

Rights group says Palestinian children falling victim to Israeli lethal arms



Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on December 5, 2020. (Photo: AFP)

Ramallah, December 10 (RHC)-- A non-governmental human rights organization says Israel uses a lethal firearm to crack down on Palestinian demonstrations despite the regime's claim to the contrary, and that several children have lost their lives to the weapon.

Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP), based in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, said Tuesday that Israel's claim that Ruger 10/22 rifles were non-lethal was unrealistic. As a case in point, it highlighted the death of the rifle's latest victim, Ali Abu Alia, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy who was killed by the Israeli military in the occupied West Bank last week.

Ali was shot with live ammunition in the stomach during a weekly protest against illegal Israeli settlement expansion activities in the al-Mughayyir village near the West Bank city of Ramallah on December 4. The teenager was taken to hospital in Ramallah, but finally succumbed to his injuries.

The organization said the child's parents said they were told by the doctors at the time that the 0.22 bullet had cut major arteries, resulting in severe bleeding. The DCIP said Israel's claim that the child Abu Alya had been shot by mistake is not the first of its kind, and that it had documented several cases of children besides Ali who were wounded and killed by Ruger rifle bullets during the past years.

Ali's death drew international condemnations, with the United Nations' Middle East envoy, Nickolay Mladenov, calling on Israel to "swiftly and independently investigate this shocking and unacceptable incident."

Violent tactics against Palestinians, including using tear gas, stun grenades, rubber bullets and live rounds, are the tools of the trade for Israeli forces. The international community has repeatedly voiced concerns about the use of live ammunition by Israeli forces against the Palestinians, who pose no threat to them.

According to reports by international law organizations, eight Palestinian children between the ages of 13 and 17 have been fatally shot by Israeli soldiers since the beginning of the year.

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