



May 2015

Tell Congress to advocate for Palestinian children

The detention of Palestinian minors by Israel raises serious concerns about lack of due process and ill-treatment. These concerns serve as a call to action for those who feel a responsibility to care for the most weak and vulnerable members of society.

According to the Israeli human rights organization, [B'Tselem](#), as of the end of March 2015, 184 Palestinian minors were held in Israeli custody. Furthermore, as B'Tselem notes, "the military law applied in the West Bank...denies them the protections accorded to minors under both international and Israeli law." A 2013 UNICEF [report](#) states, "Ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized." While noting positive progress on some fronts, a UNICEF update this year [states](#), "The data demonstrates the need for further actions to improve the protection of children in military detention, as reports of alleged ill-treatment of children during arrest, transfer, interrogation and detention have not significantly decreased in 2013 and 2014."

Contact your [representative](#) and [senators](#) today: Ask them to attend an important [Congressional briefing](#) to learn more about this issue and to advocate for ending the ill-treatment of Palestinian children in detention. Entitled, "**International Juvenile Justice Reform: Children in Israeli Military Detention**," the briefing will take place **Tuesday, June 2, 2015 at 9:30 AM** in the Capitol Visitors Center, Congressional Meeting Room North.

The briefing will discuss the legal and structural components of the military court system, and situate the detention of Palestinian children within the larger context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Opening remarks will be provided by Congressman Keith Ellison and featured speakers include Tariq Abu Khdeir, a Palestinian-American who will provide a firsthand account from a child's perspective and examine the effects of detention.

Also: If you're in the DC area, you are invited to attend an [Interfaith Vigil on the occasion of the International Day for Protection of Children, Monday, June 1, at noon](#), at the Upper Senate Park, 200 New Jersey Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001. The vigil will highlight the issue of Palestinian children in Israeli detention.

For more information:

["Children in Israeli Military Detention," UNICEF, February 2015.](#)

["Minors in Detention," B'Tselem.](#)

["Military Detention," Defense for Children International Palestine \(DCIP\).](#)

["No Way to Treat a Child."](#)

Sample Letter:

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am writing, as a person of faith who feels a responsibility to care for the most weak and vulnerable members of society, to express my concern about Palestinian children held in Israeli custody and to ask you to attend an important Congressional briefing on this topic on June 2.

A 2013 UNICEF report states, “Ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized.” While noting positive progress on some fronts, a UNICEF update this year states, “The data demonstrates the need for further actions to improve the protection of children in military detention, as reports of alleged ill-treatment of children during arrest, transfer, interrogation and detention have not significantly decreased in 2013 and 2014.”

To learn more about this issue I urge you or your staff to attend the [Congressional briefing](#), “International Juvenile Justice Reform: Children in Israeli Military Detention,” on Tuesday, June 2, at 9:30 AM in the Capitol Visitors Center, Congressional Meeting Room North. Among the featured speakers will be a Palestinian-American who will provide a first-hand account from a child’s perspective and examine the effects of detention.

Please take the time to learn more about this issue and to advocate for ending the ill-treatment of Palestinian children in military detention.

Thank you for your consideration,