Israel said set to show UN envoy proof most slain Palestinian minors had terror ties

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-set-to-show-un-envoy-proof-most-slain-palestinian-minors-had-terror-ties/>

Israel reportedly intends to present a visiting senior UN official with what it says is proof that most of the Palestinian minors killed by Israeli troops had been involved with terror groups and were engaged in military or quasi-military activity.

Virginia Gamba, UN special representative for children and armed conflict, is currently on a visit to Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, during which she will visit senior Israeli and Palestinian officials, for her annual report of harm to children in the conflict.

Unnamed diplomatic sources cited by Channel 13 news and the Kan public broadcaster on Monday said that officials will present Gamba with information on the ‘cynical use of kids by Palestinians, especially by terror groups: From recruiting children and teenagers as combatants to weapons training, summer camps, indoctrination, and using UNRWA schools as shelters for terrorists.’

‘Regarding the Palestinian casualties, Israel will present data indicating that most teenagers were operatives of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad terror groups, or engaged in military activity or military-linked activity,’ a source told Channel 13.

‘Additionally, Israel expects Gamba to examine the Palestinians’ use of teenagers as part of terror activities,’ the source said.

Regarding conflict zones, anyone under the age of 18 is considered a minor.

Diligent preparations for Gamba’s visit were made amid concerns that military operations over the past year, which have seen the deaths of over 165 Palestinians, including some minors, could lead to harsh condemnation of Israel in the UN special representative’s annual report, the network said. They included gathering video filmed by IDF soldiers as well as other material justifying the recent anti-terror activities.

Israeli officials will stress to Gamba the efforts made to prevent injury to noncombatants given the difficult conditions under which operations against terror are conducted, much of it in an urban environment, Kan reported.

Gamba is reportedly set to meet IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kohavi and other top military and police brass, as well as Foreign Ministry Director-General Alon Ushpiz and a Supreme Court justice. She will also meet Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh.

On Monday, [Shtayyeh urged Gamba](https://www.timesofisrael.com/ramallah-asks-visiting-un-official-to-blacklist-israel-after-teen-girls-killing/) to place Israel on its blacklist of countries that mistreat children in armed conflict after a teenage Palestinian girl was killed overnight during an Israeli raid in the West Bank city of Jenin that sparked a firefight. The girl, Jana Zakarna, 16, was found dead on the roof of her home with a gunshot wound to the head after the Israeli troops withdrew from Jenin.

In a post on Facebook, Shtayyeh called on Gamba ‘to investigate the occupation’s crimes against children and put Israel on the blacklist.’

The IDF, citing an initial probe of the shooting, said it believed that the girl was likely [accidentally shot and killed](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-reportedly-believes-teen-palestinian-girl-accidently-killed-by-troops-in-jenin/) by a Border Police sniper during the raid.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in July that ‘Israel should be listed’ among the countries with the most violations against children in armed conflict, if it does not improve the situation of children in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza by next year, following its annual review of children in armed conflict, which found Israel responsible for 2,934 violations against minors in the areas in 2021.

Tensions have been high in the West Bank over the past year, with the IDF conducting an ongoing major anti-terror offensive mostly focused on the northern West Bank to deal with a series of Palestinian attacks.

The operation has netted more than 2,500 arrests in near-nightly raids, but has also left more than 165 Palestinians dead, many of them — but not all — while carrying out attacks or during clashes with security forces.