerusalem.

4. This specialized study has drawn significant conclusions and recommendations aimed at safeguarding the child protection sector in Jerusalem from collapse amid ongoing isolation, persecution, and apartheid, as well as the injustices faced by those closest to the affected communities. The following are the key findings of this study:

4.1 The prolonged Israeli colonial occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in conjunction with the entrenched system of persecution and apartheid—particularly evident in the occupied city of Jerusalem—represents the principal driver of violence and violations against children in the Jerusalem Governorate. This situation is further compounded by complex internal factors stemming from the occupation and apartheid regime.

4.2 The grave violations and international crimes against children in the Jerusalem Governorate, which have escalated since October 7, 2023, are not isolated incidents carried out by the occupying military forces and armed settler militias; rather, they represent a systematic (**state policy**) targeting the child protection sector and the occupied city of Jerusalem, aimed at displacing its Indigenous population and denying them their right to self-determination. These actions constitute fully realized international crimes that necessitate accountability and redress. The pervasive culture of impunity and double standards has facilitated the continuation and escalation of these violations and crimes.

4.3 While the international community observes with alarm the ongoing grave violations and international crimes in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, a **profound nightmare and pervasive violence specifically target Jerusalemite children** in the Jerusalem Governorate. The year 2023 has become the deadliest on record for children in both Jerusalem and the West Bank, with a staggering (250%) increase in child fatalities. In the Jerusalem Governorate alone, child victims account for (17.5%) of the total child casualties in the West Bank, a figure that starkly underscores the extent of targeted violence. The rate of arbitrary arrests of Palestinian children in Jerusalem by the occupying authorities exceeds the total number of arrests of Palestinian children across all other governorates in the West Bank **“combined”** in the years preceding October 7, 2023. Moreover, the policy of house arrest imposed on Jerusalemite children has effectively turned parents into **“jailers,”** resulting in collective punishment that has inflicted catastrophic psychological and social repercussions.

4.4 The lack of a clearly articulated Palestinian policy concerning the occupied city of Jerusalem and its children, alongside the prevailing policies of persecution and apartheid, coupled with the notable deficiencies of both official and unofficial Palestinian entities in addressing issues related to Jerusalem, its children, and its institutions—particularly regarding interventions, programs, and financial allocations—has engendered a profound sense of **“alienation”** between the State of Palestine and Jerusalem, as well as its child population. The continuation of this status quo poses a significant threat to the **“collapse”** of the resilience factors that sustain Jerusalemite families, their children, and their institutions.

4.5 Institutions operating within the city of Jerusalem encounter substantial challenges in **“monitoring and documentation”** of Israeli violations against children, as well as a lack of effective advocacy and accountability programs within the context of isolation and systematic persecution. Furthermore, there is a significant inadequacy in addressing the psychological and social impacts of these violations, particularly regarding the establishment of safe and child-friendly environments, trauma-informed interventions, peer support mechanisms, child protection networks, and investment in early childhood development programs that incorporate disability inclusion.



4.6 Despite the highly complex environment in which Jerusalemite institutions operate to protect and care for children, and the substantial needs across various legal, developmental, social, economic, and psychological domains, these interventions and programs remain absent from the agendas of donor states and organizations. This situation reflects a state of “**double standards**” that is inconsistent with their obligations under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 1, common), as well as the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice and the resolutions of the General Assembly issued in 2024.

5. In light of these conclusions, as well as others elaborated upon at the end of the study, the recommendations have been grouped into three levels: the international level, addressing the obligations of states, international bodies, and organizations; the national level, focusing on the responsibilities of the State of Palestine; and the local level, pertinent to the occupied city of Jerusalem. Below is a summary of the key recommendations derived from the study that warrant immediate attention and prioritization:

5.1 States, United Nations entities, international organizations, and donor agencies are urged to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities towards the protection of children in Jerusalem in light of ongoing policies of oppression, apartheid, and other violations by Israel targeting this vulnerable population. The Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 1, common), the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the illegality of Israeli occupation and its consequential implications (2024), as well as the General Assembly resolution related to that advisory opinion and Israel’s policies and practices in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem (2024), serve as a “**roadmap**” for a comprehensive series of measures that can be undertaken to promote accountability, justice, and the provision of technical and financial assistance. These measures are critical to avert the collapse of the child protection sector in Jerusalem and to ensure the sustained operation of institutions dedicated to the welfare of Jerusalemite children.

5.2 International organizations and bodies should intensify their efforts in **monitoring, documenting, and reporting** on the international violations and crimes perpetrated by Israel against children in Jerusalem. This requires a departure from the current **ambiguity** reflected in their statements, reports, and indicators regarding violations in Jerusalem, which are often subsumed under the general phrase “**in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.**” This lack of specificity highlights significant shortcomings in the monitoring and documentation framework concerning violations within Jerusalem and impedes the establishment of clear indicators, prioritization of interventions, and the development of effective response mechanisms.

5.3 The Palestinian government should expeditiously formulate a **clearly articulated policy** regarding the occupied Jerusalem Governorate and the rights of children in Jerusalem. This policy must be grounded in a thorough understanding of the internal dynamics and the complex operational environment within Jerusalem, fostering a **collaborative and integrative approach with Jerusalemite institutions**. It should define specific roles and responsibilities, implement robust oversight mechanisms to ensure the safety and integrity of execution, and encompass multiple strategies aimed at institutionalizing and organizing processes of monitoring, documentation, advocacy, and accountability in all their forms. This framework must be integrated into the 2024 Emergency Plan. Additionally, **the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly Resolution (2024)** should be incorporated into the current emergency plan, as well as into public policies and strategic frameworks, serving as a “**roadmap**” for all interventions, applicable to both civil society and the private sector.

5.4 The policy regarding Jerusalem and the rights of children in Jerusalem, developed in

collaboration with local institutions, should encompass **sustainable interventions, programs, and activities across diverse sectors**. This should include, inter alia, the provision of various forms of technical and financial support to institutions serving children in Jerusalem, the establishment of safe and child-friendly environments, and the enhancement of psychosocial support programs, training, and capacity-building initiatives. The policy should institutionalize psychosocial interventions for children affected by trauma, strengthen peer support programs within institutions, schools, and community initiatives, and establish comprehensive child protection networks. Furthermore, the policy should incorporate long-term strategies to enhance children's resilience in coping with and overcoming trauma, as well as invest in early childhood protection and development programs, ensuring the inclusion of children with disabilities.

5.5 The Palestinian government must expeditiously implement the **Capital City Law No. (4) of 2002**, which stipulates the establishment of a dedicated budget (**independent financial center**) for Jerusalem within the public Palestinian budget framework. It is imperative to allocate effective financial resources to protect the rights of children and to support the institutions engaged in this sector. Moreover, the government should enact subsidiary legislation (**regulations and by-laws**) to ensure the law's effective implementation. Additionally, it is crucial to enhance **diplomatic initiatives and accountability mechanisms** to safeguard and promote the rights of children in Jerusalem.

5.6 Civil society organizations, human rights entities, and grassroots groups operating within the Jerusalem Governorate should undertake a "**rigorous assessment**" of interventions and programs related to child rights. This assessment should encompass monitoring, documentation, advocacy, and accountability mechanisms. Additionally, it is imperative to strengthen **collective action**, networking, and communication channels among these organizations and to establish a **collaborative resource pool**. Such initiatives are critical for addressing the persistent isolation and substantial need for sustainability and responsiveness in the promotion and protection of children's rights in Jerusalem.

5.7. Institutions operating in Jerusalem should prioritize the establishment of specialized monitoring and documentation units grounded in the principle of "**local ownership**." This initiative should encompass the development of classified databases (**information repositories**) and a shared database that complies with international standards. Furthermore, it is imperative to enhance training programs and capacity-building initiatives in the domains of monitoring, documentation, advocacy, accountability mechanisms, and United Nations protocols. Special attention must also be directed towards implementing "**digital security**" measures to protect data against recurrent incursions into their facilities, with support from Palestinian organizations operating beyond the separation barrier.

5.8. Institutions operating within Jerusalem should prioritize investments in their interventions, programs, and activities with **local service providers**. This strategy is crucial for effectively addressing the complexities of the operational environment in Jerusalem, particularly in light of the diverse local cultures and prevailing familial dynamics in various neighborhoods and communities. Such investments are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of interventions and fostering sustainable change.

## Introduction and Significance

6. This specialized study on the childhood sector in the Jerusalem Governorate emerges at a crucial juncture, following the systematic and widespread Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, which has extended to the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem. This aggression primarily targets civilians and civilian objects, particularly children, and has been characterized by United Nations entities as a “**war on children**.” This comprehensive assault is a continuation of the enduring Nakba faced by the Palestinian people since 1948, marked by long-standing settler colonialism, oppression, apartheid, forced displacement, Judaization including erasing the Palestinian identity, policies of isolation, annexation, and militarization of occupied Jerusalem, aimed at displacing its indigenous Palestinian population.

7. Children in Jerusalem face a **persistent and profound nightmare**, characterized by an enduring sense of fear and sorrow that has become an intrinsic aspect of their daily existence. They have been subjected to pervasive violence in Jerusalem for many years, a situation that has escalated to unprecedented levels since October 7, 2023. This year has been identified as the deadliest for children in Jerusalem and across the West Bank. Furthermore, the arbitrary arrests of Palestinian children in Jerusalem in recent years have surpassed the total number of arrests of Palestinian children throughout the entire West Bank. Additionally, the policy of house arrest poses a severe challenge for Jerusalemite children and their families, effectively transforming households into environments of confinement where family members assume the roles of both jailers and detainees, subject to collective punishment. This reality is compounded by various forms of violence, torture, and maltreatment, which have severe psychological impacts on children in general and the childhood sector in Jerusalem specifically. Consequently, there is an urgent need to analyze patterns of serious violations and international crimes targeting children in Jerusalem, utilizing credible evidence from United Nations mechanisms, and international and local human rights organizations. This analysis should culminate in actionable conclusions and recommendations aimed at safeguarding the rights and well-being of Jerusalem’s children.

8. This specialized study constitutes a “**roadmap**” for assessing the primary patterns of violations and international crimes that target the childhood sector in the Jerusalem Governorate, as well as the grave impacts on children, their families, and the city across various dimensions amidst ongoing persecution and apartheid. It analyzes these issues under international humanitarian law, human rights law, international criminal law, Palestinian legislation, and public policies, with particular emphasis on the current emergency response plan for 2024 implemented by the newly formed Palestinian government. The study further explores the internal factors that have exacerbated the difficult conditions faced by children in Jerusalem, the complex operational environment for these children, the institutions operating within the framework of the annexation and apartheid wall, and the substantial needs of the community, while also proposing effective strategies for addressing these challenges.

## Objectives

9. This analytical study aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the reality of childhood in the Jerusalem Governorate, which includes the presentation of credible evidence regarding patterns of violations and a legal analysis of the context in light of discriminatory Israeli policies and laws, international agreements and standards, as well as Palestinian legislation and public policies. The study aims to foster a clearer understanding of the complex environment within occupied Jerusalem and the challenges confronting the operational landscape at various levels. Furthermore, it seeks to offer “**specific,**” measurable, and actionable recommendations at the international level, the general national Palestinian level, and the local level for civil society organizations and grassroots human rights entities operating inside and outside the separation barrier in occupied Jerusalem, thereby ensuring a “**tangible impact**” on improving the reality of children in Jerusalem.



## Methodology

10. The researcher adopted a descriptive-analytical methodology in alignment with scientific research frameworks, utilizing research instruments grounded in comprehensive literature reviews, which encompassed recently published statistics, international human rights treaties, reports from international monitoring bodies, investigative commissions, fact-finding missions, United Nations special procedures, Israeli legislation, Palestinian laws, and public policies. The study included focus group discussions coordinated at the headquarters of Palestinian Vision, both within and outside the Israeli-imposed separation barrier in occupied Jerusalem. The initial focus group session occurred on July 25, 2024, and engaged civil society organizations and grassroots entities working with children “**within the separation barrier**,” representing communities such as Sur Baher, Beit Hanina, Al-Thawri, Al-Tur, and Wadi al-Joz. The second focus group session took place on July 30, 2024, involving civil society organizations and grassroots entities “**outside the separation barrier**,” encompassing communities including Kafr Aqab, Al-Eizariya, Abu Dis, Al-Ram, Biddu, Beit Surik, Qalandiya, Jaba’, and Al-Sawahra al-Sharqiya.

11. The researcher conducted a series of structured interviews with various official and unofficial stakeholders pertinent to this specialized study. The methodology adopted by the researcher is consistent with United Nations standards in terms of presentation, analytical frameworks, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as the systematic numerical sequencing of paragraphs.

12. The methodology employed by the researcher in this study is grounded in adherence to **international principles and methodologies** for monitoring, documenting, and addressing violations against children. This encompasses the following: ensuring informed, voluntary consent; safeguarding the confidentiality of information; adopting a trauma-informed approach to addressing violations; respecting children’s freedom of expression; and addressing violations with consideration for the child’s age and developmental maturity. The assessment of risks and prioritization of child protection throughout the processes of data collection and analysis related to violations affecting children are integral components of this approach. This methodology aligns with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the principles and guidelines articulated by international bodies regarding child protection.

## Patterns of Child Rights Violations in the Jerusalem Governorate

13. This section of the study will examine the primary patterns of grave violations and international crimes affecting children in the Jerusalem Governorate, drawing upon the researcher's practical experience, insights from focus group discussions with civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots entities operating both within and outside the separation barrier in Jerusalem, as well as interviews with pertinent official and non-official stakeholders. The analysis will encompass acts such as extrajudicial killings, willful infliction of harm, arbitrary detention of Palestinian minors, the imposition of house arrest, and collective punishment, in addition to various forms of violence, torture, and ill-treatment occurring against a backdrop of systemic persecution and apartheid in the occupied territory of Jerusalem. Subsequent sections will delve into the underlying causes of violence, torture, and ill-treatment, internal factors arising from the complex socio-political environment of occupied Jerusalem, the social and psychological repercussions of these violations on Palestinian children and their families, and the critical need for safe spaces, psychosocial interventions, peer support, and comprehensive child protection mechanisms, ultimately leading to informed conclusions and actionable recommendations.

### Extrajudicial Killings and Willful Infliction of Harm Against Palestinian Children in Jerusalem

14. Reliable and updated information from various United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, and independent international and local organizations has highlighted an unprecedented rise in incidents of extrajudicial killings and willful infliction of harm directed at civilians, particularly Palestinian children, since the onset of the systematic and large-scale military operations initiated by the occupying forces in the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023. This escalation of violence is not confined to the besieged Gaza Strip, which has endured a blockade for 18 years, but also extends to the West Bank, including the Jerusalem Governorate.

15. Statistics released by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in October 2024 indicate that the number of Palestinian casualties in Gaza and the West Bank has exceeded (42,000), with approximately (100,000) individuals reported injured since October 7<sup>1</sup>. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) emphasized in its appeal titled "Children in Gaza Need Life-Saving Support, No Safe Place for Children as Humanitarian Crisis Deepens" in May 2024 that the Israeli military has killed more than **(14,000) children** in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child affirmed in a statement issued on September 4, 2024, following its review of the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports submitted by Israel regarding its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), that the Israeli military has caused the killings of approximately **(17,000) children** during ongoing military operations<sup>3</sup>. These figures highlight the alarming frequency and deliberate targeting of Palestinian children, indicating a significant escalation in the use of lethal force. In terms of the overall child casualty statistics among the total number of fatalities, the Ministry of Health reports that **children account for (33%)** of all martyrs, while women represent (18.4%) and the elderly (8.6%). These figures continue to rise daily. The variation in casualty numbers can be attributed to the ongoing military aggression and intensive daily bombardment of Gaza since October 7, with evidence pointing to a systematic and widespread pattern of targeting civilians, particularly children.

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1. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory published at the link: <https://www.ochaopt.org/>

2. UNICEF, «Children in Gaza need lifesaving support, no safe place for children as humanitarian crisis deepens,» published on the UNICEF website at the link: <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/children-gaza-need-lifesaving-support>.

3. The final statement issued by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on September 4, 2024, regarding Israel's discussion of the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is published at the link: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2024/09/examen-disrael-au-crc-la-situation-des-minorites-non-juives-notamment-celle-des>.

16. Grave violations against children have escalated to unprecedented levels in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, since October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, indicating that the aggression is directly impacting children across the entire occupied Palestinian territory. In its statement issued on 28 December 2023, UNICEF reported that child fatalities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem have risen sharply over the past nine months, **making this year the deadliest on record for children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip**<sup>4</sup>. According to a subsequent report released by UNICEF in July 2024, child fatalities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem increased by **(250%)** in the nine months following 7 October compared to the preceding nine months, during which (41) children were killed. **The total number of child victims has reached (143) as highlighted during the data collection process of this research, with more than (576) children injured, over (440) of whom were struck by “live ammunition”** during this period. These figures underscore the excessive use of force against this highly vulnerable population<sup>5</sup>.

17. The data from the Jerusalem Governorate highlighted unprecedented patterns of violations against Palestinian children and civilian objects in Jerusalem since the start of the Israeli military aggression in Gaza, along with widespread and systematic attacks in occupied Jerusalem. According to the report issued on February 18, 2024, Israeli forces killed **(49) Palestinians in Jerusalem, half of whom were children under the age of (17), and injured (156) with live and rubber bullets**. Additionally, (88) demolitions were conducted, (990) arrests made, and (118) prison sentences issued. Moreover, (80) house arrests, targeting primarily children **under the age of 14**, and (36) deportation orders from Jerusalem were imposed since October 7, 2023. The report further noted (4) travel bans and the revocation of residency for Jerusalemite citizen Majed Al-Ja’ba. Regarding the Al-Aqsa Mosque, approximately (13,120) settlers have entered the mosque compound since the start of the hostilities on October 7, 2023<sup>6</sup>.

18. After cross-referencing credible evidence to determine the percentage of Jerusalemite children among the total number of child martyrs in all West Bank governorates since the start of the aggression on Gaza, UNICEF indicators confirmed that (149) children were killed in the West Bank, including Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Governorate’s data confirmed that (49) civilians were killed in Jerusalem alone, half of whom were children. Thus, the percentage of Jerusalemite children among the total child martyrs in the West Bank is (17.5%), a significant proportion illustrating the scale of targeting in Jerusalem.

19. In a public statement with clear implications, UNICEF’s Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Adele Khodr, highlighted the intense violence and the nightmare experienced by Palestinian children, particularly in Jerusalem, since the start of the Gaza conflict. Khodr emphasized, **“As the world watches on in horror at the situation in the Gaza Strip, children in the West Bank are experiencing a nightmare of their own. Living with a near-constant feeling of fear and grief is, sadly, all too common for children affected. Many children report that fear has become a part of their daily life, with many scared even walking to school or playing outside due to the threat of shootings and other conflict-related violence”**<sup>7</sup>. She further added, **“Children living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have been experiencing grinding violence for many years, yet the intensity of that violence**

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4. A UNICEF statement issued on December 28, 2023, highlights the unprecedented levels of child fatalities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since October 7, 2023. The increase in violence has made 2023 the deadliest year on record for children in these areas. UNICEF calls for urgent protection of children in the occupied Palestinian territory: <https://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/child-casualties-west-bank-skyrocket-past-nine-months-unicef>

5. The UNICEF statement issued on July 22, 2024, “Child fatalities in the West Bank skyrocket in the past nine months”. At the link: <https://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/child-casualties-west-bank-skyrocket-past-nine-months-unicef>

6. The Jerusalem governorate report, published on 18/2/2024 on al-Jazeera News Network: <https://tinyurl.com/yrbb6tbh>

7. Statement by UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, at the link: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/number-children-killed-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-reaches-unprecedented>

has dramatically increased since the horrific attacks of 7 October”<sup>8</sup>.

20. UN Secretary-General António Guterres included Israeli military and security forces in the annex of his latest 2024 annual report on children and armed conflict, often referred to as the “**list of shame**”. The report accused these forces of committing grave violations against Palestinian children, including those from Jerusalem, involving killing, maiming, and other severe breaches of international law. The UN Secretary-General’s report on “Children and Armed Conflict” detailed that the killing and maiming of children increased by 35%, with the number of children killed or maimed reaching unprecedented levels due to the devastating crises in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory especially in Gaza. The report highlighted that children have borne the brunt of rising violations and escalating crises, with a complete disregard for children’s rights, particularly their right to life<sup>9</sup>. It is important to note that the “list of shame,” which accompanies the annual report issued by the Secretary-General, includes states, armies, or groups that are among the most egregious violators of children’s rights in armed conflicts globally. This particularly covers the killing or maiming of children, sexual violence, abductions, or recruitment of children into the armed forces. The report and the annex are presented to the UN Security Council and widely circulated, as mandated by the UN General Assembly.

### Arbitrary Arrests of Jerusalemite Children

21. The latest joint statistical indicators, issued by the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, the Palestinian Prisoners Club, and Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association on 12 August 2024, highlight the **unprecedented** rise in the number of Palestinian detainees in the West Bank, including in the Jerusalem Governorate. The data indicates that more than (10,000) Palestinians are currently detained in Israeli prisons and detention camps in the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem alone, including at least (700) Palestinian children, more than (345) Palestinian women, and over (8,322) administrative detention orders issued since 7 October 2023. Prior to October 7, the number of prisoners and detainees stood at approximately (5,000), including (160) children and (30) women<sup>10</sup>. Meanwhile, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor based in Geneva documented the presence of over (3,120) prisoners and detainees in Gaza alone, including children, women, and others. These vast indicators confirm that arbitrary arrests and the targeting of children are conducted on a “**systematic**” and large-scale basis.

22. The Head of the Jerusalemite Prisoners’ Families Committee, Amjad Abu Asab, confirmed that between 7 October 2023 and 17 April 2024 (Palestinian Prisoners’ Day), the number of Palestinian detainees from the Jerusalem Governorate held by Israeli authorities reached **(1,900)**, including children and women. This figure includes those who were subsequently released and those who remain in detention. Abu Asab added that as of **17 April 2024 (Palestinian Prisoners’ Day)**, there were **(550)** Jerusalemite detainees still in Israeli custody, among them **(54) children** and **(5) women**. Furthermore, he highlighted the continued administrative detention of (52) individuals from Jerusalem, who are held without charge or trial<sup>11</sup>. These figures underscore the **systematic and recurring arbitrary arrests**, particularly targeting Jerusalemite children.

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8. Statement by UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, at the link: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/number-children-killed-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-reaches-unprecedented>

9. The UN Secretary-General’s Report: “Children and Armed Conflict”, including the “List of shame”, at the link: [n2409507.pdf](https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2024/04/2409507.pdf) (un.org)

10. The latest statistics issued by the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees, the Palestinian Prisoners’ Club, and Addameer Prison Support and Human Rights Association, in addition to data of Wadi Holwa Information Center-Jerusalem, at the link: [معطيات عن حملات الاعتقال في الضفة منذ بدء حرب الإبادة المستمرة\\*](https://www.cda.gov.ps/معطيات-عن-حملات-الاعتقال-في-الضفة-منذ-بدء-حرب-الإبادة-المستمرة) (cda.gov.ps)

11. Interview with Amjad Abu Asab, Head of Jerusalemite Prisoners’ Families Committee, published on Al-Jazeera News Network, at the link: <https://tinyurl.com/3n3e3z5p>



23. Available data and facts indicate that the arbitrary detention of “Jerusalemite children” in the Jerusalem Governorate has persisted at an alarming rate for years, particularly in light of the recent escalation of hostilities in Gaza and the ongoing violations in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem. Statistics reveal that the Israeli occupation forces detained (6,768) Palestinian children (under 18 years of age) over the years from 2015 to 2019. Notably, **(3,388) of these children were detained specifically in the Jerusalem Governorate** alone during this period before the latest conflict<sup>12</sup>.

24. The available data and statistics unequivocally demonstrate that the rate of arbitrary detentions targeting “Jerusalemite children” in the Jerusalem Governorate is significantly higher than the detentions affecting Palestinian children across all West Bank governorates combined over the past five years. The average percentage of arbitrary detentions targeting children in the Jerusalem Governorate alone during the five years preceding the escalation (2015 - 2019) exceeds (50%) of the total detentions impacting children in all West Bank governorates. When analyzing the annual detention rates across the eleven West Bank governorates, the data reveals that the annual average of arbitrary detentions affecting children over these five years in the ten West Bank governorates was (677) children, whereas the average number of detentions in the Jerusalem Governorate alone during that same period reached (678) Jerusalemite children.

25. To illustrate the systematic and widespread nature of arbitrary detention targeting Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate, as well as Palestinian children in general, sanctioned by the political level in Israel, particularly since the far-right Israeli government assumed power at the beginning of 2023, **the “Knesset” has enacted over (30) new laws<sup>13</sup>** or amendments to fundamentally discriminatory legislation targeting Palestinian children in Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territories. This legislative activity has occurred under the pretext of events before and after October 7th. Notably, on November 25, 2015, the Knesset approved a new bill in its first reading, which stipulates the **“imprisonment of children from the age of (12) if convicted of committing crimes with nationalistic motives”**. Discussions regarding this bill have intensified in the “Knesset” since October 7th, primarily targeting Jerusalemite children, despite existing Israeli legislation prohibiting the imprisonment of children under the age of (14). Additionally, the “Knesset” approved an amendment to the National Insurance Law that allows for the **deprivation of national insurance benefits for Jerusalemite children if they are convicted of crimes characterized as “nationalistic” or “terroristic activities”** during their detention, along with imposing hefty financial penalties on their families. It’s important to note that the 2016 Counter-Terrorism Law in Israel directly targets Palestinians without any foundational criteria, standards, or guarantees, contravening international law.

26. The “Knesset” enacted a law permitting the revocation of citizenship or residency status of Palestinian prisoners and detainees residing in Jerusalem, as well as those from 1948 Palestine, including minors, if it is established that they have received compensation or any funds from the Palestinian Authority. This legislation was ratified on February 15, 2023, and its provisions came into effect for all prisoners starting February 19, 2023.

27. The “Knesset” approved a preliminary reading of a draft law that **restricts prisoners’ access to medical treatment beyond basic healthcare services**. In response to this legislation, Israeli National Security Minister “Ben Gvir” announced that many medical services, includ-

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12. Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies (Masarat), fact sheet on Violations by Israeli occupation authorities of the rights of detained minors in Jerusalem, published in August 2020.

13. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, «New Laws and Amendments in 2023,» addresses the laws enacted by Israeli governments, which intensified under the recent administration, based on apartheid policies, <https://www.addameer.org/ar/media/5347>. Additionally, the Global Movement for the Defense of Children and Addameer statement, issued in November 2015, titled «The Occupation Escalates Policies Violating Children’s Rights, Especially in Occupied Jerusalem.»

ing initial assessments and dental treatment, would be at the expense of Palestinians. Following October 7, there has been a systematic violation of Palestinians' fundamental rights, including the right to health, alongside the closure of several medical clinics within prisons. Furthermore, on February 15, 2023, the "Knesset" ratified a measure allowing for the deportation of families of prisoners or martyrs who are believed to have knowledge of **"terrorist activities"** or who have demonstrated support, encouragement, or sympathy for such acts through social media.

28. It is evident from the presentation that the legislation issued by the "Knesset" exhibits a discriminatory and racially biased approach, as demonstrated by the language of these laws and their application in practice, which specifically target Jerusalemites and their children, as well as Palestinians in general while excluding others. The legislation intentionally employs **"broad and vague"** terminology in criminalization and punishment, which allows for various interpretations and extensive use in arbitrary detention practices.

29. The arbitrary arrests targeting children in the Jerusalem Governorate are conducted with political endorsement from Israeli authorities and are facilitated by legislation enacted by the "Knesset". This indicates that these actions are **"systematic"**, reflecting **"a public policy"** within Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territories. As such, they fall under the classification of **"international crimes"** that are subject to the jurisdiction of international judicial bodies, including the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). This study will analyze these serious violations in the context of international law provisions.

### **The Policy of House Arrest of Jerusalemite Children**

30. House arrest refers to the detention of a child within their home among family members or their relocation to a different residence for the duration of the legal proceedings overseen by the Israeli court. This arrangement lasts until the judicial process concludes and a verdict is issued in the child's case.

31. The policy of house arrest primarily targets **Palestinian children in Jerusalem under the age of 14**, given that current Israeli legislation prohibits actual incarceration for this age group. There are, however, ongoing legislative efforts within the "Knesset" to amend the law to allow for the imprisonment of children starting at the age of 12 instead of 14. House arrest for these children can last from several days to weeks or even months, with durations potentially extending to a year or more. Importantly, the time spent in house arrest is not counted towards the actual sentence or punishment that may be imposed following the judicial proceedings. The role of the probation officer—referred to as the **"officer" of conduct**—is crucial, as the reports they submit to the court significantly impact the child's fate in the judicial process.

32. Palestinian children in Jerusalem are subjected to house arrest, which forces them to stay indoors for extended periods, often monitored by **electronic tracking devices**, such as **GPS-linked bracelets**. It is uncommon for these children to be allowed to attend school or visit healthcare facilities after months of confinement, and even such outings are typically conditional upon being accompanied by a guardian on a round-trip basis. The psychological impact of these restrictions on both the children and their families is significant, leading to considerable emotional distress and hardship. The conditions imposed by house arrest can transform their daily lives into an ongoing struggle, with strict adherence to these orders becoming a source of constant anxiety. Any infractions can lead to harsh repercussions, further compounding the trauma experienced by the affected children and their families.

33. The frequency of **"house arrest"** targeting Palestinian children in the Jerusalem governorate has escalated significantly in recent years, particularly after October 7. This policy, characterized by collective punishment and retaliation, effectively forces **the parents of these**

children to act as their wardens, while also subjecting them to confinement within their own homes. Such punitive measures have inflicted severe psychological harm on both the children and their families, leading to profound behavioral and emotional impacts. These consequences, stemming from the practice of house arrest, will be further explored in this study.

34. The policy of house arrest targeting Palestinian children in the Jerusalem governorate became particularly prominent following the protests triggered by the horrific crime in which extremist Israeli settlers abducted **Palestinian child Muhammad Abu Khdeir** from the town of Shuafat, northeast of Jerusalem. On July 2, 2014, Abu Khdeir was tortured and burned alive, resulting in his death. This crime, which **deeply traumatized Palestinian children, particularly those in Jerusalem**, sparked widespread popular demonstrations. Thousands of Jerusalemite children took part in these protests, expressing their outrage over the brutal murder of Abu Khdeir. The use of house arrest as a punitive measure against Jerusalemite children has intensified since the onset of the Jerusalem Uprising in October 2015.

35. Amjad Abu Asab, Head of the Jerusalemite Prisoners' Families Committee, explains that "the killing of Muhammad Abu Khdeir represented a significant turning point for Palestinians, particularly in relation to the situation in Jerusalem and the impact on Jerusalemite children, who witnessed Muhammad's charred body and heard the accounts of his abduction by Israeli settlers." He adds, "**Every Palestinian child felt vulnerable, fearing they could be the next victim. This sense of injustice sparked widespread protests among the children, with thousands participating in his funeral and taking to the streets. In response, Israeli authorities escalated their use of force, employing widespread repression, arbitrary arrests, and ill-treatment**"<sup>14</sup>.

36. Statistics from the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs indicate that **over (600) Palestinian children from Jerusalem were subjected to house arrest in 2022 alone**. The Commission highlights that Israeli court-ordered house arrest for children follows two distinct tracks, each varying in severity. **The first** track requires the child to remain confined at home with their family throughout the period specified by the court, pending the final outcome of their case. In many instances, families are compelled to sell their assets and savings to meet the high financial guarantees imposed by Israeli courts to secure their children's conditional release. **The second** track, more severe and complex, involves the forced relocation of the child from their family home, often outside of Jerusalem. The Commission has documented (4) cases in which children were forcibly transferred to cities outside Jerusalem, with two placed under house arrest in Ramla and two others in northern cities. This practice, which constitutes forced displacement, **further fragments Palestinian families** and imposes significant financial burdens, as parents must often rent accommodation far from their homes to comply with house arrest orders, resulting in social hardships<sup>15</sup>.

37. The Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs has reported that many parents in the Jerusalem governorate now prefer their children to serve their sentences in actual detention rather than endure the hardships associated with house arrest. This preference arises from various considerations, particularly the severe social, financial, and psychological repercussions faced by Jerusalemite children and their families during the duration of house arrest, which is enforced through Israeli judicial orders. Furthermore, the periods of house arrest do not contribute to the calculation of the actual sentences imposed on

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14. An interview with Amjad Abu Asab, Head of the Jerusalemite Prisoners' Families Committee on al-Jazeera News Network on the 10th anniversary of burning Abu Khdeir <https://tinyurl.com/3tz7xhc6>

15. Report by the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs titled «House Arrest: A Dagger in the Flank of Jerusalemites,» published in December 2022 and available on the Commission's website at the following link: <https://cda.gov.ps/index.php/ar/ar-news-2/11764-2023-01-03-07-48-12>.

the children.

38. The Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs has documented numerous instances of house arrest imposed on Jerusalemite children, illustrating the profound suffering endured by these children and their families, who become both guardians and prisoners within their own homes. **One notable case is that of 15-year-old Aiham Hijazi, a resident of the Old City of Jerusalem.** His attorney, Hiba Ighbariya, who is monitoring Aiham's legal proceedings, confirmed that he was arrested on August 19, 2022, after Israeli police conducted a raid on his home, leading him to Moscovia Prison, where he faced prolonged interrogation while shackled and handcuffed. During this period, he was subjected to severe physical abuse, with interrogators inflicting injuries to his face and abdomen and forcibly throwing him to the ground. After the interrogation and a week following his court appearance, the court mandated his placement under house arrest. However, after three months of enduring this confinement, Aiham and his family opted to return to detention due to the challenges associated with house arrest and the court's decision to extend this period further. Aiham's grandmother acted as his guarantor and remained confined with him during this time. Israeli police conducted frequent visits to their home, approximately every hour and a half, including late-night checks. In light of this ordeal, Aiham and his family made the decision for him to surrender himself, which he did on November 11, 2022, insisting on serving his sentence in actual detention rather than enduring house arrest. He remained in Moscovia Prison for (5) days before being transferred to the juvenile section of Damon Prison in Haifa<sup>16</sup>.

39. The Wadi Hilweh Information Center in Jerusalem has documented the enduring suffering of **Jerusalemite child Suhayb Al-Awar and his family from Silwan town** due to the policy of house arrest, which they have faced for several years. This case exemplifies that the practice of house arrest is not only longstanding but also systematically targets Jerusalemite children. In 2012, (12-year-old) Suhayb was subjected to house arrest for a duration of (12) months. His family was compelled to pay a fine of (5,000) shekels (approximately \$1,400) and a bail amounting to (50,000) shekels (around \$14,000), deposited with the Israeli court to ensure compliance with the house arrest order. During this period, Suhayb spent (4) months in the home of his grandmother in Jabal Mukaber, as no alternative arrangements were available. This situation underscores the significant suffering, family fragmentation, and the economic and psychological repercussions that house arrest imposes on both the child and his family. Suhayb Al-Awar has faced prolonged hardships in Israeli detention facilities since childhood, resulting in substantial psychological trauma that has impacted his developmental stages and has had adverse effects on his family<sup>17</sup>.

40. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy has documented the suffering of **Jerusalemite child Ali Quneibi, aged 14, from the Old City of Jerusalem,** as a result of the house arrest policy. Ali was initially subjected to house arrest in 2022. Just five days after the conclusion of this first period, he was placed under house arrest again in March of the same year, with additional restrictions prohibiting him from coming within (30) meters of an Israeli settler who occupied a house located just (3) meters away from the Quneibi family's home. This situation forces him, once released from house arrest, to take a longer route to avoid passing by the settler's house. Ali's father, Rateb Quneibi, who has a physical disability, stated, "Since his arrest, Ali can no longer participate in any family social

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16. Report by the Palestinian Deatainees and Ex-Detainees Commission, titled "«House Arrest: A Dagger in the Flank of Jerusalemites,» published in December 2022 and available on the Commission's website at the following link <https://cda.gov.ps/index.php/ar/ar-news-2/11764-2023-01-03-07-48-12>

17. Wadi Hilweh Information Center-Jerusalme, A video in which the mother of Jerusalemite child Suhayb Al-Awar discusses her son's suffering, beginning with his house arrest and later during his detention in Israeli prisons, as well as the severe psychological impacts experienced by the family. The video can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.silwanic.net/article/news/76991/ar>.

gatherings, and a family member must remain with him at home to ensure compliance with the house arrest order, which carries a financial penalty of (60,000) shekels, approximately (\$16,000).” His mother, Inas Quneibi, expressed, **“Ali and each of us have become both guards and prisoners in a space we call home. The house has indeed transformed into a prison, and we are its custodians. Can you imagine the difficulty of being both a jailer and a monitor of your children, forcibly implementing the orders of the occupying power?”** She added, “Ali has the right to enjoy a normal childhood, to attend school, to play with his friends, and to participate in family social events. The occupation has deprived us of all of this. Today, Ali remains under house arrest, and during every incident in the neighborhood, he is arrested, and our home is subjected to raids by occupation forces or the extremist settler who has turned our lives into a living hell<sup>18</sup>.” This situation clearly illustrates the profound impact of house arrest on both the child and the family.

41. Despite enduring (14) months of house arrest, **14-year-old Aiham Al-Slaima from the Wadi Qaddum neighborhood in Silwan, Jerusalem**, faces a potential prison sentence of three years. In a recent interview with Al Jazeera, published on June 28, 2024, Aiham stated that he was arrested following a pre-dawn raid on his home in mid-May 2023 and subsequently placed under house arrest starting May 17, 2023. He expressed, **“I was arrested without having committed any offense. I do not wish to be incarcerated; I have been deprived of my education and my friends. I have the right to live like everyone else”<sup>19</sup>**. After extensive efforts by his legal counsel, Aiham obtained a court order in March 2024 permitting him to attend school. His father, Nawaf Al-Slaima, confirmed that despite the challenges posed by prolonged house arrest, Aiham has demonstrated academic excellence. However, Nawaf expressed grave concerns, stating, **“The Israeli prosecution is now seeking an actual imprisonment sentence of (35) months for my son Aiham.”**

42. Reports from the “Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs”, the “Palestinian Prisoners’ Club”, and the “Jerusalem Prisoners’ Families Committee” highlight the alarming expansion of Israeli house arrest measures targeting Palestinian Jerusalemite children. Between January and March 2022, Israeli occupation authorities issued approximately (2,200) house arrest orders, including (114) children under the age of 12. This stark increase, compared to the issuance of (228) house arrest orders between 2015 and 2017<sup>20</sup>, highlights the systematic and widespread use of house arrest against Jerusalemite children.

43. The policy of house arrest imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities on Palestinian children in Jerusalem constitutes a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians during times of war, which applies to the occupied Palestinian territories. It amounts to collective punishment against the families of these children, which is explicitly prohibited under the aforementioned Convention. Furthermore, it breaches the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, infringing upon the rights and best interests of the child. Such practices may also be categorized as international crimes under international criminal law, as will be explored through legal analysis in this study.

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18. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (Miftah), Report titled ‘House Arrest: When the Occupation Turns Your Home into a Prison’ published on 14/12/2022. Additionally, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy ‘Fact Sheet: House Arrest Policy’ April 2020.

19. Al Jazeera News Network: A Jerusalemite child under house arrest faces a three-year prison sentence. at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/yxxywtw>.

20. Abdulnasser Farawneh, A Prominent Increase in House Arrest Orders, Institute for Palestinian Studies, June 2022.

## Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Children in Jerusalem

44. Israel, as the occupying power in the illegally occupied Palestinian territories, has made amendments to its prison regulations, as observed in the context of arbitrary detention and the house arrest of Jerusalemite children. The frequency of these racist legislative changes has intensified, particularly following the military assault on Gaza and the declaration of a state of war by Israeli leaders against the Palestinian population.

45. The Israeli Knesset enacted the “**Amendment to the Prison Service Orders Law**”<sup>21</sup> on October 18, 2023. This amended law aims to empower the far-right Israeli Minister of National Security, “Itamar Ben Gvir”, to declare a state of emergency concerning detention practices.

46. This amended law, fundamentally based on a discriminatory framework, **legitimizes** the repression and mistreatment of Palestinians and the violation of their dignity, including children, within the Israeli occupation’s detention facilities. The law permits the detention of Palestinian prisoners without providing adequate sleeping arrangements and allows for the overcrowding of large numbers of detainees in small holding cells, including minors. These conditions create severe overcrowding that fails to meet minimum standards of humane treatment as established in international human rights law. Furthermore, the Israeli Knesset approved amendments to the “**Counter-Terrorism Law of 2016**”<sup>22</sup> in October 2023, which is inherently discriminatory. Under these amendments, penalties for alleged incitement and support for a “**hostile organization**” have been intensified, imposing a prison sentence of two years, stipulating that the **actual** incarceration period in such cases must be no less than half of that duration. This legal framework elucidates the wave of arrests targeting Palestinians, particularly children in the Jerusalem Governorate, as well as Palestinians within Israel. Arrests in the West Bank are conducted under military orders and prosecuted in military courts, often based on social media posts, images, or expressions of solidarity with Gaza<sup>23</sup>.

47. It is important to note that these legislative frameworks “reinforce” one another, collectively creating a **fertile environment for arbitrary detention, torture, and ill-treatment**, particularly targeting children in Jerusalem, as well as Palestinians in Jerusalem and within Israel. This highlights a comprehensive system of laws that facilitates arrest and repression of Palestinians in Jerusalem and the 1948 territories, a system for arbitrary detention and repression of Palestinians in the West Bank (**through military orders and courts**), and another targeting residents of the Gaza Strip (**under the Unlawful Combatants Law, military orders, and military courts**). These interconnected legislative frameworks are applied across all matters relating to Palestinians, illustrating how **the entrenched apartheid regime**, established by Israel as the occupying power, operates in the occupied Palestinian territory. To provide further clarity on this apartheid regime, which systematically targets Palestinian children, it is fundamentally one of the most egregious systems of institutionalized discrimination used by colonial powers against colonized populations. The aforementioned legal frameworks specifically target Palestinian children in Jerusalem, while exempting Israeli children in the same city; they target Palestinian children in the West Bank, while excluding settler children living there; and they target Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip, while not applying to Israeli children living in Gaza Envelope. This reveals the apartheid system’s most egregious manifestations in its discriminatory treatment of Palestinian children.

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21. The Amendment to the Prison Service Orders Law (Law No. 64 – Temporary Instructions – Iron Swords) (State of Emergency Concerning Detention) 2023.

22. Order Regarding the Intensification of Penalties for Incitement Offenses and Support for a Hostile Organization (Iron Swords) (Temporary Instructions) (Judea and Samaria) (No. 2153) for the Year 2023. This order regarding the intensification of penalties for incitement offenses and support for a hostile organization was issued on October 27, 2023.

23. The Cyber Monitoring Unit in Israel is part of the Ministry of Justice, and there is a more dangerous and widespread unit (Unit 8200) that operates under the Israeli Military Intelligence Division. This unit is responsible for electronic espionage, decryption, and electronic warfare and is located at the «Galiyah» military base in Israel.

48. A group of human rights organizations<sup>24</sup> submitted a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court on October 23, 2023, challenging the “**Amendment to the Prison Service Orders**” law. This law applies exclusively to “security prisoners” [referring to Palestinian political prisoners] and not to criminal prisoners, resulting in the reduction of living space only for security prisoners. The petition argued that the law violates the principle of equal treatment and amounts to cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment, rendering it unconstitutional. Despite the strong legal arguments presented, based on international law—specifically, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Israel is a party—and **Israel’s Basic Laws**<sup>25</sup>, which serve as a quasi-constitution (including the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty), the Supreme Court rejected the petition, ruling as follows: “The assessment of human rights violations during times of war cannot be compared to those during peacetime. After carefully reviewing the petition and considering the legal framework outlined in the amendment— including its temporary nature, its limitations, balancing mechanisms, and the judicial restraint generally applied during exceptional circumstances faced by the country, which were imposed unexpectedly and require extreme caution—we found no grounds for legal intervention as requested.” **In clear alignment between the “Knesset” and the Supreme Court**, the “Knesset” approved, on January 15, 2024, the extension of the “Amendment to the Prison Service Orders” (Emergency Detention Measures). This law permits the reduction of living space for security prisoners [Palestinian political prisoners] and allows the denial of adequate sleep, food, water, proper clothing, health-care, hygiene products, and other basic humanitarian needs within prisons, in clear violation of international conventions. Thus, the “**apartheid**” system in Israel continues to expand, fully endorsed by both the legislative and judicial authorities.

49. After illustrating the clear alignment between the legislative authority (**the Knesset**) and the judicial authority (**the Supreme Court**), it is necessary to turn to the executive authority (**the President and Government**) to complete the picture of the three branches of power in Israel. Referring to statements made by Israeli political and security officials during the ongoing military aggression against the Gaza Strip and the subsequent impacts on the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem since October 7, 2023, Israeli President “Isaac Herzog”, during a press conference on October 12, 2023, stated unequivocally: “**There is no distinction between combatants and civilians in Gaza. The entire population is responsible. This narrative of uninvolved, unaware civilians is completely false... We will fight until we break their backbone.**” On October 9, 2023, Israeli Defense Minister “Yoav Gallant” similarly stated, “**Israel is imposing a complete siege on Gaza. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals**”. This is the deeply entrenched and vile system of “apartheid” enforced by the occupying power within the framework of a public, deliberate, and systematic policy targeting Palestinians.

50. It was crucial to examine the role of Israel’s three branches of public authority—the legislative, executive, and judicial—in connection with the (apartheid) system that Israel has imposed in the occupied Palestinian territories. This apartheid regime will be highlighted in its most egregious manifestations later in the study, particularly concerning occupied East Jerusalem. This contextual understanding is essential before addressing the various forms of torture and ill-treatment perpetrated by Israel against Palestinian children in occupied Jerusalem. The objective is to demonstrate, **with conclusive evidence**, that the torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian children in Jerusalem’s prisons are systematically endorsed by

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24. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), «Petition Against Temporary Order Allowing Increased Overcrowding in the Living Spaces of Security Prisoners,» October 23, 2023.

25. Israel does not have a formal constitution. Since the 1950s, the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) has enacted a series of Basic Laws that, over time, have come to function as a de facto constitution. These Basic Laws include: Basic Law: The Knesset, Basic Law: Israel’s Lands, Basic Law: The President of the State, Basic Law: The Government, Basic Law: The State Economy, Basic Law: The Military, Basic Law: Jerusalem – Capital of Israel, Basic Law: The Judiciary, Basic Law: The State Comptroller, Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation, and Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty.

all three branches of Israeli authority. These abuses are not random or isolated incidents but rather constitute a comprehensive and widespread (**State policy**). As such, these violations meet the threshold of “**international crimes**” under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). These issues will be further examined in a dedicated section of this study, analyzing the violations in light of international law, and the legal pathways for holding perpetrators accountable under international legal frameworks.

51. It has been previously highlighted that the “**Jerusalem Governorate**” alone recorded the highest number of detained children in the prisons of the occupying power, surpassing the total number of detained children across the West Bank. This trend has not been only evident since October 7, 2023, but also reflects the years prior to this date which marked the comprehensive aggression against the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and occupied Jerusalem. Statistical data confirms that Israeli occupation forces arrested (6,768) Palestinian children (under the age of 18) from 2015 to 2019, of which (**3,388**) **were from the Jerusalem Governorate alone** during those years leading up to the aggression against Gaza. It is crucial to note that the “recurrence of arrest operations” targeting Palestinian children in Jerusalem has directly contributed to these alarming figures.

52. Focusing on the conditions of Jerusalemite children in Israeli prisons and detention centers, it is evident that they are subjected to the same treatment as older Palestinian detainees. The concept of childhood is disregarded in Israeli prisons, especially after October 7. They endure retaliatory measures and collective punishment directed at prisoners and detainees, implemented under the authority of the legislative body (**Knesset**) and the judicial authority (**Supreme Court**). The Israeli Minister of National Security, “**Itamar Ben Gvir**”, has overseen the execution of these measures within the occupation’s prisons and has publicly announced them on several occasions through various media outlets.

53. Palestinian prisoner organizations have confirmed that **the most significant violations targeting Palestinian children in Israeli detention facilities**, which have escalated since October 7, 2023, include the deliberate invasion of their homes by occupation forces during the terrifying hours of the night and early morning. Families of the children and their legal representatives are prohibited from attending interrogations, and the children face deprivation of food and water. They are often kept shackled for prolonged periods, subjected to beatings and kicking all over their bodies during interrogations, and are verbally abused, insulted, and degraded. They are threatened with extrajudicial execution and sexual violence, forced to sign statements “in Hebrew” without understanding the content of what they are signing, and are coerced with the claim that Israeli intelligence and police will release them if they accept the accusations against them. Additionally, they are threatened with the arrest of their families if they refuse to confess, aiming to compel them to confess out of fear for their families. The children are placed in inhumane detention conditions lacking adequate lighting and ventilation, overcrowded in holding areas, and deprived of showers and hygiene supplies, leading to the spread of diseases, particularly scabies, among them, as with adults. They also face denial of visits and are subjected to exorbitant fines, among other violations, which leave long-lasting psychological effects on the children<sup>26</sup>.

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26. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association: “Child Detention: A Systematic Destruction of Palestinian Childhood,” April 2020. Al Jazeera News Network Report: «Conditions of Jerusalemite Prisoners after October 7,» available at <https://tinyurl.com/yhnczr4>. A paper issued by prisoner organizations regarding «The Totality of Crimes and Violations Committed by the Israeli Occupation Against Prisoners and Detainees after October 7,» published on the website of the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, available at <https://www.addameer.org/ar/media/5246>.



54. The case of **Jerusalemite prisoner Ahmad Manasra, who spent his childhood and beyond inside Israeli prisons**, is a prominent example of the systematic destruction of Jerusalemite childhood within detention facilities. The deliberate crime committed by the occupation in showing images of child Manasra undergoing psychological torture during interrogation **has left a deep impact on the minds of children**, particularly those in occupied Jerusalem. Ahmad Manasra, a Palestinian child from Beit Hanina, north of occupied Jerusalem, was born on January 22, 2002, and was arrested by Israeli forces on October 12, 2015, when he was not yet 13 years old. During the interrogation phase following his arrest in October 2015, the child Manasra was subjected to psychological and physical torture and isolation. The occupation authorities deliberately leaked a **“video”** showing an interrogation session in which the Israeli investigator publicly perpetrated the **“crime of psychological torture”** against the child Ahmad Manasra in order to extract confessions from him through coercion. Despite the child repeatedly responding, **“I don’t remember,”** the investigator continued to shout and perpetrate psychological torture openly and brazenly to extract confessions from the child, who was deprived of his fundamental rights, including the right to legal counsel during interrogation. This constitutes serious violations of the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>27</sup>.

55. The leak of this video **does not appear to be a random act**, and the psychological warfare waged by the investigator against the child Manasra in public cannot be considered an improvised action. **It constitutes organized criminality intended to be displayed openly as a psychological war against Jerusalemite and Palestinian children and their families**, delivering an unequivocal message that this is the fate of Palestinian children within our prisons.

56. The Jerusalemite prisoner, Ahmad Manasra, suffers from a **mental disability** resulting from the forms of torture and ill-treatment inflicted upon him in Israeli occupation prisons. Manasra is afflicted with severe psychological disorders that pose a significant risk to his life, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe anxiety, acute depression, and behavioral disorders. He has expressed **suicidal thoughts**. His lawyer confirmed after a subsequent visit that he is seriously contemplating **“suicide”** and has inquired, **“Is suicide prohibited in religion?”**<sup>28</sup>.

57. Torture and ill-treatment are perpetrated systematically and on a widespread basis in the prisons, detention centers, and military camps of the occupation against Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including children and women. The frequency and severity of these abuses have escalated to unprecedented levels since the aggression launched by the occupying forces against the Gaza Strip, extending to the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem since October 7, 2023.

58. Investigative reports from the Israeli newspaper “Haaretz” and statements from the Israeli army have confirmed that approximately (1,500) residents of the Gaza Strip have been detained at the **“S’dei Taiman”** military camp under an order from Israeli Defense Minister “Yoav Gallant”. According to Israeli data, since the onset of the aggression, **(48) Palestinians—most of whom are from Gaza—have been killed as a result of torture and ill-treatment in the occupation’s camps and prisons. Of these, (36) were killed inside the “S’dei Taiman” military detention facility alone**, which is located northeast of Be’er Sheva in Israel. This facility is referred to by Palestinians as **“Guantanamo Israel”** and **“the Nightmare”** due to the severe human rights violations occurring within it. A report issued by UNRWA on April 16,

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27. Dr. Issam Abdeen, report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the case of child Ahmad Manasra) on August 6, 2023.

28. Dr. Issam Abdeen, report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the case of child Ahmad Manasra) on August 6, 2023.

2024, based on testimonies from numerous Palestinian detainees, including children and staff from UNRWA itself who were released from Israeli prisons and camps, indicated that they had endured various forms of torture and ill-treatment. These abuses included severe physical assault, deprivation of food and water, denial of bathing and hygiene supplies, denial of visits, sexual violence, threats of rape, being stripped of clothing and photographed naked, electric shock, forced confinement in “cages,” attacks by dogs, simulated drowning, and physical assaults by prison medical staff when they sought medical assistance. The report also highlighted instances of killings occurring within the occupation’s prisons<sup>29</sup>.

59. A UN committee of experts confirmed that they observed “**documented allegations**” that Palestinian women and girls were subjected to sexual assaults, including rape, while in Israeli prisons. There is evidence of at least two cases of rape, along with instances of sexual humiliation and threats of rape. The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls stated that the true extent of sexual violence may be much higher and that **violence and the dehumanization of women and children have become normalized in this conflict**<sup>30</sup>.

60. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor – Geneva documented testimonies from Palestinian female detainees in Gaza who experienced sexual violence, including forced nudity, sexual harassment, and threats of rape during their detention by Israeli military forces. The testimonies of released detainees revealed widespread forms of torture, ill-treatment, and sexual violence, with dozens of women and girls reporting incidents of sexual violence. The Permanent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory confirmed that incidents of **sexual violence** occurred in the West Bank in detention facilities, at military checkpoints, and during nighttime raids conducted by the Israeli occupation forces on the homes of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem<sup>31</sup>.

## Violations of the Rights of Children with Disabilities in Jerusalem

61. The impact of patterns of violations intensifies for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups, bearing a disproportionate burden in situations of armed conflict and emergencies. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of attention to the specific needs and requirements related to disability, inaccessibility, the absence of reasonable accommodations as mandated by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the failure to ensure disability inclusion. Consequently, this increases the risks to their health and lives.

62. The suffering of persons with disabilities, particularly children with disabilities, is **exacerbated** amid the ongoing aggression against Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, due to severe and continuous violations of their rights and the absence of reasonable accommodations, accessibility, and inclusion. The infrastructure in Gaza (as in the West Bank) **is not aligned with** the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities, and the necessary adaptations have been destroyed following the devastation of the Gaza Strip. Mobility under bombardment is nearly impossible for children with disabilities, and the “**recurring**” displacement poses complex and high risks to children with disabilities and persons with dis-

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29. Dr. Issam Abedine, «QADER for Community Development Report» submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on August 15, 2024, before the scheduled comprehensive review of Israel’s record under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, published on the United Nations website at the following link: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FISR%2F59405&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FISR%2F59405&Lang=en).

30. UN Committee: Allegations of Israeli Sexual Assaults on Palestinian Women Are Credible, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/fwefuk69>

31. Dr. Issam Abedine, the parallel report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in response to Israel’s latest periodic reports (fifth and sixth) regarding its record under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Palestinian Children), previously referenced, published on the United Nations website at the following link: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FISR%2F59405&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FISR%2F59405&Lang=en) and the report of the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, International Document No. (A/HRC/50/51).

abilities in general. Furthermore, repeated Israeli airstrikes have targeted hospitals, centers, and organizations that provide specialized services for children with disabilities, as well as assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, and hearing aids. The limited humanitarian aid entering the besieged Gaza Strip “**does not include the needs and requirements related to disability,**” leading to a significant shortage of “**prosthetics, wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, nutritional supplements, medical mattresses, disability-related medications, medical devices, sanitary pads, and medical consumables,**” despite a year of ongoing aggression<sup>32</sup>. These life-saving needs exacerbate the catastrophic conditions and mortality rates, particularly among children with disabilities.

63. Conversely, the fragmentation of the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, into isolated cantons (**ghettos**), akin to the situation in the Gaza Strip (**the large ghetto**), along with the prevention of communication between the governorates in the West Bank and between cities and villages within the governorates, has resulted in closures enforced by iron gates. The isolation, siege, Judaization, and militarization of Jerusalem, alongside the direct targeting of civil society organizations and the confiscation of their contents under various pretexts such as “terrorism” and “emergency laws,” aim to obstruct their work in monitoring, documenting, and exposing the crimes of the Israeli authorities, as well as hindering advocacy and accountability efforts. This situation, within the framework of a system of oppression, apartheid, and military domination, has produced “**catastrophic**” effects on children with disabilities regarding their **freedom of movement, access to various rights, and services** associated with children with disabilities across health, education, social, and economic spheres, further exacerbating their psychological suffering.

64. The suffering of children with disabilities is exacerbated by Israel’s refusal to recognize the applicability of fundamental human rights treaties, including the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, in the occupied Palestinian territory. This was stated by Israel in its report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the United Nations and in its response to the issues raised by the Committee in 2023 regarding the applicability of the CRPD in the occupied Palestinian territory<sup>33</sup>. Israel also made this assertion in its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports concerning its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which includes children with disabilities in the occupied Palestinian territory. Despite the affirmations by all international treaty bodies within the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the advisory opinions issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2004 regarding the illegal wall of annexation and apartheid in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as the advisory opinion issued in 2024 regarding the illegality of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, which collectively affirms the applicability of international treaties in the areas controlled by Israel—including those related to the rights of children with disabilities—**Israel continues to entirely refrain from their implementation.**

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32. Dr. Issam Abedine, The Impact of Israeli Aggression on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, QADER for Community Development, April 2024, published at the following link: <https://www.qader.org/resources/6086.html>

33. Dr. Issam Abedine, the report submitted by the Palestinian Disability Coalition to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the United Nations regarding Israel’s report and its obligations in the occupied Palestinian territory, published on the United Nations website at the link: <https://tinyurl.com/mvae3ec2>

65. Patterns of violations affect children with disabilities in Jerusalem **in various forms and in a compounded manner**; through policies of arbitrary detention targeting children, medical crimes committed within Israeli prisons and detention facilities that result in increased disabilities, deliberate denial of medical services, and catastrophic humanitarian conditions within prisons that have intensified since October 7, 2023. This includes inhumane and degrading treatment directed at prisoners and detainees, including persons with disabilities, and the absence of medical services that comply with the minimum humanitarian standards and specialized treatments appropriate to disability needs, along with the lack of reasonable accommodations as required by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This exacerbates the level of suffering and the risks to life<sup>34</sup>.

66. Children with disabilities face **immense psychological challenges** due to the ongoing Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, the isolation, blockade, and militarization of Jerusalem, and the obstruction of their freedom of movement and access to medical, psychological, and various services. The targeting of institutions that provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services for children with disabilities, despite their scarcity and limited resources, exacerbates this situation. Furthermore, colonial occupation and systemic oppression create an environment that is inherently **unfriendly to children with disabilities**, significantly impacting their personal development and independence while hindering social integration and peer interaction. These escalating health, psychological, and social challenges increase **the isolation and marginalization** of children with disabilities and obstruct their access to various rights guaranteed under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Israel is a party, on the basis of inclusivity. This situation further intensifies the violations and marginalization faced by children with disabilities in occupied Jerusalem.

67. The issues and rights of children with disabilities represent a **significant and compound-ed challenge** for civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations operating in the Jerusalem Governorate concerning interventions, programs, activities, and technical and financial capacities. There is a pressing need for intensified efforts in monitoring and documenting violations and international crimes targeting children with disabilities in occupied Jerusalem, as well as for advocacy and accountability programs that align with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its entitlements, as well as relevant international standards about the rights of persons with disabilities **on an inclusive basis**<sup>35</sup>. This necessitates effective support and assistance from the Palestinian government, its ministries, relevant bodies, civil society, and organizations representing persons with disabilities to Jerusalem-based institutions in the disability sector, which already suffer from marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination on the grounds of disability in the occupied Palestinian territory. Continuous attention is required from Jerusalem institutions to ensure “**disability inclusion**” in all interventions, programs, and activities implemented in the Jerusalem Governorate, along with “**ongoing evaluation**” of all interventions, programs, and activities from a disability perspective.

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34. UNICEF, «The Situation of Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,» 2023. Human Rights Watch, «Children with Disabilities in the Occupied Territories,» 2023.

35. Dr. Issam Abdeen, «The Reality of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Palestine – Challenges and Proposed Solutions,» QADER for Community Development, 2023, published on the organization's website at the link: <https://www.qader.org/ar/resources/6356.html>

## Apartheid in the Jerusalem Governorate

68. Following the onset of occupation in 1967, Israel commenced the “**annexation**” of East Jerusalem, preparing it to be, alongside West Jerusalem, the “**unified capital**” of Israel, in grave violation of international law, particularly the “**right to self-determination**” enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The right to self-determination for peoples under occupation constitutes a **peremptory norm** in international law, superior to all others, and serves as a compelling obligation for the international community. This action represents a serious violation of numerous relevant international agreements and resolutions issued by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council regarding the status of Jerusalem, necessitating the annulment of all annexation and settlement measures in Jerusalem and the occupied territories<sup>36</sup>. It also contravenes the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on July 19, 2024, regarding the illegality of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

## Identity System and Family Fragmentation

69. Immediately following the occupation, Israel established an identity card system in the occupied Palestinian territory, designed to fragment the Palestinian population and disrupt the cohesion of the Palestinian people. This system included issuing “**Jerusalem ID cards**” to residents of East Jerusalem while issuing “personal ID cards” to residents of the West Bank and separate “ID cards” for residents of the Gaza Strip. Israel conducted a population census in 1967 immediately after gaining control of the occupied Palestinian territory, excluding at least (270,000) Palestinians who were outside the territory at the time. These individuals were denied identity documents, effectively rendering hundreds of thousands of Palestinians stateless<sup>37</sup>. Since then, Israel has entrenched its **apartheid** system in occupied Jerusalem, implementing measures aimed at controlling the growth of the Palestinian population, with a particularly acute focus on Jerusalem. Israel’s declared demographic objective has been to maintain a 70% Jewish Israeli population versus 30% Palestinians<sup>38</sup>. To achieve this goal, Israel has employed various strategies, including the designation of “**permanent residency**” status for Palestinian residents of Jerusalem. In practice, this residency status is “**temporary**” and **subject to revocation** under arbitrary criteria, conditions, and restrictions set by the Israeli Ministry of Interior. Between 1967 and 2016, it is estimated that at least (14,595) Palestinians from East Jerusalem lost their “permanent residency” status<sup>39</sup>.

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36. Refer to United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 181, dated November 29, 1947, concerning the Partition Plan for Palestine; General Assembly Resolution No. 273, dated May 11, 1949, admitting Israel as a member of the United Nations, conditional upon Israel’s commitment to respect and uphold the obligations outlined in the UN Charter, based on General Assembly resolutions from November 29, 1947, and December 11, 1948, as well as statements by the Israeli government representative before the Special Political Committee regarding the implementation of these resolutions; General Assembly Resolution No. 303, dated December 9, 1949, reaffirming the status of Jerusalem under a permanent international regime; General Assembly Resolution No. 2253, dated July 4, 1967, calling upon Israel to revoke measures taken to alter the status of Jerusalem and to refrain from future actions in this regard; General Assembly Resolution No. 2254 (Emergency Special Session - 5), dated July 14, 1967, expressing regret over the measures taken by Israel to change the status of Jerusalem; General Assembly Resolution No. 2851, dated December 20, 1971, strongly demanding that Israel annul all actions to annex or settle the occupied Palestinian territories and requesting the continuation of work by the Special Committee; General Assembly Resolution No. 35/207, dated December 16, 1980, strongly condemning Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the Palestinian people and reaffirming its rejection of Israel’s decision to annex Jerusalem; General Assembly Resolution No. 252, dated May 21, 1968, calling upon Israel to cancel all measures altering the status of Jerusalem; General Assembly Resolution No. 267, dated July 3, 1969, reiterating the call for Israel to annul all measures that would change the status of Jerusalem; and other international resolutions regarding occupied Jerusalem.

37. Human Rights Watch, «Forget About Him, He’s Not Here”: Israel’s Control of Palestinian Residency in the West Bank and Gaza,» February 5, 2012.

38. Maria Farah, «Occupation of the Old City in Jerusalem: Israeli Policies of Isolation, Intimidation, and Transformation,» published by Al-Haq, 2020.

39. Human Rights Watch, «Israel Strips Jerusalemites of Their Residency,» published on August 8, 2017

70. The Israeli identity system and the classification of “permanent residency” for Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem (which is, in effect, a temporary status) constitute a key feature of **the entrenched apartheid regime** established by the occupying power in the occupied Palestinian territories. This regime specifically targets “**Palestinian families in Jerusalem**”, while exempting “**Jewish families**”, and applies solely to the **indigenous** Palestinian population of East Jerusalem, on their ancestral land. The discriminatory system results in the fragmentation of Palestinian families, and the forcible separation of children from their parents, and grants the occupying authorities control over **the full spectrum** of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of Jerusalem’s indigenous Palestinian residents. The system imposes devastating psychological and social impacts on these families, with the primary objective of facilitating their “**forced displacement**” from the city.

### **The Annexation Wall (Sepaeration Wall)**

71. The identity system, along with the resulting violations of the right to adequate housing, freedom of movement, and the right to live with dignity for the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, compels them to reside within the areas dictated by the type of identity card they possess and restricts their residency. This is accompanied by other Israeli policies aimed at isolating the city of Jerusalem (**isolation policy**) from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, notably the West Bank. Immediately following the onset of the occupation, Israel expanded the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem and began establishing illegal settlements, thereby creating a “**tight ring**” around the city. Through the construction of the Annexation Wall (Apartheid Wall) in the West Bank, Israel has sought to entrench **illegal facts on the ground** and further fragment the occupied Palestinian territory. Consequently, the city of Jerusalem has plunged deeper into isolation, as most Palestinians holding identity cards from the West Bank and Gaza Strip are required to obtain special permits to enter the city. The proliferation of checkpoints, the extension of the Annexation Wall, and the presence of mobile military checkpoints have encircled Jerusalem, hindering movement and access, and making the interconnected towns and villages near Jerusalem appear, in practical terms, to be very distant from the occupied city. As a result, **the entire city has been effectively isolated and annexed**.

72. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) affirmed in its landmark advisory opinion issued in 2004 that “the route chosen for the wall gives expression in loco to the illegal measures taken by Israel with regard to Jerusalem and the settlements, as deplored by the Security Council”<sup>40</sup>. The ICJ emphasized the necessity for the removal of the Annexation Wall and for compensation to be provided to the affected residents for the damage incurred due to its construction. In this context, the study will later address the second landmark advisory opinion issued by the Court on July 19, 2024.

### **Isolation, Annexation, and Militarization of Jerusalem**

73. The occupying forces have continuously sought to impose their presence in Jerusalem, which is clearly observed through the deployment of occupation army personnel in the “Damascus Gate” area of the Old City via intensified patrols and the widespread installation of surveillance camera equipment in the city’s streets and alleys, along with intelligence operations, especially inside the Old City. In June 2017, Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs “Gilad Erdan” stated that there would be “an unprecedented change in the entire security system

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40. The legal implications arising from the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion, July 9, 2004, paragraph (122). Additionally, the decision of the United Nations Fourth Committee (Committee on Special Political and Decolonization) issued on November 11, 2022, requesting the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory opinion on the «legality of the Israeli occupation,» is published on the Fourth Committee’s website at: <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/fourth-committee>

at the Damascus Gate—cameras, monitoring, intelligence operations, and alterations to the area’s features—all activated to significantly reduce attacks in this area”<sup>41</sup>. Israel began forced population transfers, settlement activities, and the erasure of the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem immediately following the conclusion of the 1967 war. The effects of these systematic and prolonged policies were manifested in the Moroccan Quarter of the Old City. On June 10, 1967, Israel notified the residents of the neighborhood to evacuate, allowing them only a few hours. By the next day, it had demolished two mosques and 135 houses, resulting in the “forced displacement of 650 Muslims from their homes,” and the area has since been referred to as the “Western Wall Plaza.” On July 31, 1980, the Israeli Knesset enacted the “Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel,” in serious violation of international law. Israel has enacted numerous legislations and plans targeting the **(isolation, annexation, and militarization of Jerusalem)** through extensive military deployment, settlement activities, denial of building permits for Jerusalemites, home demolitions, land and property confiscations, forced displacement of Jerusalemites, and repeated assaults on holy sites.

74. The United Nations report (ESCWA Report 2017), issued on March 15, 2017, titled “**Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid**,” prepared by experts Richard Falk and Virginia Tilley, asserted that Israel established an apartheid system against the entire Palestinian people through two means: **the first** is the political and geographical fragmentation of the Palestinian people to weaken their ability to resist and alter the reality; **the second** is the repression of Palestinians through various laws, policies, and practices aimed at imposing and maintaining control by an ethnic group over them. The report emphasized the necessity of dismantling the apartheid system in the occupied Palestinian territory, which constitutes a “**crime against humanity**” under international law<sup>42</sup>.

### **International Court of Justice and the General Assembly**

75. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its advisory opinion dated July 19, 2024, highlighted, among other issues, the consequences of Israel’s **settlement policy** on the Palestinian population and the extensive confiscation of Palestinian land, which results in depriving Palestinians of essential means of subsistence. The court reaffirmed that Israel’s settlement policy, including the transfer of Israeli settlers into the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and that the application of Israeli law in the West Bank and East Jerusalem breaches the **Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention**. Furthermore, the court confirmed that Israel’s use of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory contradicts its obligations under international law, specifically undermining the right of the Palestinian people to **permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and their right to self-determination**. The ICJ also stressed that the “**Oslo Accords**” cannot diminish Israel’s obligations under international law applicable to the occupied Palestinian territory, as unequivocally affirmed by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

76. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluded that Israel’s policies and practices, including the maintenance and expansion of settlements, the exploitation of natural resources, the **declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel**, and the widespread implementation of these policies, are designed to entrench its control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Court explicitly stated that Israel has no sovereignty over any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It reaffirmed that **the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination**

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41. Maria Farah, «Occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem: Israeli Policies of Isolation, Intimidation, and Transformation,» Al-Haq Foundation, 2020

42. The report issued by Amnesty International, «Israeli Apartheid Against Palestinians – A Cruel System of Domination and a Crime Against Humanity,» 2022. And Human Rights Watch, «A Threshold Crossed – Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution,» 2021.

is an inalienable right and cannot be subject to conditions under international law. The continued presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitutes a violation of the prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force, as established under the UN Charter, and infringes upon the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, a principle enshrined in numerous international legal instruments. The ICJ emphasized that the prolonged occupation, along with the ongoing denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, renders Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory **illegal. Israel is therefore under an obligation to terminate its occupation without delay.** The court further affirmed that Israel must evacuate all settlers from existing settlements, dismantle the apartheid wall (Separation Wall) in the occupied Palestinian territory, and allow all Palestinians displaced during the occupation to return to their original places of residence.

77. In its July 19, 2024 ruling, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) reaffirmed that Israel is obligated to provide reparations for its unlawful actions, including restitution and compensation. This includes the return of lands, immovable property, and assets seized since 1967, including cultural properties. The Court found that Israel is required to compensate all affected natural and legal persons in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for the harm they have suffered. The ICJ also emphasized that the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly and the Security Council, must consider specific measures and additional steps to bring Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to an end as swiftly as possible. The Court noted that international organizations, including the United Nations, are under a legal obligation not to recognize the legitimacy of the situation resulting from Israel's unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Moreover, the Court concluded that all states are under an obligation not to recognize Israel's legal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and must refrain from offering any assistance that would sustain Israel's illegal activities in those territories. This landmark ruling by the ICJ, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, should serve as a priority for enforcement in addressing the serious violations and international crimes committed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Jerusalem.

78. On September 18, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the historic resolution (A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1\*) on the "Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the Legal Consequences of Israel's Policies and Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Illegality of Israel's Continued Presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." This resolution reaffirmed the content of the ICJ's advisory opinion of July 19, 2024, regarding the illegality of Israel's occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the resulting legal consequences. The resolution outlined specific mechanisms, obligations, and responsibilities for the occupying power, member states, United Nations bodies, and international organizations to ensure the enforcement of the resolution. It requires Israel to terminate its illegal presence throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, within a maximum period of 12 months from the date of the resolution's adoption. The duty to ensure respect for this UN resolution falls on all states, organizations, and bodies. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly resolution form a "roadmap" for all interventions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, encompassing all aspects related to implementation, monitoring, documentation, advocacy, accountability, and all forms of support.

79. The 2024 United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1\*) reaffirmed, among other provisions, **that all States have an obligation** not to recognize the legality of the situation created by Israel's unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and must refrain from rendering aid or assistance in maintaining the situation resulting from Israel's continued presence. The resolution further emphasized that **international organizations, including the United Nations, are under the same obligation** not to recognize the legality of the situation arising from Israel's illegal occupation. Moreover, the United Nations, particu-



larly the General Assembly, which sought the advisory opinion, and the Security Council, are called upon to consider specific mechanisms and additional measures necessary to bring an end to Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory at the earliest possible time.

80. The General Assembly resolution affirms that the obligations violated by Israel, as indicated by the International Court of Justice, include obligations of a **peremptory nature**, which are obligations “**owed to all States**.” All States have a legal interest in safeguarding these obligations, including the commitment to respect the right of the Palestinian people **to self-determination**, the prohibition of the use of force to acquire territory, its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the imperative of **accountability** for all violations of international law, the need **to end impunity**, and the guarantee of justice to deter any future violations while protecting civilians and promoting peace.

81. The General Assembly resolution emphasizes that States must not recognize any changes to the physical character or demographic composition of the territory occupied by Israel since June 5, 1967, **including East Jerusalem**, whether in its institutional structure or status. In this regard, States are required to adhere to several matters, including **their diplomatic, political, legal, military, economic, commercial, and financial dealings** with Israel. States must distinguish between Israel and the Palestinian territory it has occupied since 1967 **in various ways**, including refraining from establishing treaty relations with Israel in any cases where it claims to act on behalf of the occupied Palestinian territory, avoiding any economic or commercial transactions with Israel concerning the occupied Palestinian territory that could solidify Israel's illegal presence there, including settlements and the associated system. Furthermore, in establishing diplomatic missions in Israel or maintaining such missions, States must not recognize Israel's illegal presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including refraining from establishing diplomatic missions in Jerusalem. As parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, States must ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and their obligations, while stressing the urgent need to take measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, **including East Jerusalem**. They must also exert efforts to prevent, prohibit, and eradicate all forms of racial discrimination (**apartheid**).

82. The aforementioned General Assembly resolution also stresses the necessity of establishing an “international mechanism to remedy all damages, losses, or injuries resulting from Israel's actions that are unlawful under international law in the occupied Palestinian territory.” It calls upon member States, in coordination with the United Nations and its relevant bodies, to create an “International Damage Register” to serve as a documented record for evidence and information related to claims concerning damages, losses, or injuries sustained by all natural and legal persons concerned, as well as the Palestinian people, due to Israel's actions that are unlawful under international law in the occupied Palestinian territory. This register aims to enhance and coordinate the process of gathering evidence and initiatives aimed at providing reparations to those affected. The international resolution includes a “follow-up mechanism” through the UN Secretary-General in consultation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and member States with relevant expertise regarding Israel's violations of Article 3<sup>43</sup> of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (apartheid), as defined by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion. Additionally, the resolution requests that the UN Secretary-General present a report to the General Assembly within three months on the implementation of this resolution, including actions taken by Israel, other States, and international organizations, including the United Nations, to implement the provisions of the resolution or any violations thereof.

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43. Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination states: “States Parties particularly condemn racial segregation and apartheid and undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of this nature in territories under their jurisdiction”.

## The Primary Causes of Violence, Torture, and Ill-treatment

83. This section addresses the primary causes of violence, torture, and ill-treatment directed at children in the Jerusalem Governorate, under two subheadings: the first addresses occupation and apartheid, while the second focuses on the “internal factors” that exacerbate violations.

### Occupation and Apartheid

84. The long-term colonial settlement occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, in itself, along with the apartheid system established by the occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory, constitutes a deep, systematic, and widespread violation. This situation is supported and fueled by the three branches of government in Israel: the legislative authority (Knesset), the judicial authority (Supreme Court), and the executive authority (President and Government of Israel). It is characterized by “**systematic persecution**” aimed at politically and geographically fragmenting the Palestinian people to weaken their capacity for resistance and alter reality. It involves the suppression of Palestinians through various laws, policies, and practices intended to impose and perpetuate the control of an ethnic group over them, the isolation, annexation, and militarization of occupied Jerusalem, and the fragmentation and forced displacement of Jerusalemite families. This environment serves as the **primary cause and fertile ground** for all forms of violence targeting Jerusalemite children and original Jerusalemite families, particularly in the city of Jerusalem and throughout the occupied Palestinian territory.

85. Referring to the **International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid of 1973**, the policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination that Israel, the colonial occupying power, implements are based on systematic persecution targeting Palestinians in general and Jerusalemite children and their families in the Jerusalem Governorate. These practices mirror the former apartheid system in South Africa, aiming to impose control of an ethnic group over Palestinians and Jerusalemites in various aspects of life and to perpetuate this racial control. Such actions qualify as all criminal acts specified in the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and are considered “**crimes against humanity**” under international criminal law, particularly within the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Apartheid is a central focus in the advisory opinion issued by **the International Court of Justice and the aforementioned historic General Assembly resolution** in this study.

86. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid addresses forms of apartheid crime in Article (2), which states: “For the purpose of the present Convention, the term “**the crime of apartheid**”, which shall include similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practised in southern Africa, shall apply to the following inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them: (a) Denial to a member or members of a racial group or groups of the right to life and liberty of person: (i) By murder of members of a racial group or groups; (ii) By the infliction upon the members of a racial group or groups of serious bodily or mental harm, by the infringement of their freedom or dignity, or by subjecting them to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; (iii) By arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment of the members of a racial group or groups; (b) Deliberate imposition on a racial group or groups of living conditions calculated to cause its or their physical destruction in whole or in part; (c) Any legislative measures and other measures calculated to prevent a racial group or groups from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country and the deliberate creation of conditions preventing the full development of such a group or groups, in particular by denying to members of a racial group or groups basic human rights and freedoms, including the right to work, the right to form

recognized trade unions, the right to education, the right to leave and to return to their country, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of movement and residence, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; d) Any measures including legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups, the prohibition of mixed marriages among members of various racial groups, the expropriation of landed property belonging to a racial group or groups or to members thereof; (e) Exploitation of the labour of the members of a racial group or groups, in particular by submitting them to forced labour; (f) Persecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose apartheid. “

87. Referring to the patterns of gross violations and systematic persecution practiced by the Israeli colonial occupation in the city of Jerusalem as an occupied territory, including segregation, annexation, militarization, Judaization, violations of holy sites in Jerusalem, settlement activities, and expropriation of land and property, as well as serious violations targeting Palestinian children and their families in the Jerusalem Governorate, including killings and harm to children, arbitrary arrests, house arrest orders, violence, torture, and ill-treatment within Israeli prisons and detention centers, as outlined in this study based on reliable and independent evidence from United Nations bodies and their specialized agencies, as well as independent international, regional, and local organizations, we find that these acts committed in the context of systematic persecution fall within the definition of **“the crime of apartheid”** and its practices outlined in Article (2) of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Since these criminal acts fall under the crime of apartheid, they are considered **“crimes against humanity”** under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

88. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court emphasizes the Court's jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute **the crimes of persecution and apartheid** (apartheid being systematic persecution) as international crimes that fall within the category of crimes against humanity under the provisions of Article (7) of the Rome Statute titled “Crimes Against Humanity.” Article 7(2)(g) of the Statute defines **the crime of persecution** as **“the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity.”** It also defines the **crime of apartheid** in Article 7(2) (h) as **inhumane acts of a character similar to those referred to in paragraph 1, committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.”** The acts referred to in paragraph (1) of Article (7) of the Statute, included in the definition of the crime of apartheid, are: murder, torture and inhumane treatment, intentionally causing severe suffering or serious injury to body or health, extensive destruction of property and appropriation thereof without military necessity, arbitrary detention or imprisonment, and forced displacement, transfer, or expulsion, among others.

89. The patterns of violations targeting the Jerusalem Governorate, including Jerusalemite children and their families in occupied Jerusalem, as detailed with credible evidence in this study, fall within the scope of the crimes of **“persecution and apartheid,”** which are international crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Given that Article (29) of the Rome Statute unequivocally affirms that crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC, including the crimes of persecution and apartheid, **are not subject to any statute of limitations**, it is crucial and necessary to conduct **professional and continuous monitoring and documentation** based on UN monitoring standards and ICC standards. This applies to all grave violations targeting occupied Jerusalem, Jerusalemites, and their families in the Jerusalem Governorate as detailed in this study, as well as other serious and systematic violations. It is essential to submit **“successive reports”** on these violations in the form of dossiers containing facts, legal analysis, and conclusions to the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC to

ensure **criminal accountability for these international crimes**. This process should aim to **secure justice and compensation for the child victims of Jerusalem and their families** and to ensure effective remedies under the Rome Statute of the ICC, the Elements of Crimes document, and **other** relevant ICC documents.

90. It is important to note that the patterns of grave violations and international crimes, such as the killing and intentional harm of Jerusalemite children, arbitrary arrests, house arrest, torture and ill-treatment, and the policy of collective punishment targeting the families of Jerusalemite children, as outlined in this study, constitute “**independent international crimes**” under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In addition to these being classified as “**crimes of persecution and apartheid**,” this means we are dealing with a situation of “**multiple international crimes**” being committed.

### **Internal Factors**

91. There are several internal Palestinian factors, both at the national level and locally within the Jerusalem Governorate, that undermine the efforts aimed at holding the Israeli colonial occupation accountable for its international crimes and the deep-rooted and systematic regime of persecution and apartheid in occupied Jerusalem. These factors also impact the resilience of Jerusalemite children and their families in the face of widespread and systematic grave violations and international crimes committed against them. Furthermore, these factors negatively affect the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights system of Jerusalemite children and their families in the Jerusalem Governorate. This situation necessitates, as a matter of priority, **a serious evaluation and comprehensive review of the approach to Jerusalem at both the national and local levels.**

92. The researcher observes that the efforts made at the official Palestinian (national) level remain highly modest in addressing the major challenges and risks targeting the Jerusalem Governorate and its indigenous Jerusalemite population. The researcher emphasizes that, despite the issuance and enforcement of the **Capital Law No. (4) of 2002**, passed by the first Palestinian Legislative Council, this critically important law has not been practically implemented to reflect the will of the Palestinian legislator, despite (22) years having passed since its approval and publication in the Official Gazette (Palestinian RecGazette) in issue No. (44) in March 2003. Article (3) of the Capital Law of 2002 stipulates that “**an annual share of the general budget shall be allocated to the Holy City of Jerusalem, and programs and plans shall be set to encourage public and private investment in it, and it shall remain a special priority Development Area (A).**” Furthermore, Article (4) of the Capital Law states that “**any legislation or agreement that diminishes the Palestinian right to the Holy City of Jerusalem or contradicts the provisions of this law is considered null and void.**” Article (5) specifies that “**this law shall not be amended or repealed except by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Legislative Council.**” This means that the Capital Law holds the status of a “**Basic Law**,” equivalent to constitutional provisions (the Basic Law), as it requires, like the Palestinian Constitution, a two-thirds majority of the Legislative Council members to be amended or repealed. This approach underscores the high and supreme status of the Capital Law in the eyes of the Palestinian legislator.

93. On July 31, 1980, the Israeli Knesset enacted the “**Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel**,” in blatant violation of international law. The colonial occupation has implemented numerous plans and measures aimed at the isolation, siege, annexation, and militarization of Jerusalem, and has continued to allocate substantial financial resources to impose an illegal reality within the occupied city of Jerusalem. These actions stand in clear contradiction to international law, United Nations General Assembly resolutions, Security Council resolutions, and the latest advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (2024), which affirms the illegality of the occupation, settlement, alteration of the demographic composition, character, and status of Jerusalem, and the invalidity of declaring Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Furthermore, it stresses the illegitimacy of the prolonged occupation of Palestinian

territories and the need for its cessation, alongside compensation and justice for Palestinians. In contrast, the Palestinian Legislative Council passed the **Capital Law (Basic Law)** in 2002, which aligns with international law and affirms the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and full sovereignty over the occupied city of Jerusalem as it is recognized as an occupied territory.

94. However, this Palestinian law has not been enforced to date, and there is no independent budget (**separate financial center**) for Jerusalem in any of the public budgets ratified by the Palestinian Authority since its inception. It is crucial to differentiate between the financial allocations designated for the Ministry or the Governorate of Jerusalem—such as salaries, wages, and running costs, akin to other governorates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—and the provisions of the Capital Law, which call for the **“allocation of a financial budget (separate financial center) within the public budget for Jerusalem, recognizing it as a Development Area (A) with special priority.”** This situation underscores the necessity for both governmental and non-governmental bodies to fully collaborate in implementing the Capital Law without further delay, to enable the formulation and execution of effective plans and programs aimed at reinforcing the resilience of Jerusalem's indigenous residents, particularly children and their families, within the Jerusalem Governorate.

95- During a personal interview conducted by the researcher, the Deputy Minister of Jerusalem Affairs emphasized that the ministry acts as the principal arm of the Palestinian government on all matters concerning the occupied city of Jerusalem, particularly about Israeli policies and violations within the Jerusalem Governorate. This includes the protection of the rights of Jerusalemite children, addressing violations targeting them, and safeguarding their identity and psychological well-being, in accordance with international law and human rights standards. The ministry operates primarily by **supporting the efforts and programs of Jerusalem-based institutions across various sectors**, including those focused on the protection and promotion of children's rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The ministry provides an annual grant of (\$10,000) to each institution to strengthen their programs and activities aimed at enhancing the resilience of the Jerusalemite population. These programs, coordinated with the ministry, include initiatives related to childhood and motherhood, cultural preservation, and the promotion of national identity, as well as safeguarding the rights of children to education, cultural participation, and well-being. Furthermore, the ministry **supports extracurricular programs for children through Jerusalem-based institutions and Palestinian cultural centers**, enriching children's experiences with national, educational, cultural, artistic, and recreational content. These initiatives are designed to promote cultural resilience in the face of Israeli policies aimed at erasing the Palestinian identity in Jerusalem. They also seek to mitigate the psychological harm caused to Jerusalemite children and their families by daily violations and the severe economic and social conditions imposed by the occupation<sup>44</sup>.

96. During the interview, the Deputy Minister of Jerusalem Affairs noted that the Ministry's annual operational budget, allocated from the general treasury, amounts to **approximately (25) million shekels**. Despite the **limited budget**, the Ministry makes every effort to serve the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, particularly children, and collaborates with various ministries—such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing—to provide essential services. Furthermore, the Ministry supports legal and human rights organizations, especially in cases related to building permits, addressing home demolitions, and providing legal aid through lawyers to challenge violations of international law<sup>45</sup>.

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44. A personal interview conducted by the researcher with Dr. Saeed Yaqeen, Deputy Minister of Jerusalem Affairs, on 20/10/2024 for the purposes of this specialized study.

45. A personal interview conducted by the researcher with Dr. Saeed Yaqeen, Deputy Minister of Jerusalem Affairs, on 20/10/2024 for the purposes of this specialized study.

97. During the interview conducted by the researcher, the Director of Social Affairs in the Jerusalem Governorate emphasized that the governorate's priority in the child protection sector is **addressing domestic violence**, which poses a significant threat to the well-being of Palestinian children in Jerusalem. The programs and interventions are predominantly carried out **in areas outside the Separation Wall** within the Jerusalem Governorate, underscoring the challenges associated with accessing areas located **within the Separation Wall**. The initiatives target children who are survivors of domestic violence, as well as those in residential care facilities, providing a comprehensive package of interventions that includes **psychosocial support, legal aid, and community awareness-raising** on the severe impact of domestic violence on the physical and psychological development of children. Furthermore, there is close coordination with relevant child protection actors and civil society organizations in this regard<sup>46</sup>.

98. The Director of the Department of Social Affairs in the Jerusalem Governorate emphasized the significant **budgetary limitations affecting the governorate**, particularly in the area of **child protection**. She highlighted **the critical shortage of social workers and mental health professionals** and stressed the **urgent need to establish a specialized center for the protection of girls survivors of domestic violence**, to offer integrated psychosocial support services for children within the governorate. Additionally, she called for the **creation of a specialized unit for the monitoring and documentation of violations** against children in Jerusalem, both **within and outside the separation wall**, equipped with adequate human, logistical, and technical resources to assess the scope of violations and inform targeted interventions. The Director noted that achieving these objectives **requires sufficient financial resources**, alongside the **strengthening of partnerships and collaboration with civil society organizations** working in the child protection sector. She emphasized that capacity-building initiatives and training programs are essential to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of efforts aimed at **protecting and promoting the rights of children** in the Jerusalem Governorate<sup>47</sup>.

99. The interviews and discussions conducted by the researcher with both official and non-official entities revealed extensive patterns of violations within the Jerusalem Governorate. These violations stem from policies of isolation, annexation, Judaization, militarization, systemic oppression, and deep-rooted apartheid, all of which pose significant threats to the past, present, and future of the occupied city of Jerusalem and its indigenous residents. The violations affect a wide array of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. **These chronic and heavy accumulations** have led to rising poverty and unemployment rates, heightened deprivation, and an increase in crime within the Jerusalem community. The education sector has seen a sharp rise in school dropouts, while drug abuse has spread, facilitated by the colonial occupation authorities. Families in Jerusalem have been torn apart by forced displacement, and the residents face continuous violence from occupation soldiers and armed settler militias, particularly targeting Palestinian children and holy sites in occupied Jerusalem. Further complicating the situation are the cultural differences and dominant familial mentalities in the neighborhoods and towns within occupied Jerusalem, as well as the intense sensitivity towards any interventions aimed at addressing these severe deteriorations. This sensitivity is driven by fear of the occupation's systematic policies of persecution against Jerusalem's residents, their children, and their families. The meetings also highlighted key priorities **in terms of patterns of violations, legal analysis, and necessary interventions**, which are presented as a foundational and serious introduction to a series of "**specialized**" studies, papers, and inter-

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46. An interview conducted by the researcher with Ms. Inaam Abu Zaiter, Director of the Department of Social Affairs in the Jerusalem Governorate, on 21/10/2024 for this study.

47. An interview conducted by the researcher with Ms. Inaam Abu Zaiter, Director of the Department of Social Affairs in the Jerusalem Governorate, on 21/10/2024 for this study.

ventions concerning the Jerusalem Governorate. These will be discussed in more detail later under a separate section dedicated to the perspectives of Palestinian institutions operating within and outside the separation wall.

100. In the context of the Israelization of educational curricula, the occupying authorities have carried out **extensive falsifications of Palestinian school curricula** for children in occupied East Jerusalem. The “Israeli Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality” altered (54) textbooks from the Palestinian curriculum, with (689) documented instances of falsification. These alterations targeted the Palestinian flag, national songs, and the traditional Palestinian keffiyeh, and aimed to erase the history of Jerusalem and the presence of the separation wall (apartheid wall) from the educational materials provided to children in occupied Jerusalem. Schools in the city were subjected to various forms of pressure to comply with these imposed curricula, under threat of sanctions and deprivation of essential resources<sup>48</sup>. This systematic effort by Israel seeks to distort the consciousness of Palestinian children, erase their national identity, and deepen the apartheid regime by isolating, annexing, and Judaizing Jerusalem. These actions constitute serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. This policy of targeting education and curricula in Jerusalem falls within the broader context of **persecution and apartheid**, constituting a crime against humanity under international criminal law. Addressing these violations requires bolstered efforts from both official and non-governmental organizations, as well as Jerusalem-based institutions, to monitor, document, expose, and seek accountability and justice. Additionally, **“effective options”** to confront this policy, such as digital education programs and mobile schools, must be explored. Furthermore, a **clear policy to protect education and uphold children’s rights** should be included as a priority in the government’s current **2024 emergency budget and plan**.

101. The researcher believes that despite the importance of the outcomes from meetings held with the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, the Jerusalem Governorate, and civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations working in occupied East Jerusalem, and the insights that have shaped the methodology of this study (which will be detailed later), these outcomes are not sufficient in themselves. There is an urgent need for coordinated efforts to enforce **Capital Law No. (4) of 2002**, which mandates securing the necessary financial, human, and technical resources to support institutions in Jerusalem that are facing the risk of collapse. Effective and sustainable plans and programs need to be implemented in Jerusalem, classified as a priority Area (A) Development Zone under the Palestinian **Capital Law**. A top priority is the establishment of specialized **monitoring and documentation units** within official and non-governmental institutions working in Jerusalem, particularly within the Separation Wall. These efforts must be rooted in the principle of **local ownership** within the governorate to enable the monitoring of violations, the identification of needs and intervention maps, and the development of a clear policy for comprehensive and sustainable solutions. Moreover, **comprehensive and sustained capacity-building programs** are essential, focusing on the United Nations monitoring and documentation mechanisms, the standards of **the International Criminal Court (ICC)**, and the frameworks of international commissions of inquiry. These programs should be inclusive, aligning with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to address Israel’s policies of isolation, blockade, annexation, militarization, and systemic oppression. Each institution should maintain an institution-specific classified database (**information repositories**) in line **with international standards**, as well as participate in the development of a **shared database** to facilitate coordination across institutions. A key aspect of this work is ensuring **digital security**, given the ongoing efforts

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48. Investigative Report by Al-Araby Al-Jadeed - London: The Occupation Distorts the Palestinian Curriculum in Jerusalem, published at the following link: <http://tiny.cc/r8qgzz>

by the Israeli occupation to target public institutions within Jerusalem, especially those located within the Separation Wall. Ultimately, these collective efforts, supported by sustainable capacity-building and training programs, should culminate in the establishment of a **Jerusalem Observatory**. This observatory will systematically monitor **gross human rights violations** and **widespread international crimes** committed in Jerusalem. It will also ensure that pathways for international accountability are pursued, guaranteeing justice and reparations for Jerusalem's Palestinian inhabitants, and their families and children.

102. The evident shortcomings in the methodology, tools, and reference frameworks used in monitoring and documentation efforts, along with the frequent confusion between mere information gathering and comprehensive documentation, have highlighted the absence of specialized monitoring and documentation units. Furthermore, the lack of classified databases aligned with United Nations standards (information repositories), the weak coordination, and the lack of structured collective work have severely impacted the performance and credibility of evidence related to the grave violations and international crimes committed by the colonial occupation in occupied East Jerusalem, including those affecting Palestinian children. These issues represent the "**weakest link**" in the performance of Palestinian civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations, especially those operating within the Separation Wall in East Jerusalem. This weakness not only undermines the quality of services provided but also negatively affects advocacy efforts and the accountability processes for violations and international crimes, diminishing the chances of achieving justice and redress for Jerusalem's children and residents. It is crucial to address this **significant challenge** and recognize the decisive importance of local ownership in overcoming isolation. Strengthened training programs and capacity-building initiatives are essential to create a tangible impact and drive meaningful change in the fight for justice in Jerusalem.

103. The frequent reference to "**violations in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem**" in statements, reports, and statistics produced by local and international organizations underscores **a significant gap** in monitoring, documentation, and follow-up mechanisms within Jerusalem Governorate, particularly inside the Separation Wall and areas affected by Israeli apartheid policies. This deficiency arises from Israel's systematic policies of isolation, blockade, annexation, and militarization, which are part of its ongoing colonial occupation in occupied Jerusalem. Effectively addressing **the systematic oppression** targeting occupied Jerusalem and its indigenous population cannot be accomplished through these inadequate methodologies. There is a pressing need to establish comprehensive monitoring and documentation systems, including classified databases (information repositories), alongside organized, collective efforts, and intensive, sustainable training and capacity-building programs. These initiatives should lead to the establishment of a **Jerusalem Monitoring Observatory**, rooted in a framework of integrated local ownership within Jerusalem and its institutions. This approach will facilitate the strengthening of partnerships with national, regional, and international entities. Prioritizing institutionalization and organization is crucial; **otherwise**, all efforts will remain trapped in a vicious cycle without meaningful outcomes.



## The Psychosocial Implications on Children and their Families

104. The results of the meetings and interviews conducted by the researcher with official and unofficial entities, as well as partners for the purposes of this study, reveal the importance and necessity of **understanding the reality of Jerusalem Governorate, particularly within the confines of the Separation Wall and apartheid policies**, and the complexities arising from systematic oppression and the long-standing accumulations of grievances. This understanding is critical for informing any interventions related to the state of mental health in Jerusalem or any other actions across civil, political, social, economic, and cultural fields. Comprehending the unique reality of Jerusalem, its specificities, and complexities, alongside the differing social contexts and predominant family mentalities in various neighborhoods—despite their proximity—is of utmost importance. Additionally, the heightened sensitivity of the residents of Jerusalem towards any interventions aimed at addressing the accumulated crises that have led to a significant erosion of trust **is crucial**. This awareness is key to generating impactful results and establishing a cumulative foundation for dismantling the current stagnation and progressing toward substantive change<sup>49</sup>.

105. The institutions and organizations operating in the Jerusalem Governorate emphasized the **severity of social disintegration** resulting from the systematic oppression exercised against Jerusalemite children and their families. This oppression leads to devastating impacts on mental health, family cohesion, and social ties, as well as increasing rates of poverty, unemployment, and deprivation. Furthermore, there is a rise in violence and crime, including revenge killings and acts of violence lacking justifiable causes, along with an increase in divorce rates and child marriage under the age of 18. These issues are exacerbated by the immense psychological pressures experienced by Jerusalemite families due to the occupying power's policies of systematic oppression and forced displacement. Moreover, the crucial importance of a sense of **"security and acceptance"** for families and their children in any programs or services within the Jerusalem Governorate was highlighted. Additionally, the need to build **"bridges of trust"** in the programs and services offered is vital. This can be achieved by relying on and investing in **service providers from the same governorate, town, and neighborhood, as well as engaging parents' councils and other community members**. Such an approach is essential for fostering acceptance of services that contribute to meaningful change.

106. Findings from the focus groups and meetings with both official and unofficial stakeholders revealed the profound psychological and social impacts on Jerusalemite children and their families due to the ongoing and escalating patterns of violations in the Jerusalem Governorate. There is an urgent need to provide **safe environments and child-friendly spaces for Jerusalemite children** suffering from the psychological and social effects of these violations. Furthermore, the importance of psychological support within a safe, supportive, and child-friendly environment for Jerusalemite children to express their opinions and emotions, away from daily traumas, was highlighted. The necessity for **psychological and social interventions for Jerusalemite children** affected by the trauma resulting from the occupation and its practices is critical. Sustainable psychological and social support programs should be developed through collaboration among institutions, schools, and community centers. Additionally, the importance of training and capacity-building, as well as institutionalizing psychological and social interventions for traumatized children, was emphasized. Supporting peer relationships for children affected by trauma is essential for effectively and sustainably assisting them in coping with their experiences. This can be achieved through peer interactions, facilitating the expression of their opinions and feelings, and enhancing peer support

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49. A key outcome from the meeting held with civil, human rights, and grassroots organizations at the Palestinian Vision Foundation in occupied Jerusalem on July 25, 2024, as well as the meeting with similar organizations outside the Separation Wall on July 30, 2024.

programs within institutions, schools, and community events in the Jerusalem Governorate. **Strengthening child protection networks**, promoting collaborative efforts, and implementing long-term strategies to enhance resilience and the ability of Jerusalemite children to adapt to difficult circumstances and overcome trauma is vital. **Investing** in early childhood development programs is also crucial.

107. Indicators from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reveal that the number of children under the age of (18) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reached (2,432,534) as of mid-2024, with (1,364,548) children in the West Bank and (1,067,986) children in the Gaza Strip. This indicates that **approximately half of the Palestinian population consists of children**. In 2022, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank conducted a mental health survey within the Palestinian community following the Israeli aggression on Gaza in May 2021. This survey encompassed three primary indicators: depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and common mental health disorders. The findings indicated that **more than half of the Palestinian population experienced depression**, with rates reaching (71%) in Gaza and (50%) in the West Bank. Additionally, there was a **notable increase in new cases reported at addiction centers, as well as a rise in suicide attempts and escalating rates of domestic violence**<sup>50</sup>. If such alarming mental health indicators were recorded in 2022, the results of any specialized survey conducted after the recent aggression on Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem—which surpasses the scale of killing and destruction from **the seven previous military assaults** on Gaza<sup>51</sup> since 2006 combined—are expected to be **catastrophic**.

108. Patterns of violations against children in the Jerusalem Governorate, highlighted by this study, reveal a staggering increase in the killing of Palestinian children by (250%) since October 7. Additionally, there has been a significant rise in the arbitrary detention of Palestinian children, exceeding rates observed in all other governorates in the West Bank. The policy of house arrest has transformed Palestinian parents into both jailers and prisoners with their children, resulting in immense psychological harm to family dynamics and the mental well-being of Palestinian children. Systematic torture and ill-treatment targeting Palestinian children, along with the psychological warfare waged by the occupation against Jerusalemites and their children, have further exacerbated this situation. This includes distressing scenes of psychological torture broadcast live, **such as those involving Palestinian child Ahmad Manasra (I don't remember)**, who spent his childhood and beyond in Israeli prisons, leading to cognitive impairment. The brutal murder of **Jerusalemite child Muhammad Abu Khdeir, who was burned alive** by extremist settlers, ignited outrage among thousands of Jerusalem residents, who took to the streets upon hearing of this horrific crime. The complex system of identity and residency regulations, the separation of Palestinian children from their families, systematic persecution, and the isolation, annexation, and Judaization of Jerusalem have all contributed to a cycle of pervasive violence, which UNICEF has aptly described as a nightmare. These factors have inflicted **profound psychological impacts, trauma, and disturbances that are deeply rooted in the minds of Palestinian children**, necessitating extensive interventions focused on post-traumatic therapies. The healing process will require many years of treatment and will leave indelible psychological scars.

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50. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank announce the results of the 2022 Mental Health Conditions Survey in Palestine, published on the Central Bureau's website on February 21, 2023, at the following link: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=ar&ItemID=4447>

51. The Gaza Strip, which has been under a severe and continuous blockade for 18 years and is deemed unlivable according to United Nations reports, has endured eight military assaults by the Israeli occupation forces. These attacks have resulted in tens of thousands of casualties, injuries, and disabilities among the civilian population, as well as extensive destruction of civilian objects and various aspects of daily life. The first assault occurred in 2006, followed by the second from late 2008 to January 2009, the third in 2012, the fourth in 2014, the fifth in 2019, the sixth in 2021, the seventh in 2022, and the eighth—which is the longest, most extensive, and deadliest for civilians, especially children and women—began on October 7, 2023. This latest offensive is unprecedented in modern history, and its effects will be felt across various aspects of life and mental health in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories for many years to come.

109. The report released by **the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)** on January 22, 2024, provides a comprehensive analysis of the health and psychological situation in occupied Jerusalem following the events of October 7, 2023. Key findings from the report indicate a significant increase in mental health disorders in occupied Jerusalem, particularly in cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alongside heightened levels of anxiety and depression across various degrees of severity. The WHO report estimates that approximately (12%) of the total population in occupied Jerusalem exhibits symptoms of PTSD that exceed clinical thresholds. The report further highlights disparities in anxiety levels, noting that (15%) of the population suffers from high levels of anxiety as a result of immense psychological stress, uncertainty, and concerns for the safety of their loved ones. It emphasizes the critical importance of taking immediate action to meet the growing mental health needs and to enhance mental health services, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, such as children and adolescents in occupied Jerusalem, especially those with a history of trauma-related disorders<sup>52</sup>.

110. The Director-General's report of the World Health Organization (WHO), issued on January 22, 2024, following the October 7 military aggression, underscores **the profound psychological impact of trauma on children in occupied East Jerusalem**. The report categorizes the effects by age group: **Early Childhood (3–6 years)**: In this developmental phase, children are particularly vulnerable to symptoms such as intense fear, enuresis (involuntary urination), social withdrawal, sleep disturbances, and difficulties in appropriately expressing emotions. These factors can manifest as either increased aggression or social isolation. Children exposed to traumatic events at this age may experience delayed emotional and cognitive development, with heightened sensitivity to environmental stressors and changes. **Middle Childhood (7–12 years)**: At this stage, children may exhibit symptoms such as nightmares, difficulty concentrating, academic decline, and social anxiety. Their evolving cognitive abilities allow them to comprehend traumatic events more deeply, resulting in feelings of insecurity and fear. Exposure to trauma during this period can significantly undermine self-esteem, and social functioning, and may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), negatively shaping their worldview. **Adolescence (up to 16 years)**: Common psychological issues among adolescents include anxiety disorders, depression, and eating disorders. In severe cases, they are at a higher risk of suicidal ideation or behaviors. Adolescents may respond to trauma by withdrawing from social interactions or engaging in risky or self-destructive behaviors. The long-term effects of trauma during adolescence can impair identity development and the ability to form healthy relationships, posing a threat to their overall psychosocial well-being and future prospects.

111. The interviews and consultations conducted by the researcher with both official and non-official entities, along with the review of published literature in the field of mental health, revealed **a substantial and urgent need for mental health services in the Jerusalem Governorate**. These services are crucial for addressing the psychological consequences experienced by Palestinian children in Jerusalem and their families as a result of systematic human rights violations and persecution by the Israeli occupying forces and armed settler militias, as outlined in this study. The situation is further exacerbated by complex internal factors, as well as the cultural, social, and economic contexts in occupied Jerusalem. **There is a significant shortfall in funding for mental health programs, alongside a severe shortage of human resources**, including specialized mental health professionals such as psychiatrists and psychologists. Additionally, there are weaknesses in systems for monitoring, documentation, and follow-up in the mental health sector, which are essential for effective response and compliance with international human rights standards. Capacity-building and training pro-

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52. World Health Organization (WHO), Director-General's report on the health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, after October 7th. The report was issued on December 22/January 2024.

grams for mental health personnel are insufficient, and there are notable gaps in oversight, governance, and the necessary standards to ensure the safety, efficacy, and accountability of mental health services. Moreover, the coordination between the public, private, and civil society sectors, as well as with other relevant stakeholders, is inadequate, resulting in fragmented and disorganized service provision in occupied Jerusalem. This situation necessitates **a clear, transparent, and rights-based policy framework, along with adequate resources and a structured, participatory approach** involving Jerusalem-based institutions to effectively respond to the significant mental health needs. These challenges have become even more pressing following the recent escalation of violence in Gaza and its ripple effects on the population of occupied Jerusalem.

112. Referring to the **2024 Government Emergency Plan**<sup>53</sup>, which the Palestinian government is currently implementing to address the impact of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and occupied East Jerusalem, it becomes clear that East Jerusalem is **“almost absent”** from **the urgent response to the priorities and needs arising from the aggression in the West Bank, and from the emergency interventions tied to it (the second pillar of the plan following Gaza)**. The Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, as the relevant authority, is mentioned only twice in the third pillar of the plan, which addresses the continuity of “regular” government services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The plan makes no reference to the health situation, including mental health, in the Jerusalem Governorate, even in terms of routine interventions planned for 2024 activities and projects. Neither the Ministry of Health, the competent authority, nor the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, nor any joint efforts between these two key ministries responsible for health and mental health in East Jerusalem are adequately reflected. This omission is particularly alarming given the serious challenges, long-standing complex issues, and significant gaps in mental health services across all levels in the Jerusalem Governorate. In a later section of this study, we will detail the findings from the 2024 Government Emergency Plan, particularly regarding the State of Palestine’s obligations under international law.

113. Notably, the historic advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on July 19, 2024, regarding the **“illegality of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories and its consequences,”** as well as the significant resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 18, 2024 (A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1\*), concerning **“the ICJ advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel’s policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the illegality of Israel’s continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories,”** have not yet been incorporated into the 2024 Government Emergency Plan. This gap highlights the urgent need to integrate both the ICJ’s advisory opinion and the UNGA’s resolution into the Government Emergency Plan and all relevant public policies, as well as cross-sectoral and sector-specific strategies. These legal instruments should serve as a **“roadmap”** for any interventions, programs, or projects in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem and the sector addressing childhood. This approach should also apply to initiatives undertaken by civil society organizations and the private sector in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

114. The 2024 Government Emergency Plan emphasizes, in its methodology and criteria for developing the plan currently in progress, that the Palestinian Cabinet made a decision on December 12, 2023, to instruct government department heads (ministers) to prepare a Government Emergency Plan for 2024 in response to the aggression against the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and occupied Jerusalem. To facilitate this, the General Secretariat of the Cabinet communicated with all governmental departments on December 14, 2023, providing them

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53. The 2024 Government Emergency Plan currently being implemented by the new Palestinian government (the 19th government) is published on the official website of the Palestinian Cabinet at the following link: <https://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/publication/9/1>

with the Cabinet's decision and the general framework for preparing the plan, which outlines the strategic directions, parameters, and criteria to be utilized in selecting projects and activities. It underscores the importance of reviewing existing plans within ministries to ensure alignment with the requirements of the 2024 Government Emergency Plan. Consequently, the researcher highlights the necessity for the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs to coordinate with the Jerusalem Governorate and collaborate with the Ministry of Health and all relevant stakeholders in the civil society and private sectors. This collaboration aims to formulate a **comprehensive policy and clear priorities for mental health in Jerusalem, which should be integrated into the 2024 Emergency Plan.** The policy must include a detailed assessment of mental health challenges in the governorate, relevant indicators, and specific actions to enhance the mental health situation in Jerusalem. This assessment should be based on the issues identified in this study and others, along with the determination of financial, human, and technical resources, implementation timelines, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with safety and effectiveness standards. This process should involve a participatory approach among all stakeholders to achieve the desired objectives of addressing the critical mental health needs in Jerusalem, thus establishing a vital foundation for the forthcoming strategy<sup>54</sup> in the field of mental health.

115. It is important to always remember that the Capital Law No. (4) of 2002 (Basic Law) clearly emphasizes that “an annual allocation from the general budget shall be designated for the city of Jerusalem, and programs and plans shall be established to encourage public and private investment therein while maintaining Area (A) as a special priority zone.” The government, ministries, and relevant authorities should not overlook or disregard the existence of this constitutionally binding law in any interventions, programs, or projects in the Jerusalem Governorate.

## **Legal Analysis of Serious Violations in the Jerusalem Governorate**

116. This concise and in-depth legal analysis of the patterns of violations discussed in the study is grounded in the provisions of international humanitarian law and the principles governing military occupation, international human rights law, and international criminal law, particularly as they pertain to the International Criminal Court. It also takes into account the role of international judicial bodies, including (the International Court of Justice), as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations responsible for issuing binding decisions and advisory opinions.

117. Palestinian children and their families are classified as protected persons under international humanitarian law, specifically under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, dated August 12, 1949. This Convention applies in situations of armed conflict and military occupation, including in the occupied Palestinian territory, such as the city of occupied Jerusalem.

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54. The Palestinian Ministry of Health issued a National Mental Health Strategy for the years 2015–2019 and a National Mental Health Strategy for Children and Adolescents for the years 2023–2028 in collaboration with the World Health Organization. There is an urgent need for a serious and comprehensive review of these strategies, especially in light of the ongoing aggression against the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and occupied Jerusalem since October 7, 2023, and its devastating effects, particularly in the area of mental health. This review should extract lessons learned from the challenges and obstacles facing the Ministry of Health in strategic planning at the levels of institutionalization, governance, partnership, inclusion, and the necessary financial resources to ensure the achievement of desired objectives. Effective and participatory mechanisms for monitoring the safety and efficacy of implementation at all stages are also essential. Additionally, the 2024 Government Emergency Plan and the decisions issued by the government concerning it necessitate these comprehensive reviews.

118. Israel, as the occupying power engaged in colonial occupation and an apartheid regime in the occupied Palestinian territory, cannot claim that international humanitarian law, customary international humanitarian rules, and international human rights law do not apply to the occupied Palestinian territory. This assertion contradicts the positions affirmed by all United Nations bodies, relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, and the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on July 9, 2004, which stated that the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, are occupied territories. Consequently, Israel, as the occupying authority, is obligated to respect its commitments and responsibilities under international law, including the removal of the annexation wall and providing reparations. Furthermore, the recent advisory opinion of the ICJ dated July 19, 2024, regarding the **“illegality of the occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories and its implications,”** reiterates that Israel must evacuate all settlers and settlements, dismantle the apartheid wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, provide compensation for its unlawful actions, restore rights to their rightful owners, refrain from altering the demographic composition of Jerusalem and its character, recognize the illegitimacy of declaring Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, fully end its occupation and unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, **“as soon as possible,”** and enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination. Additionally, the resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on September 18, 2024, outlines the mechanisms and timeline for ending the occupation (**12 months from the date of the resolution**). Therefore, Israel, as the occupying authority, is required to strictly comply with international law and the advisory opinions of the ICJ. This strict obligation extends not only to the occupying power but also to all states, United Nations bodies, and others to ensure its implementation.

119. There can be no justification for contravening or evading obligations under international law by invoking any agreements with the Israeli occupying authority and the apartheid regime, including the **“Oslo Accords.”** Article (8) of the Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly states that protected persons under this Convention may not, in any circumstances, wholly or partially renounce the rights granted to them by the Convention. Any agreement that violates the Convention by waiving any of these rights shall be deemed null and void. This principle applies to the Palestinian-protected population covered by the Convention in Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem. Furthermore, Article (47) of the Convention asserts that “Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory.” The recent advisory opinion of **the International Court of Justice and the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly** have unequivocally (affirmed) the illegality of the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the necessity for its termination within one year from the date of the General Assembly resolution.

120. The patterns of violations targeting occupied Jerusalem through isolation, annexation, Judaization, and militarization, as well as those directed against Palestinian children and their families in Jerusalem, **detailed in this study**, encompass acts such as the killing and intentional harm of Palestinian children, arbitrary arrests, house arrest policies, collective punishment, torture and ill-treatment, and forced displacement of the indigenous Palestinian population and their families from occupied Jerusalem—this includes the regime of identity control and family separation—as well as the persecution and apartheid practices perpetrated by the occupying power against Palestinian children and their families in Jerusalem. These actions constitute **“serious violations”** of international humanitarian law, as defined in Article (147) of the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning grave breaches of international law.

121. The actions legally characterized as serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 147) also constitute grave breaches of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1977 regarding international armed conflicts and situations of military occupation. These actions fall within the definition of “**war crimes**” as established in Article (85) of Additional Protocol I. Consequently, the patterns of violations detailed in this study, which target occupied Jerusalem and its indigenous population, including Palestinian children and their families, are regarded as serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I, qualifying as “**fully constituted war crimes**” under the provisions of Additional Protocol I.

122. In reference to international human rights law, particularly **the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, to which Israel is a state party, and specifically the recent combined fifth and sixth periodic reports (CRC/C/ISR/Q/5-6) concerning its obligations under the provisions of the Convention—especially regarding Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territories, including those in Jerusalem—the assertions made in Israel’s reports claiming that the Convention does not apply in the West Bank are **devoid of “any legal validity” under international law**. This point has been elaborated upon by the researcher in the analysis presented in this specialized study and is further reinforced in the parallel report submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on August 15, 2024, addressing Israel’s aforementioned reports. This submission includes comprehensive recommendations for the international committee to bolster its efforts in conducting a thorough review of Israel’s obligations concerning Palestinian children in the occupied territories<sup>55</sup>.

123. The patterns of violations perpetrated by Israel, the occupying power with a colonial and apartheid regime, against Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate, as detailed in this specialized study, constitute serious violations of the majority of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Israel’s obligations toward Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate. **Notably**, these include: Article (2) concerning racial discrimination and the systematic persecution targeting Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate, which represents a serious violation of the aforementioned provision. Articles (3) and (4) regarding the Israeli policies, legislations, and measures that have targeted Jerusalemite children and their families, contrary to the best interests of Jerusalemite children and their full rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural) as enshrined in the Convention. Article (6) concerning the violation of the right of Jerusalemite children to life through acts of murder and deliberate harm. Additionally, Articles (7) and (8) address the violation of the right of Jerusalemite children to be registered at birth and to maintain their identity without unlawful interference. Article (9) regarding the separation of Jerusalemite children from their families and the dispersion of Jerusalemite families, which constitutes a grave violation of the aforementioned provision. Furthermore, Article (10) concerning policies of persecution and the prevention of family reunification for Jerusalemite families in a positive, humane, and prompt manner. Articles (12) and (13) regarding the violation of the freedom of expression of Jerusalemite children and the arbitrary arrests targeting them for exercising their freedom of expression, particularly on social media. Article (15) concerning the obstruction of the right to freedom of association and the targeting of Jerusalemite organizations that provide various services to Jerusalemite children and their families.

124. Article (16) addresses the violation of the privacy of Jerusalemite children by the occupying authorities in the Jerusalem Governorate. Article (19) pertains to various forms of violence, including physical and psychological abuse, neglect, and maltreatment directed at Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate. Article (23) focuses on “Jerusalemite children

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55. Dr. Issam Abedine, Report of QADER for Community Development submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on August 15, 2024, regarding Israel’s recent combined fifth and sixth periodic reports. The report is published in both English and Arabic on the official United Nations website at the following link: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FISR%2F59405&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FISR%2F59405&Lang=en)

with disabilities” and the infringement of their comprehensive rights as outlined in the Convention, as well as the compounded effects of the violations discussed in this study on children with disabilities, in light of the absence of reasonable accommodations, accessibility, and inclusive practices.

125. Article (24) pertains to the overall health and deteriorating mental health of Jerusalemite children as a result of violations committed by the occupying authorities in the Jerusalem Governorate. Article (26) addresses the violations related to the deprivation of Jerusalemite children from national insurance entitlements under tenuous pretexts, particularly following October 7. Article (27) highlights the restrictions on an adequate standard of living necessary for the physical, mental, spiritual, and social development of Jerusalemite children, stemming from violations, persecution, and apartheid practices affecting them in the Jerusalem Governorate. Article (28) discusses the violation of the right to education, including the distortion of educational curricula, the Israelization of education, and the threats to the future of childhood in Jerusalem. Article (31) concerns the ongoing restrictions on the cultural and artistic rights of Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate. Article (37) focuses on the forms of torture and ill-treatment experienced by Jerusalemite children in Israeli prisons and detention facilities. Article (38) relates to the violation of the rights of Jerusalemite children and their families due to non-compliance with international humanitarian law in situations of armed conflict and military occupation.

126. Referring to **the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)**, to which Israel is a state party, the definition of **“torture”** articulated in Article (1) applies to the severe violations perpetrated against Jerusalemite children in detention facilities and prisons. This definition is also relevant to the policy of house arrest that targets childhood within the Jerusalem Governorate.

127. The elements and components of the **“crime of torture,”** as defined in Article (1) of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), hinge on acts that result in **“severe physical or mental pain or suffering.”** These acts are committed for a specific **purpose**, such as obtaining information or confessions from children, punishing them for actions they or others have committed, or when exercised in a discriminatory manner (**e.g., based on their status as Palestinian children**). Such acts must be carried out by **a public official** (such as prison personnel) or by **a person acting in an official capacity** (e.g., private security contractors). The distinction between the crime of torture, as described in Article (1), and the crime of ill-treatment (which includes cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment) outlined in Article (16) of the Convention lies in the severity of the pain and suffering inflicted on children and, more specifically, the **“purpose”** of these actions. If these acts aim to achieve one of the objectives specified in the text (such as obtaining information, confessions, or punishing for actions committed or allegedly committed by the child or others, or for discriminatory reasons), they constitute **torture**. Conversely, if there is no purpose other than to inflict humiliation and degradation on the children, it falls under the category of **ill-treatment**. Both forms of treatment are prohibited, but the crime of torture is considered **“more severe”** than ill-treatment under the Convention and international law.

128. Torture is categorically prohibited under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) of 1984, and the absolute prohibition of torture is recognized as a peremptory norm (**jus cogens**) in international law. No circumstance may be invoked as a justification for torture. This means that states cannot cite a state of emergency, wartime conditions, political instability, or exceptional circumstances, nor can orders from military officers, senior military leaders, or political officials serve as a justification for torture under the Convention (Article 2). Such acts are deemed prohibited under all circumstances based on the absolute prohibition of torture as established in customary international law and the Convention. Israel's claim that an individual poses a **“ticking**



**time bomb**” as a rationale for torture is inadmissible under international law (**the absolute prohibition**) in all circumstances. Furthermore, the prosecution and accountability of those who commit acts of torture **are not subject to any statute of limitations**, regardless of the passage of time, under the Convention Against Torture and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

129. The patterns of violations directed against children in Jerusalem, through systematic and widespread arbitrary arrests over the past years—intensifying since October 7—along with the policy of house arrests, represent multiple forms of the crimes of torture and ill-treatment in violation of the Convention Against Torture and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

130. The video footage broadcast live showing the Palestinian child “**Ahmad Manasra**” enduring severe psychological torture at the hands of **an Israeli interrogator**, along with the child’s repeated responses under duress (“**I don’t remember**”), constitutes a **complete crime scene involving acts of torture** perpetrated against Manasra and other Jerusalemite children. The torture of Palestinian children, particularly those from Jerusalem, is not an isolated incident but rather a systematic and widespread policy endorsed by the political, judicial, and executive branches of the occupation authorities, which uphold a regime of colonial occupation and apartheid in the occupied Palestinian territory. This is unequivocally evidenced in this specialized study, which examines the relevant legislation, judicial rulings, statements by Israeli officials, and the patterns of grave violations targeting Palestinian children in Jerusalem, especially following October 7. Consequently, we are confronted with international crimes (**acts of torture**) that fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, and such acts of torture are not subject to any statute of limitations, regardless of the passage of time.

131. Referring to international criminal law (**International Criminal Court**), the grave violations systematically and extensively targeting children, families in Jerusalem, and the city itself over the past years, which have escalated significantly since the onset of the ongoing aggression against the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, as outlined in this specialized study, cannot be legally classified solely as “**war crimes**.” They also encompass “**crimes against humanity**,” thereby strengthening the credible evidence of the commission of “**genocide**” in the occupied Palestinian territory, under the definition of genocide provided in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as well as in the Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Elements of Crimes document.

132. Article (8) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court defines “**war crimes**,” particularly when committed as part of a general plan or policy (**systematic/state policy**) or within the context of a widespread operation. The text clarifies that, for the purposes of this Statute and the Court’s jurisdiction, war crimes encompass “**serious violations of the Geneva Conventions**” of August 12, 1949, specifically including “willful killing,” “torture and inhuman treatment,” “Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health,” “Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly,” “arbitrary detention,” “forced displacement,” “settlement,” and “Pillaging a town or place, even when taken by assault,” among other acts of war crimes outlined in Article )8( of the Rome Statute. The patterns of violations detailed in this specialized study, which specifically target Palestinian children, families, and the occupied city of Jerusalem, constitute “**multiple forms of war crimes**,” **with each act representing an independent and fully realized war crime in itself**. Complaints and legal files concerning these violations can be submitted to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. It is essential to underscore Article (27) of the Statute, which establishes that there is “**no statute of limitations**” for international crimes falling within the Court’s jurisdiction.

133. Referring to Article (7) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court regarding “**acts constituting crimes against humanity**,” and applying this definition to the patterns of violations targeting Palestinian children, their families, and the Jerusalem Governorate as outlined in this study, it is clear that the concept of crimes against humanity under the Statute includes the acts specified in the aforementioned article (Article 7) when they are committed as part of a “widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack.” Thus, the legal classification of war crimes is distinct from that of crimes against humanity, **with the latter carrying greater severity**, supported by credible evidence regarding the scale and scope of the attack. This distinction applies to Palestinian children, their families, and the city of Jerusalem, particularly following the military offensive initiated by the occupying forces since October 7 in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Among the most prominent forms of crimes against humanity listed in Article (7) of the Court’s Statute, which correspond to the serious violations examined in this study, are “**willful killing**,” “**torture**,” “**arbitrary detention**,” “**persecution**,” and “**apartheid**.” Each of these international crimes constitutes a crime against humanity, independent in nature and fully formed, for the purposes of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

134. Article (6) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) delineates “**acts constituting genocide**,” recognized as the gravest international crime under the Court’s jurisdiction (the “**crime of crimes**”). The provision states: “For the purpose of this Statute, “genocide” means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” According to the Elements of Crimes document of the Court (ICC-ASP/1/3), the material element (**criminal conduct**) encompasses any of the five acts of genocide directed against the Palestinian population and their children (for the purposes of this study). The mental element (intent) entails knowledge and the will to commit these acts, with the “**specific intent**” articulated in the text through the phrase “**as such**.” This indicates that the crimes were perpetrated against the group (**Palestinians**) based on their national, ethnic, or religious identity “as such” (**because they are Palestinians—specifically from Jerusalem**). This distinction renders genocide a particularly serious and complex crime within the ICC’s jurisdiction compared to other international offenses. The “**specific intent**” required for the crime of genocide may be inferred from “**the factual circumstances, statements of the perpetrators, policies, legislation, judicial decisions, and other relevant evidence**.” This study provides detailed information supporting the establishment of this specific intent.

135. There are compelling reasons and strong evidence to assert that at least two **forms of genocide (referred to as “A” and “B”)** as defined in Article (6) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) have been perpetrated against Palestinian children in Jerusalem, in their capacity as members of this group, in the occupied city. This is in addition to the confirmed international crimes (**war crimes and crimes against humanity**) committed in the Jerusalem Governorate. Furthermore, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, has stated that “**the threshold indicating Israel’s commission of genocide has been reached** after analyzing Israel’s actions and patterns of violence in its assault on Gaza, which were supported by discourses that dehumanize Palestinians from senior Israeli officials and often reflected in the conduct of soldiers on the ground”<sup>56</sup>. In light of this specialized study, we conclude that at least two forms

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56. The report of the Special Rapporteur submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 25, 2024 (A/HRC/55/73) is available at the following United Nations link:

of genocide (“A” and “B”) have been committed in the occupied city of Jerusalem, while four forms (“A,” “B,” “C,” and “D”) of genocide outlined in Article (6) of the Statute have occurred in the Gaza Strip, particularly during the assault that began on October 7 and its subsequent impacts.

136. We substantiate our claims in this study with public and repeated statements made by officials in the Israeli government, such as “Bezalel Smotrich” and “Itamar Ben Gvir,” regarding the occupied city of Jerusalem and its indigenous civilian population. This is further evidenced by the racist legislation enacted by the Knesset and rulings from the Israeli Supreme Court pertaining to the occupied city of Jerusalem and its Palestinian residents. Moreover, there has been a reported increase of over (250%) in intentional killings targeting Palestinian children in occupied Jerusalem, according to reliable information and evidence from “UNICEF” and other independent international and local organizations referenced in this study. The widespread practice of arbitrary arrests, systematic torture, and ill-treatment directed at Palestinian children has inflicted unprecedented physical and psychological harm on them and their families. Additionally, the systematic persecution and entrenched apartheid system in Jerusalem have severely compromised their rights as the indigenous Palestinian population of the occupied city.

137. It is important to note that the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) pertains to states (such as Israel as an occupying power) regarding the enforcement of its decisions and judgments, focusing on compliance with these rulings and state liability for reparations, rather than individual accountability. In contrast, the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is directed at individuals, particularly political and military leaders implicated in the commission of international crimes as defined by its statute, which is founded on the principle of individual criminal responsibility and accountability. This includes holding political and military leaders accountable, as well as ensuring the rights of victims to obtain compensation and redress. In summary, the ICJ addresses the responsibility of “**states**,” while the ICC focuses on the responsibility of “**individuals**” within those states.

138. Israel’s accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is unnecessary for accountability regarding the international crimes committed against Palestinian children in the Jerusalem Governorate and against Palestinians in general in the occupied Palestinian territory. This is because the State of Palestine has been a party to the Rome Statute since early 2015. According to the Rome Statute, the Court has jurisdiction over international crimes committed on the territory of a state party (**territorial jurisdiction**) as outlined in Article (12) of its statute. Given that Palestine is a full member of the Court, the international crimes perpetrated by the occupying forces and settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, clearly fall within the Court’s jurisdiction.

139. It is also important to note that on March 3, 2021, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) initiated a formal investigation into the situation in Palestine (**Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem**). On May 20, 2024, the ICC Prosecutor, Karim Khan, announced that he had submitted requests to the Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC for the issuance of arrest warrants as part of the ongoing investigation into the situation in Palestine, which includes the Israeli Prime Minister “Benjamin Netanyahu” and Israeli Defense Minister “Yoav Galant”. These requests are currently under consideration by Pre-Trial Chamber I, which has the authority to issue arrest warrants based on the Prosecutor’s requests. Criminal investigations by the Office of the Prosecutor are still ongoing in the context of the Palestinian situation.

## **The Responsibility of the State of Palestine and Third Parties Regarding the Jerusalem Governorate.**

140. Based on the detailed presentation of patterns of serious violations and international crimes perpetrated by the colonial occupation against the city of Jerusalem and its indigenous Palestinian population, along with the catastrophic impacts on Jerusalemite children and their families, as well as the legal analysis of these violations and international crimes in light of international humanitarian law, customary law, international human rights law, and international criminal law (as defined by the International Criminal Court), along with judicial precedents established by international courts (such as the International Court of Justice), which serves as the principal judicial body of the United Nations, the responsibilities, roles, and obligations of the State of Palestine and third parties (other states) concerning the Jerusalem Governorate become evident.

### **The Responsibility of the State of Palestine**

141. The State of Palestine has ratified over (100) international treaties in the realms of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international criminal law, including key human rights instruments. These treaties have been published in the Official Gazette (Palestinian Facts), indicating that they have also become an integral part of the **binding domestic legal framework in Palestine**. We will delineate the responsibilities of the State of Palestine towards Jerusalemite children in the Jerusalem Governorate under the provisions of international law.

142. The State of Palestine has acceded to the Fourth Hague Convention concerning the Respect for the Laws and Customs of War on Land, as well as the Regulations pertaining to the Laws and Customs of War on Land, under Law No. (9) of 2023 regarding the publication of international humanitarian law treaties to which the State of Palestine is a party, published in the Official Gazette of Palestine on April 13, 2023. Additionally, it has ratified the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols (**including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the First Additional Protocol**) under Law No. (8) of 2023 concerning the publication of the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, published in the Official Gazette of Palestine on April 14, 2023. The primary responsibility for protecting Jerusalemite children in the occupied city of Jerusalem rests with the occupying authorities under international humanitarian law and the Hague and Geneva Conventions. However, this does not exempt the State of Palestine, which remains under occupation, from its obligations towards Jerusalemite children, the Jerusalemite population, Jerusalemite institutions, and the city of Jerusalem itself.

143. In addition to the primary responsibilities of the occupying power and the restrictions it imposes, the State of Palestine has a duty to adopt all necessary measures at the policy, legislative, and operational levels to **“protect the rights of children”** in the occupied city of Jerusalem. This includes multiple areas directly and indirectly addressed in the Hague and Geneva Conventions, particularly concerning the education and health of Jerusalemite children, safeguarding them from all forms of violence, torture, and ill-treatment, ensuring their rights, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and supporting and empowering Jerusalemite institutions across various domains. These measures are vital for protecting the rights of children, caring for Jerusalemite children, and providing the requisite financial resources and human and technical capacities to support and uphold the best interests of these children.

144. In relation to international humanitarian law and its application to situations of military occupation, including the occupied city of Jerusalem and its Palestinian children, the State of Palestine has acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child under Presidential Decree No. 25 of 2021, published in the Official Palestinian Gazette on July 27, 2021. As a result, the State of Palestine is legally bound to adopt all necessary measures, including policy, legislative, and practical steps, to ensure the full realization of the rights of Jerusalemite

children as enshrined in the Convention. This encompasses their **civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the rights of children with disabilities** in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, the State is required to secure adequate financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention, the protection of children's rights, and the resilience of families, institutions, and occupied Jerusalem. The obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, along with other relevant treaties, have already been addressed in this study and do not require further elaboration.

145. The State of Palestine's obligations under international criminal law expanded after its accession to the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**<sup>57</sup> and the publication of the Statute in the Palestinian Official Gazette under Presidential Decree No. 9 of 2023, dated April 13, 2023, making it part of the national legal framework. This necessitates, as a priority, that the State of Palestine **submits a series of specialized reports (legal dossiers) on the grave breaches and international crimes targeting "Palestinian children in Jerusalem" to the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC.** Equally critical is the role of Jerusalem-based human rights organizations working in child protection, as well as civil society organizations in general, to **focus** on documenting the violations and international crimes against children in Jerusalem. These organizations should file specialized and continuous communications, presenting patterns of violations and corresponding legal analyses, to the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor. **The detailed findings and legal assessments contained in this study could be submitted as part of these communications to the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor.**

146. Under Palestinian legislation, the Amended Basic Law of 2003 (**the Palestinian Constitution**) affirms, in Article (29), that **child welfare is a "national duty"** and guarantees children's rights to comprehensive protection and care. It prohibits the exploitation of children in any work that may endanger their safety, health, or education, and ensures their protection from violence, abuse, and cruel treatment. Consequently, the State of Palestine's obligations toward children in Jerusalem, and Palestinian children more broadly, are based on the provisions of the Palestinian Constitution. Additionally, Article (32), in conjunction with Article (29), establishes that any violation targeting Palestinian children (including those in Jerusalem) constitutes a **"constitutional crime."** Such violations are not subject to a statute of limitations, meaning neither criminal nor civil claims resulting from these acts can be barred by time. The Palestinian Authority is required to provide fair compensation to those affected, with the primary victims, in this context, being the children of Jerusalem within the Jerusalem Governorate.

147. According to the provisions of **the Palestinian Child Law No. (7) of 2004 and its subsequent amendments**, the law guarantees the fundamental rights of children, including children with disabilities. These rights include the right to life, freedom of expression, respect for privacy, registration at birth, and the acquisition of nationality, as well as family rights, healthcare and mental health services, social, cultural, and educational rights, and the right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse—whether physical, psychological, or emotional—neglect, exploitation, or displacement. The law outlines specific mechanisms, measures, and procedures for child protection and oversight. In line with these obligations, the State of Palestine must ensure the full and effective enforcement of the comprehensive child rights

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57. On January 1, 2015, the Palestinian government submitted a declaration under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), accepting the court's jurisdiction over crimes falling within its competence and committed on the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as of June 13, 2014. On January 2, 2015, the State of Palestine formally acceded to the Rome Statute by depositing the instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Statute entered into force for Palestine on April 1, 2015. On May 22, 2018, under Articles 13(a) and 14 of the Rome Statute, the State of Palestine referred the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory to the ICC Prosecutor, requesting an investigation into "past, ongoing, and future crimes falling within the court's jurisdiction, committed throughout the territory of the State of Palestine," within the temporal scope of the court's jurisdiction.

framework established by the Palestinian Child Law of 2004 and its amendments, with a particular focus on safeguarding **children in the Jerusalem Governorate**. This is **particularly critical** in light of the grave violations and international crimes perpetrated against Palestinian children in Jerusalem and their families. The State must take all necessary legal, policy, and practical measures to guarantee the effective protection and fulfillment of children's rights.

148. Palestine's accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which confers jurisdiction over international crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territory, including occupied Jerusalem (such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide), necessitates the urgent drafting and enactment of a **"Law on International Crimes"** to be published in the Palestinian Official Gazette. Given that the ICC's jurisdiction is complementary to that of national courts—commonly referred to as the **"principle of complementarity"** in international criminal law—Palestine is legally obligated to enact this legislation. To date, this critical legal framework has not been established in Palestine, despite being a legal requirement following the country's accession to the ICC. The proposed law should specifically address patterns of international violations and crimes targeting children, including those in Jerusalem. It should focus on the monitoring, documentation, and investigation of international crimes by established international standards and best practices. Additionally, the law must outline mechanisms for the collection of evidence and investigations, as well as provide avenues for both formal and informal follow-up, particularly concerning the systematic persecution and apartheid targeting Palestinian children in Jerusalem.

149. Upon reviewing **the Palestinian government's emergency plan for 2024**, which was adopted to address the repercussions of the aggression perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces against the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and occupied Jerusalem, we find that the main components of the current emergency plan consist of **three key pillars**: 1. Immediate response to the humanitarian priorities resulting from the aggression in the Gaza Strip; 2. Response to the priorities and needs arising from the aggression in the West Bank; 3. Ensuring that all governmental institutions continue to provide essential services to citizens, particularly in the areas of education and health, while addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. However, a review of the emergency plan reveals **a complete absence of Jerusalem from the "second pillar," which focuses on the urgent response to the priorities and needs arising from the aggression in the West Bank and the associated emergency interventions**<sup>58</sup>. This omission is both perplexing and unjustifiable, especially given the devastating impact of the aggression on Jerusalem and the unprecedented escalation of violations targeting the city and its residents—particularly children—since October 7, as detailed in this study. The exclusion of Jerusalem from the second pillar of the plan is neither understandable nor defensible.

150. In contrast, the current 2024 Government Emergency Plan only mentions Jerusalem in the **"third pillar"** of the plan, which pertains to the continuity of government services, rather than in the urgent priorities outlined in the **"second pillar"** related to the West Bank. A review of the intervention table associated with the third pillar of the government emergency plan, along with the estimated financial budget, reveals that the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs appears "twice" in the emergency intervention table as a responsible entity. The first instance is under the heading **"Strengthening the Resilience of Jerusalemites and Preserving the City of Jerusalem (land, people, infrastructure, and place),"** and the second under **"Ensuring the Sustainability of National Institutions' Services in the City of Jerusalem (housing, education, health, culture, tourism, women, and youth)"**<sup>59</sup>. Upon examining the projects and activities related to the first heading and the associated financial allocations (in shekels),

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58. 2024 Government Emergency Plan, previous reference, Emergency Response in the West Bank (page 15) and Emergency Interventions Table (page 19).

59. Government Emergency Plan 2024, Follow-up on the Government Emergency Plan, Objective Three, Performance Measurement Indicators Table, Page (27).

we find the following: support for 400 cases related to demolition orders and building violations (8,500,000 shekels), support for 150 engineering cases and building permits (12,000,000 shekels), support for 500 humanitarian cases among marginalized groups to enhance the presence of Jerusalemites (2,800,000 shekels), ongoing implementation of a plan to combat the Israeliization of education (operational), funding for infrastructure projects in Jerusalem areas outside the separation barrier (5,000,000 shekels), and support for 750 legal cases concerning demolition orders, building violations, eviction, and settlement issues (5,500,000 shekels). Moreover, activities related to this heading aim to protect the Palestinian national identity of Jerusalem in the face of Judaization threats, preserve the existing legal status of Islamic and Christian holy sites, and involve projects and activities such as holding consultative meetings with international and local partners, communicating with official international bodies regarding developments in Jerusalem, and continuously monitoring Israeli violations in the city. All of these efforts are funded through the ministry's operational budget, which also includes issuing four research papers on the state of Jerusalem (60,000 shekels). The responsibility for implementing these interventions and activities lies with the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, under the emergency plan.

151. Upon reviewing the tables that detail the projects and activities related to the second heading under the responsibility of the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, which pertains to the provision of services by national institutions in the city of Jerusalem (including housing, education, health, culture, tourism, women, and youth), the allocations are as follows: support for 50 Jerusalemite institutions through annual grants and initiatives to enhance resilience (4,000,000 shekels); support for 100 institutions within the city of Jerusalem through the implementation of developmental projects (7,000,000 shekels); in addition to convening periodic meetings with donors and partners to highlight intervention priorities in the city of Jerusalem, without specifying the nature of these intervention priorities.

152. The researcher posits that the current 2024 emergency plan of the new Palestinian government (the nineteenth) lacks a clear policy framework and fails to meet the requirements for **governance and partnership** with Jerusalemite institutions, despite an emphasis on collaboration in governmental performance. It does not establish **a clear vision or methodology** for addressing patterns of grave violations, international crimes, persecution, and the systematic apartheid targeting the Jerusalemite population, particularly children, as well as the historical, present, and future context of the city of Jerusalem. Moreover, the interventions, projects, and activities detailed in the 2024 emergency plan for the Jerusalem governorate appear to be **"reactive"** and do not reflect a comprehensive understanding of the scale, depth, and urgency of the crises and risks in the city. They seem to represent impulsive measures that lack effective governance and do not convey a well-defined policy, making it challenging, if not impossible, to achieve a meaningful impact in Jerusalem. Additionally, the financial allocations designated for occupied Jerusalem in the 2024 emergency plan are **alarmingly inadequate** in light of the significant challenges and risks facing the Jerusalemites, their families, children, and institutions. In fact, Jerusalem (**the occupied city**) was not included in the urgent interventions and priorities outlined in the 2024 emergency plan, despite the escalation of violations and international crimes targeting occupied Jerusalem since October 7.

153. The provisions outlined in the 2024 government plan concerning occupied Jerusalem do not reflect the intentions of the Palestinian legislator, as clearly expressed in the **Capital Law No. (4) of 2002**, which was enacted by the Palestinian Legislative Council. This law stipulates the necessity of **allocating an annual share of the general budget to the holy city of Jerusalem and mandates the formulation of programs and plans to promote both public and private investment therein, designating it as a priority special development area (Area A)**. Moreover, the plan does not adequately reflect the obligations of the State of Palestine under international humanitarian law, human rights law, international criminal law, the Palestinian

constitution, and the aforementioned legislations regarding the protection, care, and support of children. Such obligations require a comprehensive vision and plan, along with sufficient financial, human, and technical resources within Jerusalem. Consequently, there is an urgent need for collaborative efforts, particularly with Jerusalemite institutions, to strengthen the status and presence of Jerusalem as the capital within the emergency plan.

### Responsibility of Third Parties

154. The responsibility of third parties (**state responsibility**) toward children in occupied Jerusalem primarily arises from the obligations of states under international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts and situations of military occupation. This includes, in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 concerning the protection of civilian persons in times of war, specifically under “**Common Article 1**”<sup>60</sup> of the Fourth Geneva Conventions, which explicitly states: “**The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances.**”

155. Common Article 1 of the Fourth Geneva Convention establishes a “**comprehensive obligation**” for state parties to the Geneva Conventions, encompassing nations worldwide, to ensure “**respect**” for and “**ensure respect**” for the provisions of the Convention in an “**effective**” manner. This obligation extends not only to upholding the provisions of the Convention within their own territories but also to ensuring compliance among all state parties, including in the occupied Palestinian territory and specifically in occupied Jerusalem. **Respect** entails that states, such as the European Union at the intergovernmental level, refrain from engaging in or encouraging any actions in the occupied Palestinian territory—including occupied Jerusalem, which is the focus of this study—that would violate or support violations of the rights of Palestinian children and their families, as well as the legal status of Jerusalem as an occupied territory. **Ensuring respect** requires that states take all necessary **measures and actions** to prevent the occupying authorities from breaching their obligations in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Should the state parties to the Geneva Conventions fail to fulfill their obligations (**to respect and ensure respect**), they would be deemed to have “violated” the Geneva Conventions.

156. Some numerous **effective** measures and actions that state parties to the Geneva Conventions can implement to fulfill their obligations to respect and ensure respect for the Conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, as stipulated in **Common Article 1**. These measures may include political, diplomatic, and economic pressures (**such as economic sanctions**), military actions (**including the prohibition of arms and ammunition exports**), and judicial measures (**accountability and redress for victims**). This is especially pertinent in light of the ongoing and escalating patterns of violations and international crimes perpetrated by the occupying authorities in the occupied Palestinian territory, specifically targeting the rights of children in occupied Jerusalem, which is the focus of this specialized study. Such actions should aim to ensure Israel’s full compliance with international law. **This commitment has been further reinforced by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in July 2024 and the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024**, along with the enforcement mechanisms that include these and other measures.

157. Conversely, the obligations of state parties to the Geneva Conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention under **Common Article 1**, also encompass the protection and care of children in the occupied Palestinian territory, including occupied Jerusalem. This in-

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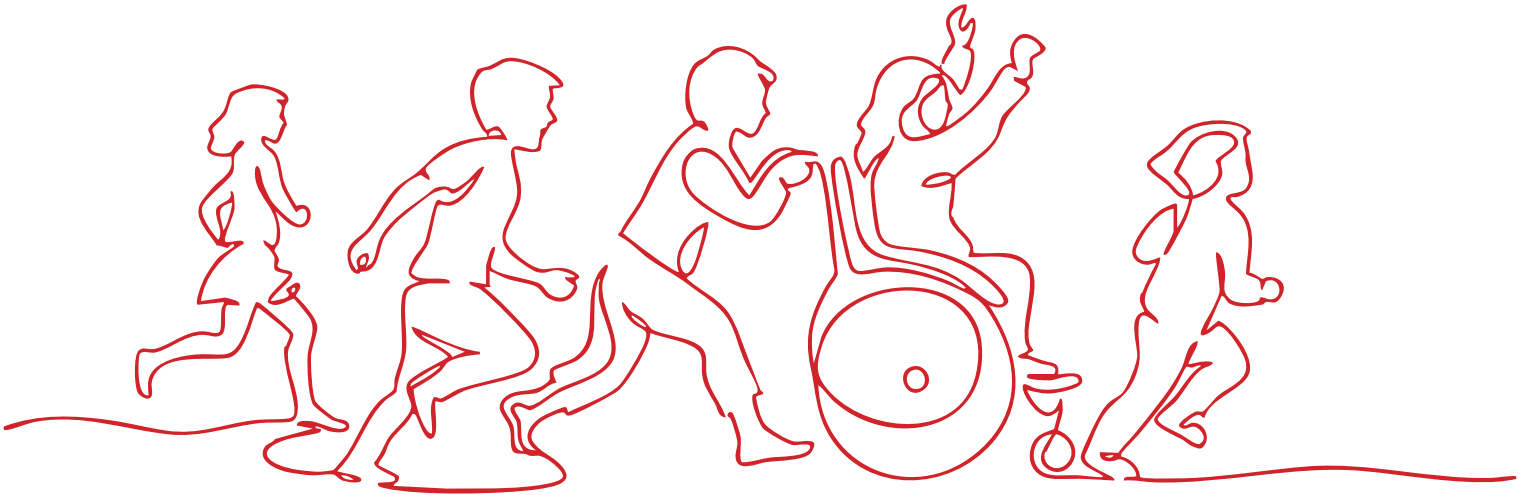
60. The term «common Article 1» means that the text of Article 1 included in the First Geneva Convention on the amelioration of the condition of the wounded and sick in armed forces in the field, the Second Geneva Convention on the amelioration of the condition of wounded, sick, and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea, the Third Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, from 1939, is the same text/common in all four conventions.



cludes providing **various forms of support, protection, care, and relief** to Jerusalemite children and their families, as well as supporting the efforts of local institutions that strive to defend the rights of children and safeguard their best interests, **per the Advisory Opinion of the Court and the resolution of the General Assembly.**

158. The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on July 19, 2024, affirms the **“strict obligation” to adhere** to international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international criminal law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including occupied Jerusalem. This opinion reinforces the **obligation to “respect and ensure respect”** for the Fourth Geneva Convention by the Israeli occupying colonial power, state parties to the Convention, and the State of Palestine itself in addressing patterns of violations and international crimes targeting children in occupied Jerusalem. It also emphasizes the need for effective remedies for Palestinian children concerning all their rights guaranteed under international law. This **“strict obligation”** extends to United Nations bodies, international organizations, and countries worldwide, as mandated by the advisory opinion. Furthermore, the United Nations General Assembly resolution on September 18, 2024, clearly and comprehensively outlined the obligations of all parties involved.

159. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice declaring the complete illegitimacy of the occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory does not exempt the occupying power from its obligations; rather, it reinforces the **“strict obligation”** to comply with international law within the context of **“illegitimacy.”** This places the occupation under heightened scrutiny and more stringent oversight, rendering it unable to invoke justifications of **“military necessity,”** **“security necessity,”** or **“precautionary measures”** under humanitarian law to justify its actions. Such circumstances intensify its obligations to end the occupation, along with the obligations of states under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions. This commitment has been further solidified by the United Nations General Assembly’s resolution establishing a timeline (one year from the date of the resolution) for the cessation of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and outlining the responsibilities and duties of all states to implement this resolution.



## Perceptions of Palestinian Institutions Within and Outside the Annexation Wall

160. The outcomes of the meetings and focus groups coordinated with and held at the Palestinian Vision Organization within the Annexation Wall<sup>61</sup> on July 25, 2024, and outside the Wall<sup>62</sup> on July 30, 2024, included participation from civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations operating in the Jerusalem Governorate relevant to this specialized study. Additionally, personal interviews conducted by the researcher with professionals and specialists in the child sector in Jerusalem revealed critical insights regarding patterns of violations, particularly those that are severe and target children in Jerusalem. These findings are grounded in daily field observations and highlight the considerable and multifaceted challenges within the working environment, which arise from entrenched policies of Israeli oppression and apartheid, as well as internal factors and the specific circumstances prevailing in occupied Jerusalem.

161. The views expressed within the focus groups<sup>63</sup> and during the interviews conducted by the researcher largely converged on the importance and necessity of concentrating this specialized study on the **patterns of Israeli violations**, particularly the crimes of murder and intentional harm targeting Palestinian children. These violations have escalated to unprecedented levels since October 7, 2023, and include recurring arbitrary arrests of Palestinian children, the implications of house arrest on children and their families—who become both jailers and prisoners within their own homes—as well as the forms of violence, torture, and ill-treatment inflicted on children inside and outside the occupying forces' prisons and detention centers. The profound psychological impacts on children and their families are exacerbated by the increasing scope of these violations and international crimes, which stem from pervasive policies of oppression and a deeply entrenched system of apartheid targeting children. The displacement of Palestinian families, forced evictions, isolation, annexation, and militarization of Jerusalem, along with the deprivation of the indigenous Palestinian population's right—like that of all Palestinians—to self-determination, further complicate the already precarious **internal situation** in occupied Jerusalem. This context necessitates legal analyses and comparisons of evidence regarding serious violations and international crimes by international humanitarian law, customary law, human rights law, and international criminal law, as well as future insights and projections. This study, the first of its kind in this field, aims to provide a foundation for further specialized research and interventions in Jerusalem.

162. Civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations underscored the critical importance of this specialized study and the conclusions and recommendations it produces, positioning them as a **“roadmap”** for the future of the childhood sector within the highly complex context of occupied Jerusalem. They drew attention to the significant challenges related to **“monitoring and documentation”** that many organizations encounter, particularly within the confines of the Annexation Wall in occupied Jerusalem. There is a pressing need to institutionalize monitoring and documentation processes to effectively track violations, ensuring the preservation of evidence quality and reliability. Moreover, the organizations highlighted deficiencies in **“advocacy and accountability mechanisms,”** which many are struggling to address. Some institutions face substantial gaps in their monitoring and documentation tools and procedures, relying primarily on oral testimonies from victims of violations in the childhood sector without sufficient written records. This practice leads to the deterioration of

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61. Sur Baher, Beit Hanina, Al-Thawri (Abu Tor or Al-Thawri), Al-Tur, and Wadi al-Joz.

62. Kafr Aqab, Al-Eizariya, Abu Dis, Al-Ram, Biddu, Beit Surik, Qalandiya, Jaba, and Al-Sawahira Al-Sharqiya.

63. Participants in the meetings and focus groups for the purposes of this study, both inside and outside the Annexation Wall, included: Palestinian Vision (Palvision), the Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (TRC), the Human Rights and Democracy Media and Center (Shams), the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Al-Thawri Women's Center, the Sur Baher Women's Association, the Mount of Olives Club, the MADA Creative Center in Silwan, and the Sunflower Association.

evidence collected in the field and hampers the efficacy of follow-up actions and advocacy initiatives aimed at ensuring justice for Jerusalemite children.

163. The institutional environment within the city of Jerusalem is marked by (**significant complexity**), shaped by its unique characteristics and the diverse cultural contexts of its neighborhoods, despite their proximity. The prevailing familial mentality in addressing issues, along with various intricate internal factors, contributes to a heightened sensitivity toward any remedial interventions. The pervasive atmosphere of fear and anxiety, exacerbated by systematic colonial oppression and the fragility of Palestinian interventions in Jerusalem, despite the considerable needs, further complicates an already intricate scenario.

164. Civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations underscored that the **repeated targeting and incursions** by the occupying authorities necessitate the transfer of documents and data into the West Bank to safeguard the security of their institutions and personnel. This situation results in further fragmentation and disorganization of their efforts, thereby diminishing their overall impact. From the researcher's perspective, a lack of knowledge regarding "**digital security**" techniques, combined with "**inadequate support**" from civil society organizations in the West Bank that specialize in digital security, as well as the absence of shared databases (**information repositories**), has significantly exacerbated these challenges and **heightened the isolation** of institutions based in Jerusalem.

165. The findings from the meetings and focus groups revealed a **significant disconnect (a state of alienation)** in the performance of the ministries, institutions, and agencies of the State of Palestine concerning the occupied city of Jerusalem. This disconnect is evident in methodology, institutionalization, prioritization, and the provision of essential financial, human, and technical resources to effectively address the substantial challenges confronting the childhood sector and the overall complex situation in occupied Jerusalem. The fragility of current interventions, programs, projects, and responses has resulted in an inability to achieve meaningful impact amidst a landscape of chronic and compounding challenges. **This scenario poses a serious threat to the growing alienation and continued deterioration** of the resilience mechanisms within occupied Jerusalem, should the status quo remain unchanged. Furthermore, it casts a significant shadow over the institutions operating within Jerusalem and exacerbates **the prevailing uncertainty and despair** among its inhabitants.

166. The outcomes of the meetings highlighted the increasing challenges faced by civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations operating within the occupied city of Jerusalem, particularly concerning the "**legal personality and registration of Jerusalemite institutions**." This situation is exacerbated by the existence of institutions registered with Israeli authorities that function in occupied Jerusalem, as well as those registered with Palestinian authorities. The resulting overlap and duality in institutional operations complicate the political and legal landscape within the city. Furthermore, the persistent issue of "**financial burdens**" impacting Jerusalemite families and their children—stemming from systematic Israeli violations, racial discrimination, and financial liabilities associated with home demolitions, permits, exorbitant taxes, arbitrary arrests, house arrests, and substantial fines—has prioritized "**financial anxiety**" among these families. This concern often overshadows the crucial legal, social, psychological, and developmental services that Palestinian institutions endeavor to provide, while they concurrently experience inadequate support and reinforcement from the State of Palestine.

167. Civil society organizations, human rights entities, and grassroots organizations emphasized the importance of "**organized collective action**" in delivering services within the occupied city of Jerusalem. They underscored the need to enhance networking and communication channels among these organizations to effectively address the substantial needs within the child welfare sector in Jerusalem across various legal, human rights, social, psychological,

and developmental dimensions. This is particularly critical in the context of isolation, especially within the separation barrier, to foster resilience, survival, and a proactive response to escalating challenges, thereby providing services that adequately meet the needs of Jerusalemite children and their families in the capital. Moreover, the significance of “**local ownership**” was highlighted, advocating for investment in service providers from the same governorate, neighborhood, and community, as well as the involvement of parent councils within the Jerusalem Governorate. Such investment promotes the acceptance of services, leading to meaningful impacts in areas of change. Additionally, the necessity for “**sustainable capacity-building and training programs**” in monitoring, documentation, and the mechanisms of the United Nations and international courts was emphasized as crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of these institutions.

168. In conclusion, civil society organizations, human rights entities, and grassroots organizations—particularly those operating within the separation barrier in the occupied city of Jerusalem—emphasize that the programs and activities they implement are not **prioritized by donor countries and organizations**, despite the considerable burdens they bear, the complexities of their working environment, and the substantial demand for services in the child welfare sector. Furthermore, these Palestinian institutions in occupied Jerusalem perceive a prevailing “**double standard**” among donor entities. The researcher views this as a failure to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of states and donor entities under international humanitarian law and the conditions of military occupation, particularly in light of “**Common Article 1**” of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which underscores the obligation of contracting parties to “**respect and ensure respect**” for the Geneva Conventions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. This situation also constitutes a violation of their commitments under the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the 2024 United Nations General Assembly resolution, as previously highlighted.

## Study Conclusions

169. The Israeli colonial and settlement occupation constitutes the **primary cause of violence and serious violations** against Palestinian children in Jerusalem. The most prominent patterns of these violations include extrajudicial killings, intentional harm, repeated arbitrary detention, administrative arrests, house arrest, torture, and ill-treatment. These acts occur within the framework of a systematic regime of oppression and apartheid that targets Jerusalemite children and their families, characterized by the isolation, annexation, and militarization of Jerusalem, forced displacement of its indigenous population, and deprivation of their right to self-determination.

170. The patterns of violations detailed in this study, which have targeted children in the Jerusalem Governorate and have escalated to unprecedented levels since October 7, are not isolated incidents carried out by the occupying forces and armed settler militias that occur intermittently. Instead, they reflect a **systematic and widespread** policy fully sanctioned by the public authorities of the occupying state, including the **Knesset, the Supreme Court, and political leadership**, constituting a “**state policy**” aimed at the child population and occupied Jerusalem. Consequently, these actions represent grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, qualifying as international crimes under international criminal law.

171. As the world observes in horror the violations and international crimes committed by the Israeli colonial occupation against civilians in the Gaza Strip, particularly children, the “**double standards**” have intensified since this unprecedented aggression—unmatched since World War II in scale and impact on the population of Gaza. Meanwhile, **a genuine nightmare and relentless violence are being inflicted on Palestinian children in the Jerusalem Governor-**

**ate.** The year of aggression (2023) has emerged as the deadliest for Palestinian children in both Jerusalem and the West Bank, with a staggering (250%) increase in child fatalities, according to United Nations indicators. The arbitrary arrests of Palestinian children over the past years **alone exceed** the total number of such detentions targeting children across all governorates of the West Bank, as this specialized study confirms. Furthermore, the policy of house arrest, which disproportionately impacts Palestinian children, has effectively turned their parents into jailers, subjecting families to collective punishment. The harrowing scenes of Palestinian children being killed, such as (**Muhammad Abu Khdeir**), and the live torture of others, like (**Ahmad Manasra**), have left deep psychological scars on Jerusalem's children, intensifying cycles of violence and trauma.

172. Despite the global focus on the violations and international crimes targeting civilians, particularly children, in the Gaza Strip—falling under the jurisdiction of **the International Criminal Court (ICC)** for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, as well as **the International Court of Justice (ICJ)** under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide—evidence derived from indicators, statistics, data, and reports issued by United Nations entities and independent international and local organizations, along with the corroboration of forensic evidence presented in this specialized study, reveals **compelling grounds for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide directed at Palestinian children in Jerusalem.** These findings **necessitate urgent accountability** measures to ensure justice for the children of Jerusalem.

173. The policies of isolation, annexation, Judaization, militarization, oppression, and deep-rooted colonial apartheid in the occupied city of Jerusalem have produced severe **“internal factors”** that pose **significant risks** within this complex environment. These policies have resulted in increased levels of poverty, unemployment, and deprivation, as well as rising crime rates within the Jerusalemite community. Additionally, there has been a notable rise in school dropout rates among Palestinian children and a growing prevalence of drug abuse, facilitated by the occupying authorities. This situation has contributed to a state of social disintegration, compounded by the ongoing fragility of both official and informal Palestinian interventions. The resulting heavy and accumulated legacy has further complicated the Jerusalemite landscape, which is already burdened by challenges, exacerbated by the **“diversity of local cultures and the dominant family-oriented mentality”** in the neighborhoods and towns of Jerusalem, despite their proximity. There is also a heightened sensitivity towards any interventions aimed at addressing these issues, underpinned by a pervasive climate of fear and uncertainty.

174. The lack of a clear Palestinian policy addressing the occupied city of Jerusalem and its children, particularly in confronting ongoing oppression and apartheid, combined with chronic deficiencies in interventions, programs, projects, financial resources, and collaborative networking with institutions—especially those operating within the annexation barrier in the Jerusalem Governorate—has collectively fostered a profound sense of **“alienation”** between the State of Palestine and its institutions and the city of Jerusalem, along with its children and indigenous inhabitants. The continuation of this status quo, alongside the substantial need for effective interventions, poses a grave risk of further alienation and instability, potentially leading to a state of **“collapse”** in the resilience of Jerusalemites, their children, and the institutions dedicated to their support.

175. The environment in which civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations operate within the occupied city of Jerusalem is **highly complex** and multifaceted. Key factors contributing to this complexity include the **pervasive isolation and alienation** resulting from systematic oppression and apartheid, as well as the evident shortcomings of both official and unofficial Palestinian entities in providing effective support and assistance across various levels. Furthermore, there are frequent Israeli incursions into organizations, resulting

in the confiscation of their resources, alongside the complicated legal status related to the registration of institutions and the execution of activities aimed at safeguarding the rights of Jerusalem's children. Additionally, the financial burdens imposed on Jerusalemite families due to the occupying policies of oppression and apartheid overshadow the essential social, psychological, and developmental services provided by local institutions, which are crucial to achieving their objectives and programs. This is further exacerbated by the fragility of support and assistance from the State of Palestine.

176. Civil society, human rights, and grassroots organizations operating within the occupied city of Jerusalem face a significant deficiency in **monitoring and documenting** violations and international crimes based on the principle of **"local ownership."** This challenge is exacerbated by a context of isolation and systematic oppression, rendering these organizations **the weakest link** in the performance of Palestinian institutions within Jerusalem. There is a clear lack of financial, technical, and human resources, along with deficiencies in **collaborative efforts, networking, training, and capacity-building** in various specialized human rights fields. This inadequacy affects the ability to monitor and document violations according to United Nations monitoring standards, international investigation commissions, and international court criteria concerning the **"quality"** and reliability of evidence needed for the criminal prosecution of violations and international crimes. Additionally, there are shortcomings in adhering to principles and methodologies for documenting violations against children, including ensuring informed consent, protecting the confidentiality of information, conducting trauma-informed interviews, and engaging children in ways appropriate to their age and maturity. Risk assessments and collaboration with specialists during documentation processes are also essential, alongside **advocacy, accountability efforts, and digital security** measures within a complex working environment, all compounded by weak support from both official and unofficial Palestinian entities.

177. There is a clear shortcoming in the performance of international and local organizations regarding the violations and international crimes targeting Palestinian children, particularly within the confines of the separation barrier. The weaknesses in monitoring and documentation efforts are not limited to the institutions operating within the barrier; they extend to include international and local entities outside of it. This is evidenced by the repeated phrase **"violations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem"** found in many reports and statements addressing Israeli violations, which complicates the process of accurately identifying, assessing, and categorizing violations and international crimes specifically occurring within the barrier. This lack of clarity adversely impacts interventions, resulting in ambiguous reports, data, and statistics related to childhood and other critical issues. Consequently, it is essential to emphasize the necessity of proactive efforts at the level of **"local ownership"** in monitoring, documenting, and addressing violations within Jerusalem.

178. There is a clear deficiency in the institutional framework, sustainable programs, and integrated approaches to address **the escalating psychological and social impacts** faced by Jerusalemite children and their families due to the violations perpetrated by the occupation and the system of oppression and apartheid targeting childhood. This is particularly evident in the need for safe and child-friendly environments and spaces, psychological and social interventions for children affected by trauma, peer support programs for Jerusalemite children, and the expansion of these initiatives. Additionally, there is a pressing need to enhance child protection networks and invest in early childhood development programs.

179. There is a notable shortcoming in the performance of **"the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)"** regarding the grave violations targeting childhood in the Jerusalem Governorate and the grave violations of international humanitarian law in general within Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory. Although this apparent deficiency in the ICRC's performance has persisted for years, it has significantly intensified since the unprecedented

escalation of violations that began on October 7, 2023, in Gaza, the West Bank, and occupied Jerusalem. The ICRC **has violated its obligations through a troubling silence** regarding the grave violations of international humanitarian law occurring in Gaza, the West Bank, and occupied Jerusalem. It appears to treat “**the principle of neutrality**” as a justification for remaining “**silent**” in the face of ongoing and escalating serious violations, seemingly evading its fundamental responsibilities to uphold international humanitarian law and to take necessary measures to protect and assist victims of armed conflict, particularly **safeguarding children as protected categories**, while ensuring respect for and compliance with the Geneva Conventions under all circumstances. The ICRC’s approach of silence and failure to issue clear public statements, at the very least concerning prohibited weapons, systematic killing and destruction, policies of starvation and displacement, and the unprecedented escalation of serious violations of the Geneva Conventions—especially since October 7, 2023—coupled with the rise in arbitrary arrests, torture, and ill-treatment targeting Palestinian children and detainees in general within the occupation’s prisons, both before and after October 7, encourages the occupying authorities to continue and further intensify these serious violations.

180. Despite the complex environment in which civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots initiatives operate within occupied Jerusalem—particularly concerning the programs, activities, and interventions aimed at addressing the substantial needs for the protection of Jerusalem’s children across various legal, developmental, social, economic, and mental health domains—they remain absent from the **agendas and priorities of donor countries and organizations**. This reflects a state of “**double standards**” and constitutes a violation of the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of states and donor entities under international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. Notably, “**Common Article 1**” of the Fourth Geneva Convention emphasizes the responsibility of contracting parties to “**respect and ensure respect**” for the Geneva Conventions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Furthermore, this situation undermines their commitments as outlined in **the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (2024)** and **the United Nations General Assembly Resolution (2024)**, as discussed in this study.

## Study Recommendations

181. This study’s recommendations are structured across **three levels**: the first level focuses on international recommendations concerning the obligations and responsibilities of the occupying colonial authorities, as well as the nations and international bodies, to protect children in the occupied Jerusalem Governorate. The second level addresses national responsibilities regarding the obligations of the State of Palestine, including its institutions and official and unofficial entities, towards Jerusalem’s children. The third level pertains to the performance of local institutions operating within the Jerusalem Governorate.

### Internationally

182. States, United Nations bodies, and international organizations must uphold their obligations and responsibilities towards the protection of children in the Jerusalem Governorate in the face of the pervasive Israeli apartheid system, as well as other violations and international crimes targeting Jerusalem’s children, by international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention under “**Common Article 1**,” which obliges them to respect and ensure the respect for the rights of Jerusalem’s children, to protect, care for, and provide relief to them, and to advocate for their best interests. Additionally, they should support, empower, and protect the institutions that provide legal and developmental services to children in Jerusalem at all levels.

183. States, United Nations bodies, and international organizations should undertake a **clear**

and effective series of measures to fulfill their obligations under the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on July 19, 2024, regarding the illegitimacy of the occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory and its implications. They must also act in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution issued on September 18, 2024, concerning the aforementioned advisory opinion and the consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem (A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1\*). This should include various forms of support, care, protection, and relief that ensure the respect for the rights of Jerusalem's children. Additionally, it must encompass financial, programmatic, technical, and capacity-building support, alongside the protection of institutions serving children in the Jerusalem Governorate. These institutions must be empowered to carry out their programs and activities freely in the face of the isolation, persecution, assaults, and restrictions imposed by the occupying authorities. Furthermore, political, diplomatic, and economic pressures (including economic sanctions) and military measures (such as preventing the export of weapons and ammunition) used by the occupying authorities to commit international crimes targeting children in Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territory must be addressed. Legal actions should also be pursued against the Israeli occupation for violations and international crimes targeting Jerusalemites and Palestinians in general (seeking accountability and redress), especially in light of the ongoing and escalating violations and crimes following October 7, ensuring full compliance with the aforementioned advisory opinion and General Assembly resolution.

184. International bodies and organizations should enhance their efforts in **monitoring and documenting the violations and international crimes** targeting the child population in occupied Jerusalem, as well as other violations and crimes affecting the city and its indigenous Palestinian residents. This should be conducted independently of the “ambiguity” that appears in their reports and indicators regarding violations, often framed as “**in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.**” Such phrasing reflects a clear deficiency in monitoring and documentation, particularly within the separation barrier in Jerusalem. Addressing this issue is crucial for establishing clear indicators regarding the violations targeting Jerusalem's children and for determining effective intervention strategies and priorities.

185. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) must immediately cease its “**concerning policy of silence**” regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including violations targeting the child population in occupied Jerusalem, under the guise of neutrality. **The principle of neutrality** entails impartiality, a focus on humanitarian assistance, protection of the rights of victims, independent assessments of situations, and confidential communication with relevant parties regarding violations to achieve tangible outcomes and improve the conditions of victims. This principle does not equate to “**silence**” in the face of the ongoing and escalating serious violations of international humanitarian law, nor does it address the genuine and immediate threats to the lives and safety of protected civilians, including children. The failure of confidential communication to halt these egregious violations and protect victims has only exacerbated their suffering. Such a silence inevitably conveys an implication of “**encouragement**” for the continued perpetration of serious violations.

## Nationally

186. The State of Palestine (the new Palestinian government) should, without delay, develop a **clear policy framework** regarding the Governorate of Jerusalem and the Palestinian child population, in response to the ongoing persecution and system of apartheid. This policy should be based on a deep understanding of the internal factors and the complex working environment within occupied Jerusalem, and it must be participatory, particularly in collaboration with civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots entities operating within Jerusalem. This framework should identify the needs, interventions, and priorities necessary for an emergency response to the significant needs of the Palestinian child pop-



ulation and others within the Governorate of Jerusalem. These priorities should be integrated into the Emergency Plan (2024) and the National Development Plan, as well as future interventions. Furthermore, the framework should incorporate **the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion** on the illegality of the occupation and **the United Nations General Assembly's resolution** regarding the enforcement mechanisms of the advisory opinion into the current Emergency Plan, along with applicable policies, strategies, and programs. This approach should extend to civil society and the private sector as well.

187. The policy concerning the city of Jerusalem should delineate **clear tasks and responsibilities** for official entities (such as the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, the Jerusalem Governorate, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.) while also fostering **integrative roles and partnerships** between official bodies, civil society, and Jerusalemite institutions. It should include a comprehensive assessment of the complex Jerusalem environment, prioritize interventions, and establish **effective mechanisms for monitoring implementation** to address the significant needs across various civil, political, social, economic, cultural, and psychological domains. This approach aims to halt the deterioration, **dismantle the entrenched challenges**, and create a tangible impact.

188. The policy specific to Jerusalem should, in collaboration with local institutions and community initiatives, include effective and sustainable programs to address the significant psychological and social impacts on Jerusalemite children and their families resulting from the ongoing and escalating patterns of Israeli violations in the city. This approach should encompass multiple, integrative pathways that provide **safe environments and child-friendly spaces** for Jerusalemite children suffering from the psychological and social repercussions of violations. It should enhance **psychosocial support programs, training, capacity building, and institutionalization of psychosocial interventions** for children affected by trauma. Additionally, it should effectively promote **peer support programs** for traumatized children to help them cope through interactions with their peers and the expression of their thoughts and feelings. This includes strengthening peer support initiatives within institutions, schools, and community activities in the Jerusalem Governorate, as well as enhancing **child protection networks** and fostering integrative strategies for long-term resilience. Ultimately, this policy should prioritize **investments** in **effective** early childhood development programs to empower Jerusalemite children to adapt to challenging circumstances and overcome trauma.

189. Immediate action must be taken to implement the Capital Law No. (4) of 2002, which stipulates the necessity of allocating an annual share of the public budget to the city of Jerusalem and establishing programs and plans to encourage both public and private investment in the city, designating it as a priority Area A for development. This requires the allocation of a dedicated budget for Jerusalem (an independent financial center) within the overall public budget to safeguard the childhood sector through comprehensive interventions, alongside the provision of adequate financial, human, and technical resources, as well as effective support for Jerusalemite institutions.

190. Immediate action should be taken to develop subsidiary legislation (**regulations and executive bylaws**) that complements the Capital Law of 2002. These regulations should provide legislative details and enhance the effective implementation of the Capital Law in collaboration with civil society and Jerusalemite institutions. The legislation should encompass various sectors, including the Jerusalem childhood sector, and establish effective monitoring mechanisms along with penalties for violations of these regulations.

191. The new Palestinian government should take immediate action to **enhance its diplomatic performance** through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Palestinian embassies and missions abroad. This effort should be part of a **comprehensive program** aimed at highlighting the deep-rooted system of oppression and apartheid, particularly within occupied Jerusalem, as well as the grave violations targeting the childhood sector in the Governorate of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the government should **activate the International Court of Justice's (2024) advisory opinion** regarding the illegality of the occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories and the associated implications, along with **the United Nations General Assembly's (2024) resolution** concerning that opinion and Israel's policies and practices in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. It is also essential to strengthen accountability pathways for serious violations targeting Jerusalem and Jerusalemite children before international courts.

192. The Palestinian government should take immediate action to institutionalize monitoring and documentation processes within the Governorate of Jerusalem. This includes establishing a **specialized unit for monitoring, documentation, and advocacy, along with a classified database (information repositories) on violations based on local ownership within the governorate**. It is essential to provide this unit with the necessary resources, and human, and technical capacities while prioritizing training and capacity-building programs and their funding. These efforts should aim to effectively address violations and international crimes within the complex Jerusalem environment, enabling a thorough understanding of the details and needs related to these violations. A clear and participatory methodology should be adopted in collaboration with local institutions to meet these needs, facilitate advocacy and accountability efforts concerning the escalating violations targeting the childhood sector, and invest in service providers and parent councils within the governorate to enhance the impact of these services on the process of change.

## Locally

193. Civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots entities operating within the Governorate of Jerusalem should conduct a comprehensive assessment, both at individual and collective levels, of the programs and activities being implemented in the occupied city of Jerusalem amidst a highly complex work environment characterized by policies of oppression and apartheid. These organizations should **enhance collective action, networking, and communication channels** among themselves to effectively address the significant needs of the childhood sector in Jerusalem across various legal, human rights, social, psychological, and developmental dimensions. Additionally, they should **develop a shared resource pool** to counter the challenges of isolation, funding shortages, and limited resources, ensuring that efforts are not fragmented, thus enabling resilience and effective response.

194. Civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots entities within the Governorate of Jerusalem should promptly establish specialized **"monitoring and documentation" units within each institution based on local ownership**, as this is a critical area of weakness in institutional performance in Jerusalem. They should develop classified databases (**information repositories**) that align with international standards and include disability considerations, as well as a shared database. Special attention must be given to enhancing **"digital security"** policies to protect data from repeated incursions by the occupying forces that target such information. Furthermore, these organizations should prioritize **training and capacity-building programs** in monitoring, documentation, advocacy, accountability, and United Nations mechanisms. Ultimately, these collective efforts should culminate in the launch of a **"Jerusalem Observatory"** to monitor, document, and follow up on violations and international crimes targeting children and others in Jerusalem, while developing **advocacy and accountability tools** and avenues for redress for Jerusalemite children and their families.

195. Civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots entities operating within Jerusalem should invest as much as possible in their programs, activities, and interventions with service providers, parent councils, and community initiatives within the Governorate (**within the wall**). This investment is crucial for effectively addressing the complex working environment characterized by “**the diversity of local cultures and prevailing family mentalities**” in various neighborhoods and districts of Jerusalem. These organizations should focus on enhancing safe and child-friendly environments for Jerusalemite children, implementing peer support programs for children affected by trauma, and strengthening child protection networks. Additionally, they must develop long-term strategies to enhance the resilience of Jerusalemite children in coping with challenging circumstances and overcoming trauma. Investment in early childhood development programs should be prioritized, following a collective and integrative planning and implementation approach as part of the overall transformation process.

196. Civil society organizations, human rights groups, and grassroots entities operating outside the Jerusalem Governorate (**outside the annexation wall**) should strengthen their efforts to defend the rights of children and protect the Jerusalemite child sector against the policies of isolation, oppression, and systemic apartheid within occupied Jerusalem. They must provide **comprehensive support and assistance to Jerusalemite institutions** across all sectors, including digital security. Moreover, these organizations should enhance collective action, networking, and communication channels with Jerusalemite institutions (**within the annexation wall**) in areas such as monitoring and documentation, training and capacity-building, advocacy campaigns, United Nations mechanisms, and accountability pathways. This includes submitting reports on grave violations and international crimes targeting the child sector in Jerusalem, as well as other violations and crimes committed by the Israeli occupation in the city. Additionally, they should prepare collaborative and specialized legal studies and research focused on Jerusalem.

197. In conclusion, this specialized analytical study on the reality of childhood in the Jerusalem Governorate presents a focused overview of the patterns of violations and international crimes targeting Jerusalemite children and their families, along with the severe social, economic, and psychological repercussions that have resulted. It diagnoses the internal factors that pose significant risks within the highly complex working environment of Jerusalem, provides a comprehensive legal analysis of the violations, and outlines the perspectives of institutions operating in the Jerusalem Governorate, both within and outside the annexation wall. As the first of its kind in terms of specialized methodology in human rights approaches and inclusiveness, this study serves as a **solid foundation** for further specialized research targeting occupied Jerusalem and Jerusalemite childhood. It can be submitted to United Nations mechanisms (such as special rapporteurs, experts, and working groups), as well as to the permanent and independent international investigation committee established by the UN Human Rights Council since 2021, which is responsible for investigating the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Additionally, it can be presented as a report to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) regarding the ongoing criminal investigation into the Palestinian situation. This study can also support the legal team’s efforts in South Africa concerning the request submitted by the South African government against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for measures to ensure the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as well as to other international and local bodies concerned with Jerusalem.



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