

Urgent Appeal

UA 4/10



Defence for Children International/Palestine Section
الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال / فرع فلسطين

Incident: Shooting of children collecting building gravel
Location: North Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territory
Number of incidents: 12
Date of incidents: 22 May to 14 October 2010
Date of issue/update: 16 October 2010



Hasan W. – On 22 May 2010, 17-year-old Hasan is shot in the leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **300** metres from the border with Israel.



Awad W. – On 7 June 2010, 17-year-old Awad is shot in the right knee whilst collecting building gravel, about **350** metres from the border with Israel.



Ibrahim K. – On 16 June 2010, 16-year old Ibrahim is shot in the right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **400** metres from the border with Israel.



Abdullah M. – On 22 June 2010, 16-year-old Abdullah is shot in right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 60 metres from the border with Israel



Mohammad M. – On 23 June 2010, 16-year-old Mohammad is shot in his side whilst collecting building gravel, about **500** metres from the border with Israel.



Arfat S. – On 10 July 2010, 16-year-old Arafat is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 50 metres from the border with Israel.



Nu'man A. – On 10 July 2010, 14-year-old Nu'man is shot in his right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **300** metres from the border with Israel.



Hameed O. – On 14 July 2010, 13-year-old Hameed is shot in his left arm whilst collecting building gravel, about 50 metres from the border with Israel.



Khaled I. – On 31 July 2010, 16-year-old Khaled is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **600** metres from the border with Israel.



Mohammad S. – On 25 August 2010, 17-year-old Mohammad is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **800** metres from the border with Israel.



Ahmad H. (New) – On 13 October 2010, 17-year-old Ahmad is shot in the right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **600-700** metres from the border with Israel.



Yahia Z. (New) – On 14 October 2010, 16-year-old Yahia is shot in his right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **450** metres from the border with Israel.

Nature of incidents

Between 22 May and 14 October 2010, DCI-Palestine documented 12 cases of children shot whilst collecting building gravel near the border fence between Gaza Strip and Israel. Due to a severe lack of job opportunities and a shortage of construction material entering Gaza from Israel, hundreds of men and boys scavenge for building gravel amongst the destroyed buildings close to the border fence. The gravel is collected into sacks, loaded onto donkey drawn carts and sold to builders for use in concrete. Children can earn up to 50 shekels (US \$13) per day which is used to help support their families. Reports indicate that Israeli soldiers on duty in the observation towers which line the border between Gaza and Israel frequently fire warning shots to scare workers away from the border region. Reports also indicate that these soldiers sometimes shoot and kill the donkeys used by the workers, and also target the workers, usually, but not always, shooting at their legs. In the cases documented by DCI-Palestine, the children report being shot whilst working between **50 to 800 metres** from the border fence. These cases were recently reported in [Haaretz](#), [The Guardian](#) and [The Independent](#) newspapers.

Background information

According to a recent [UN study](#), over the past 10 years, the Israeli military has gradually expanded restrictions on access to land on the Gaza side of the border, with the stated intention of preventing attacks from Palestinian armed factions. In May 2009, the Israeli air force dropped thousands of pamphlets over different parts of Gaza stating that anybody approaching within **300 metres** of the border endangers his or her life. The findings of the study indicate that these restrictions have had a devastating impact on the physical security and livelihoods of around 180,000 people, exasperating an already bleak humanitarian situation caused by the blockade imposed by Israel in June 2007.

Fast facts

- According to a [UN report](#), in July 2010, only 30 truckloads of building gravel per week were permitted to enter Gaza via the Karni crossing. At this pace, it will take approximately 15 years (2025) to bring in the 24,000 truckloads of aggregate needed to complete 26 frozen UN projects, and about 75 years (2085) to bring in the aggregates needed to implement the whole UN reconstruction plan for Gaza.
- According to a [UN study](#), between January 2009 and August 2010, at least 22 Palestinian civilians in Gaza have been killed and 146 injured in the arbitrary live fire zone adjacent to the border with Israel and imposed at sea. At least 27 of these civilians were children.
- In nine out of the 12 cases (**75 percent**) documented by DCI-Palestine, the children estimate that they were on, or outside the 300 metre exclusion zone unilaterally imposed by the Israeli army when they were shot.
- The targeting of civilians is absolutely prohibited under international law, regardless of circumstances.

Recommended action

Please send Urgent Appeals urging that:

1. The Israeli army immediately ceases the practice of targeting unarmed children in the buffer zone on the Gaza side of the border with Israel; and
2. An immediate review of the orders and procedures relating to firing on persons in the buffer zone on the Gaza side of the border for compliance with international law, and to make all findings of the review public.

Appeals to:

- **Your elected representatives;** and
- **The Israeli embassy in your country** [[list of Israeli diplomatic missions worldwide](#)].

Please inform DCI-Palestine if you receive any response to your appeals and quote the UA number at the top of this document – ria@dcj-pal.org