

November 21 Mission & Service Story

No Way to Treat a Child: Obaida's Story



Photo of Obaida at sunset.

[Photo credit: DCIP/Matthew Cassel]

13,000 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli forces and held in military detention facilities since 2000. Your Mission & Service gifts support partners to defend and promote the rights of children living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Thank you!

Military violence exposes children to unimaginable brutality.

"I was on my way to the store when they arrested me," Obaida, a Palestinian child from Al-Arroub refugee camp, says to the camera. "When they took me for interrogation, they bound my hands in plastic cords. They used two of them so that I couldn't move my hands at all. My eyes were covered in a thick blindfold that also covered my nose and made it hard to breathe."

He is talking about the first time he was detained by Israeli military forces. Obaida was only 14.

Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip have lived under Israeli occupation since 1967. Anyone—including children—can be arrested without a warrant if there is suspicion that a “security offence” has been committed.

According to The United Church of Canada’s mission partner Defense for Children International–Palestine (DCIP), Israeli forces detain and prosecute around 700 Palestinian children every year. Thirteen thousand Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli forces and held in military detention facilities since 2000. Israel is the only country in the world that routinely convicts children in military courts—which are known to lack fair trial guarantees.

On May 17, 2021, just a month shy of his 18th birthday, Obaida was tragically killed. He was one of the 67 children who were killed by Israeli forces during an 11-day military assault on the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian children, like all children, deserve a childhood that is free of violence. Your Mission & Service gifts support DCIP in defending and promoting the rights of children living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Thank you for helping to provide a safe and just future for all children.