

# Israel furious at UN report detailing torture of Palestinian children

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The Committee on the Rights of Children, a body of independent legal experts charged by the UN with the task of monitoring the protection of children's rights in signatory states, has urged Israel to honour its responsibility to prevent the torture and ill-treatment of children.

"The Committee expresses its deepest concern about the reported practice of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian children arrested, prosecuted and detained by the military and the police, and about the State party's failure to end these practices in spite of repeated concerns expressed by treaty bodies," the investigative body stated in its periodic review of Israel's child rights record, released on Thursday.

It continued: "[Palestinian children are] systematically subject to physical and verbal violence, humiliation, painful restraints, hooding of the head and face in a sack, threatened with death, physical violence, and sexual assault against themselves or members of their family, restricted access to toilet, food and water.

"These crimes are perpetrated from the time of arrest, during transfer and interrogation, to obtain a confession but also on an arbitrary basis as testified by several Israeli soldiers as well as during pretrial detention."

The report prompted a furious response from **Israel**, countering that the findings are "not based on any direct investigation on the ground, only on documents gathered from secondary sources."Muslim Brotherhood.

Yigal Palmor, spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, described the report's allegations that Israel did not comply with requests for information as a "bold, scandalous lie". Its allegations that Palestinian children are being used as informers and human shields, he added, are also deliberately

misleading.

“The [committee] were fully informed that instructions have indeed been issued and that the use of children as human shields is totally forbidden. Yet the authors pretend there never was any such communication by Israel,” Mr Palmor said.

A UNICEF report investigating the treatment of Palestinian children published earlier this year described “widespread, systematic and institutionalised” abuse of minors detained by Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including night-time arrests and long periods of solitary confinement, but stopped short of describing this ill treatment as torture.

The report, which consulted closely with Israel’s foreign ministry, also praised the country’s efforts to improve its child rights record. Israeli human rights group B’Tselem has extensively documented the testimonies of Palestinian children abused in by Israeli security services.

Sarit Michaeli, the organisation’s spokesman, argued that while several improvements have been made there remain “major problems with Israel’s treatment of Palestinian minors”.