

Israel Arresting Palestinian Children for Their Facebook Posts



Tel Aviv, October 19 (RHC)-- Israel has been interrogating and imprisoning dozens of Palestinian minors for months without any legal representation or a parent's presence. As Facebook gives the Israeli government more access to posts deemed as "incitement," occupation forces have been raiding the homes of Palestinians children and detaining them over posts on the social media site, according to a report by the Defense for Children International-Palestine.

The group spoke with several Palestinian minors who were arrested for their Facebook posts, interrogated for hours and then kept in prison for months without charges under the Israeli policy of "administrative detention."

"Israeli authorities must immediately stop using administrative detention against Palestinian minors," attorney and international advocacy officer at DCIP Brad Parker, said in the organization's report.

"Inability to file charges against children due to lack of evidence should never be grounds for holding them indefinitely without charge or trial."

The group said this was the first time that Israel has used administrative detention against Palestinian

children since 2011, a policy that allows Israeli authorities to keep Palestinians in jail for an indefinitely without charges.

Ahmed, a 17-year-old Palestinian who was only identified by his first name in the report, said he was arrested in August and interrogated for hours over pictures of he had posted on Facebook. "He asked for my Facebook password," Ahmed told DCIP recalling his first interrogation in an Israeli prison. "I gave it to him. He logged in and said it had inciting photos."

Ahmed had also been arrested in April over posts on Facebook. "I told (the interrogator) of my arrest earlier in April 2016 for 10 days, when I was interrogated (at Shikma prison) in Ashkelon about my Facebook account. I told him I deleted everything upon my release and the account is clean. I told him to check it."

Three days later, Israeli authorities placed Ahmad under administrative detention for six months. The report warned that more than 19 Palestinian children, arrested since October 2015, did not have any legal representation or a parent's presence during the interrogations, which is internationally illegal.

Last month, Facebook and the Israeli government agreed to set up joint teams in order to fight what they call "incitement" posts on the social media website, which critics slammed as policies to target Palestinians and Arab-Israelis.

The report highlighted that "Israel has the dubious distinction of being the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes between 500 and 700 children in military courts each year that lack fundamental fair trial rights."

Despite these policies being part of the legal code of the country that should presumably apply to all of Israel and the occupied territories, Israelis seem to be spared from such laws by the police and army.

Israeli Jews and settlers, as well as government officials and politicians, have repeatedly and publicly incited violence against Arab and Palestinian men, women and children. Very few extremist members within the illegal Jewish settler community have been penalized over their calls for violence, or indeed the carrying out of such violence.

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