

Urgent Appeal

UA 4/10



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

Incident: Shooting and shelling of children working near the border
Location: North Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territory
Number of incidents: 27
Date of incidents: 26 March 2010 to 17 February 2011
Date of issue: 16 October 2010
Last update: 5 March 2011



Mustafa M. (New) – On 17 February 2011, 17-year-old Mustafa is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 30 metres from the border fence with Israel.



Mohammad E. (New) – On 12 February 2011, 15-year-old Mohammad is shot in his leg, whilst watching gravel collectors about 50 metres from the border with Israel.



Nashat H. (New) – On 7 February 2011, 16-year-old Nashat is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 150 metres from the border fence with Israel.



Said H. – On 26 March 2010, 15-year-old Said is shot in his left leg whilst his brother collected building gravel, about 100 metres from the border.



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.



Arafat 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.



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.



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. – 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.



Shamekh D. – On 27 November 2010, 15-year-old Shamekh is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 150 metres from the border with Israel.



Belal L. – On 4 December 2010, 16-year-old Belal is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 600 metres from the border with Israel.



Rasmi G. – On 10 December 2010, 15-year-old Rasmi is shot in his right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 200 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.



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.



Mahmoud J. – On 7 October 2010, 16-year-old Mahmoud is shot in his right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 450 metres from the border with Israel.



Yahia Z. – 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.



Mokhles M. – On 28 November 2010, 15-year-old Mokhles is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building gravel, about 500 metres from the border with Israel.



Suhaib M. – On 10 December 2010, 15-year-old Suhaib is shot in his left leg whilst collecting wood, about 250 metres from the border with Israel.



Fadi H. – On 13 December 2010, 17-year-old Fadi is shot in his left leg whilst grazing goats, about 500 metres from the border with Israel.



[Rami S.](#) – On 21 December 2010, 17-year-old Rami is shot in his right leg whilst collecting building gravel, about **400** metres from the border fence with Israel.



[Hatem S.](#) – On 23 December 2010, 17-year-old Hatem is shot in the head whilst buying vegetables, about **800** metres from the border with Israel.



[Mahmoud S.](#) – On 23 December 2010, 17-year-old Mahmoud is shot in his right elbow whilst collecting gravel, about **350** metres from the border with Israel.



[Ismail Z.](#) – On 18 January 2011, 15-year-old Ismail is hit by shrapnel whilst collecting building gravel, about **600** metres from the border with Israel.

Nature of incidents

Between 26 March 2010 and 17 February 2011, DCI-Palestine has documented **27 cases** of children shot whilst collecting building material or working near the border fence between the 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 and other items 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 between 30 and 50 shekels (US \$8-14) 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 **30 to 800 metres** from the border fence. These cases have also been reported in [Haaretz](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Independent](#), [AFP](#) and [CNN](#) media outlets.

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. In November 2010, 25 non-governmental organizations, including Amnesty International, released a [report](#) into the situation in Gaza, five months after the Israeli government announced it was ‘easing’ the blockade following intense international pressure. The report concludes that in the five months since the ‘easing’ was announced on 20 June 2010, there are few signs of real improvement on the ground.

Fast facts

- According to a recent [report](#) by 25 non-governmental organisations, including Amnesty International, and based on UN data, Gaza requires 670,000 truckloads of construction material to rebuild after the war that ended in January 2009. However, the Israeli authorities have only permitted an average of 715 truckloads per month since the ‘easing’ of restrictions in June 2010. At this rate it will take 78 years to rebuild Gaza, with a completion date in 2088.
- 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 17 out of the 27 cases (**63 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](#)].