

Childhood in Chains

The Detention and Interrogation of Palestinian Teenagers in the West Bank



April 2018

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Photograph: "Palestinian worshippers trying to reach Jerusalem", September 2008, courtesy of ActiveStills

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1. Introduction

Every year, Israeli security forces arrest hundreds of Palestinian minors who are residents of the West Bank.¹ Most of the minors are arrested by the military in the middle of the night, taken directly from their beds on a grueling journey through the West Bank, and then transferred to one of the Israel Police stations located in the West Bank for interrogation. The interrogations are conducted mostly by police investigators, and are frequently preceded or accompanied by informal interrogations conducted by Israel Security Agency (ISA) officials.

Between July and October 2017, HaMoked collected affidavits from 29 Palestinian minors from the West Bank, who were arrested by Israeli security forces during 2017.² The affidavits focus on the minors' arrests, the hours between the arrests and their interrogations, and the interrogations themselves. They do not cover their experiences later on, during the criminal proceedings, if any were initiated against them. Of the 29 teenagers, 4 were 15 years old at the time of their arrest, 13 were 16 years old, and 12 were 17 years old.

The affidavits portray a grim picture: following their arrest in the middle of the night, the minors are taken, alone, on an exhausting night-time journey, during which some suffer violence by the security forces. The minors are brought to an interrogation room when they are in a state of fear and exhaustion, in many cases without having had anything to eat or drink for many hours and without having been permitted to relieve themselves. Some of the minors are held in isolation in extremely poor conditions for hours or days between interrogation sessions, completely cut-off from the outside world. In the majority of cases, the minors are not granted access to legal counsel prior to their interrogation, and in the few cases where some sort of consultation is enabled, it is cursory at best. By and large, the minors are unable to contact their parents prior to their interrogations and the parents are not notified regarding their son's location. Indeed, none of the minors HaMoked spoke to were permitted parental presence during their interrogations, and thus had to face their interrogators on their own. Many of the teenagers underwent an informal interrogation, or a "softening" talk, with one or more interrogators prior to the formal interrogation. This type of interrogation is not documented at all, and often entails physical and verbal abuse. Similarly, in most cases, formal interrogations are not documented by audio or video recording devices. In some cases where interrogations were audio-recorded, the minors reported that their interrogators turned off the recording devices when using threats or physical violence against them. In a few cases, while the recording devices were off, the minors received offers to collaborate with the Israeli security forces in exchange for better detention conditions or early release from detention.

The affidavits point to a routine, systematic ordeal that brings many minors to a breaking point, both physically and mentally, during their arrest and interrogation. In this state, they are exposed to ongoing violations of their most basic rights, including the right to bodily integrity, the right to dignity, the right to due process and the right not to incriminate themselves. The combined conditions of detention and interrogation lead to the potential

¹ For example, between August and December 2017, some 295 – 309 Palestinian minors from the West Bank were held in Israel Prison Service (IPS) incarceration facilities, as can be seen in responses received by HaMoked pursuant to freedom-of-information requests submitted on the subject. See the [IPS response of December 17, 2017](#) and the [IPS response of December 26, 2017](#).

² All the affidavits were taken by Adv. Tagrid Shabita. The initial contact with the teenagers resulted from HaMoked tracing their whereabouts of detention, at their families' request. See, on this matter, footnote 5 below.

that minors will be convicted with ease, without having had their rights clarified to them or having been granted the opportunity to properly, if at all, consult with legal representation or with their parents prior to and during their interrogations.³

2. Violations of the teenagers' rights

A. Violations during the arrests

Generally, the military is charged with carrying out arrests in the West Bank. As such, the majority of the violations described in this section are attributed to soldiers. However, in some cases ISA agents are present during the arrests and take an active part in them.

Night-time arrests

As a matter of routine, the military regularly arrests West Bank Palestinians – both minors and adults – in the middle of the night, regardless of the severity of their alleged offence. It is therefore unsurprising that of the 29 teenagers, 27 testified they were arrested at night; 26 of them were taken directly from their homes to interrogations. Not a single one of the teenagers received a summons for interrogation beforehand, and they were thus denied the opportunity to avoid the traumatic arrest experience. Night-time arrests create an even more traumatic experience for an entire family,⁴ as the teenagers' parents and siblings are woken up suddenly in the middle of the night to face the alarming presence of soldiers in their homes (in one case 15 soldiers invaded a home during an arrest!). This arrest method is also used in cases where it is clear that the offences attributed to the teenagers are not severe, and there is no need for such drastic measures.

In most cases, the soldiers did not permit the teenagers to say goodbye to their families, and some were prevented from taking their coats or putting their shoes on before exiting their homes. In one case, a teenager was prevented from taking his eyeglasses with him, and he spent the next two months in detention without them. In no case were the teenagers' families told where the boys were being taken to and how they could be contacted while in detention.⁵

Mansur,⁶ aged 15 and 3 months at the time of his arrest, described his night-time arrest:

I was arrested... at 4 AM from my home. I was asleep, the military woke me. I opened my eyes and saw soldiers. I was very surprised. They pointed a bright flashlight into my eyes and started shouting. They yelled "who is Mansur?" I said

³ Similar findings arose from affidavits taken by HaMoked during 2016 from 32 Palestinian minors who were arrested in the West Bank. On this matter see [HaMoked's letter of August 8, 2016](#).

⁴ See the testimony of one Palestinian family that experienced a difficult night-time arrest: Gideon Levy and Alex Levac, "[The Israeli Army Snatched a Palestinian Boy From His Bed and Arrested Him – Then Realized It's a Mistake](#)", **Haaretz**, April 13, 2018

⁵ Although the authorities are legally obligated to promptly notify relatives of detainees of their place of detention – an obligation entrenched both in military legislation in force in the West Bank and in Israeli law, in the Prisons Ordinance and the Police Ordinance – families were not notified of the detainees' arrest and whereabouts. Throughout the years, HaMoked has communicated with the military for current information about the whereabouts of detainees in order to speedily provide it to their families, in the shortest time possible. This is often their only means of tracing their relatives. On this matter, see the arrangement established in [HCJ 6757/95 Hirbawi et al. v. IDF Commander in Judea and Samaria Petition](#), Judgment, 11.2.1996).

⁶ All the teenagers' names in this report are aliases.

"Me". They told me to get up. I got up, they searched me and immediately cuffed my hands. They made me sit apart, away from my family. The soldiers made a mess searching the house. They searched through my things, and took some of my clothes... They didn't find anything... They left me in my pajamas, my hands were still cuffed. They took me out, while mother was yelling and screaming and crying, everyone in the house was crying and yelling... I'm one of 8 brothers and sisters.⁷

Violence and humiliation

Most of the teenagers reported they suffered abuse at the hands of the military during their arrest and transfer to a police station. Ten of them testified they were subjected to actual physical violence.

Mahmoud, aged 16 and 11 months at the time of his arrest, described the humiliating treatment he experienced: *"The soldiers took my photo twice using their mobile phones and laughed. They sat on either side of me while I knelt on my knees between them. They also cursed me the whole time."⁸*

Sa'id, aged 17 and ten months at the time of his arrest, described the physical violence he experienced:

The military arrived at my house, I woke up from their blows. I was sleeping in my bed, and the soldiers started hitting me with their rifles and I woke up... They pulled me out of bed, threw me on the floor and cuffed my hands behind my back using cable ties. They picked me up and sent me to the kitchen... I heard them yelling at my parents, who had been taken to a different room... They refused to let me say goodbye to my parents... [One of the soldiers] grabbed me by the neck from behind so I wouldn't see my parents as we were leaving the house.⁹

Denial of access to food and toilets

19 of the 29 teenagers related they were not given food for several hours, and in some cases for more than 24 hours. Many were denied access to a toilet, and one teenager stated he had to relieve himself while being observed by female soldiers, an experience that caused him a deep sense of humiliation.¹⁰

Handcuffing and blindfolding

26 of the 29 teenagers were blindfolded during their arrest. All 29 of the boys indicated they had had their hands cuffed with cable ties for extended periods of time in a manner causing them a great deal of physical pain.

⁷ The affidavit was taken on September 5, 2017.

⁸ The affidavit was taken on August 17, 2017.

⁹ The affidavit was taken on September 5, 2017.

¹⁰ Based on the affidavit of Abed, aged 15 and one month at the time of his arrest, taken on August 2, 2017.

B. Violations during the interrogations

Generally, interrogations of suspects in police stations in the West Bank are conducted by the police. However, there is frequent involvement (either formally or informally) of ISA personnel in these interrogations. As such, while the majority of the violations described in this section are attributed to the police, there are indications that the ISA is responsible for some of them.

It is to be noted that, while there is no legal obligation that only certified youth interrogators may interrogate minors from the West Bank, the Israel Police ordinances – which apply without distinction to all police districts, including the West Bank – stipulate this should be done, to the extent possible.¹¹ [According to the Israel Police response](#) to HaMoked's freedom-of-information application, "As a rule, a minor will be interrogated by an interrogator who has been certified to work with youth...", unless no such interrogator is available and "there is a real necessity to conduct the interrogation urgently". In such cases, this decision must be documented and justified in the interrogation file. The response also noted that there are only 26 certified youth interrogators working in all the Israel Police stations in the West Bank.

According to the affidavits, in no case did the interrogators behave as expected from qualified youth interrogators, as none ensured the minors' most basic rights were protected. Furthermore, in many cases the teenagers were simultaneously interrogated by two or more interrogators, having to face a number of interrogators and "questioners" on their own.

Informal "softening-up" interrogations

Eleven of the teenagers indicated that prior to their formal interrogation by the police, they underwent a "softening-up" interrogation by another interrogator (or interrogators), whether from the ISA, the police or the military. During these unofficial interrogations, many of the boys experienced severe verbal and physical abuse. These interrogations were not documented in any way, not even in writing, and the teenagers' were not told they had a right to counsel beforehand. In some cases, the interrogators used the informal interrogations to propose that the teenagers become ISA informants.

The right to counsel

Of the 29 teenagers, 22 related they were not granted access to legal counsel prior to their interrogations. A few said they were barred from speaking to an attorney despite having explicitly requested they be allowed to do so. Only four of the boys were able to consult with an attorney by phone, but it was always the interrogators themselves who selected and phoned the attorneys. Only two teenagers were allowed to consult with their attorneys face-to-face before their interrogations. Even in the few cases where some sort of legal consultation was enabled, it was never substantive: the boys were only permitted to talk with their attorneys briefly, and were simply told to remain silent and not confess to anything, with nothing beyond.

The right to remain silent

Sixteen of the teenagers testified that their interrogators did not clarify they had a right to remain silent during their interrogations, and four others testified they had been explicitly told by their interrogators that silence would harm them. Only five of the 29 boys said they received – as due – a page in Arabic explaining their legal rights as minors in interrogations.

¹¹ As can be found in the [Israel Police response to HaMoked, dated May 9, 2017](#).

Of the remaining 24, almost none received such a document, while some were given a purported "rights" page in Hebrew, which they were unable to read.

Lack of documentation or selective documentation of interrogations

Only five of the teenagers stated their interrogation was video-recorded in full. Four others indicated their interrogation was audio-recorded. One of the four related that the audio-recording was paused in the middle of the interrogation, and during the break the interrogator beat him and shouted at him.¹² Another of the four said the audio-recording was paused in order to proposition collaboration with the Israeli security forces. Five of the boys testified they were taken out of the interrogation room in the middle of their interrogation, and were subjected to violence outside the room, before they were returned to it.

Pressure to sign confessions

Many of the teenagers indicated that their interrogators pressured them to sign documents in Hebrew, which they later discovered were "confessions", though they did not understand their contents and had not confessed to anything beforehand.

Ramadan, aged 16 and 9 months at the time of his arrest, described the pressure applied to him to sign a confession:

At the end, he [the interrogator] asked me to sign some paperwork, and said I would be declaring that I confess to nothing. I believed him and signed the material in Hebrew. After signing, two interrogators started laughing at me and said: here, you signed a confession.¹³

Another boy described how his interrogators forced him to write out "confessions" that were dictated to him in his own handwriting, based on information from his interrogations in the preceding days, and despite his attempts to argue about some of the dictated contents. The teenager said that "confessions" were dictated to him on six different occasions, and his interrogators pressured him to sign them, promising that doing so would bring to his quick release from detention.

Pressure to collaborate with the security forces

Five of the teenagers reported that, at one point during their interrogations, they were pressured to collaborate with the Israeli security forces, in exchange for lenient punishments or immediate release from detention. Such propositions are contrary to international humanitarian law, which explicitly prohibits occupying forces from pressuring residents of the occupied territory to collaborate with them.¹⁴

Wisam, aged 17 and two months at the time of his arrest, described the pressure put on him to collaborate with the security forces:

¹² Based on the affidavit of Majeed, aged 15 and 9 months at the time of his arrest, taken on August 30, 2017.

¹³ The affidavit was taken on August 17, 2017.

¹⁴ [Geneva Convention \(IV\) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War](#) (1949), Articles 31 and 51.

After turning it [the recording device] off, the interrogator proposed I inform on friends from my neighborhood, and in exchange he would release me and give me money and everything I need. He told me I would have everything I need.¹⁵

Threats and violence during the interrogation

22 of the teenagers testified that their interrogators threatened them during their interrogations. One of them, Abed, aged 15 and one month at the time of his arrest, said that the threats made against him were of a sexual nature: *"He cursed and offended my mother's honor, very rude curse words... He threatened to beat me half to death, and to do sexual things to me that I can't repeat."¹⁶*

Thus also in the case of Mansur, aged 15 and 3 months at the time of his arrest, who described the threats and mistreatment he experienced during his interrogation:

He [the interrogator] said that if I didn't confess, I would be sent to solitary confinement.... He said I would be sent to an electricity room, that I would be put in a cold storage room naked... When he saw I wasn't confessing to anything he sent me to a small room – took off my shirt, sat me down on a bench adjacent to a well, and turned on a very strong [current] of cold air... He left me there for many minutes. He said "Now think for yourself"... He threatened to give me electric shocks, he had a device in his hand – I realized it was a Taser – he really used it, but not directly on me. He did it next to my head and to my sides, in order to scare me.¹⁷

Muhammed, aged 16 and 4 months at the time of his arrest, talked about the physical violence he experienced during his informal interrogation:

One soldier, dressed in civilian clothes, took me to a small room. He shouted at me and told me I had to confess... I told him I had nothing to confess. He slapped and kicked me. He said he would let me go immediately if I confessed. He started hitting my head with his hand, and said – "if this is how you want it, this is what you'll get". He threatened to put me in a refrigerator and threatened he would arrest my father and mother.¹⁸

Holding in isolation

Six of the teenagers stated they were held in solitary confinement between interrogation sessions, for stretches ranging from 24 hours up to 20 days. Being completely cut-off from the outside world caused the boys severe mental distress.

Eyad, aged 17 and 9 months at the time of his arrest, described the difficult emotions he experienced while he was in isolation: *"I miss them a lot, especially my mother. I thought about her a lot when I was alone, in solitary confinement. It's very difficult to be there alone. You don't know what time it is and how many days have gone by. If you don't have an ability to endure suffering, you can lose your mind."¹⁹*

¹⁵ The affidavit was taken on July 27, 2017.

¹⁶ The affidavit was taken on August 2, 2017.

¹⁷ The affidavit was taken on September 5, 2017.

¹⁸ The affidavit was taken on August 30, 2017.

¹⁹ The affidavit was taken on August 6, 2017.

Conditions in isolation cells are harsh, and are unsuitable for holding minors. Samir, aged 16 and two months at the time of his arrest, described the isolation cell he was held in:

I was in isolation for 10-11 days, in a solitary confinement cell. The room had a toilet and a tap that barely emitted water, and the toilet was open to the room, and there was a yellow light on all the time. I couldn't sleep because of that light. Sometimes there was cold air and sometimes it was too hot... The room wasn't clean, there was a bad smell from the unseparated toilet. I felt as if I was living inside a toilet. I prayed to be let out of there, I was willing to say whatever they wanted, as long as they let me out of there.²⁰

Handcuffing

In the majority of cases, the teenagers' hands were kept cuffed during their entire interrogation, which typically lasted several hours, and some were even cuffed to the chairs they were sitting on during the interrogation. Some of the boys said both their hands and their feet were cuffed to a chair during their interrogation.

Denial of contact with the teenagers' parents

None of the teenagers was permitted to have a parent present during his interrogation. 25 of the boys had no communication whatsoever with their parents before or during the interrogation, and most of them were not allowed to notify their families regarding their whereabouts or their interrogation. Only one teenager was able to speak with his parents on the phone before the beginning of his interrogation, and another boy said he was allowed to speak to his parents by phone in the middle of the interrogation. Even after their interrogation was completed and they were transferred to IPS detention facilities, many of the teenagers said they were held in arrest or detention for weeks or months before they were able to receive their first parental visit, something that was emotionally very difficult for many of them and left them particularly vulnerable and exposed.²¹

3. The legal framework

International law recognizes the heightened vulnerability of minors in comparison to adults,²² and the long-term impact that traumatic experiences can have on their lives. It is acknowledged that the age of minors affects not only their criminal responsibility, but also the manner in which they experience arrest, interrogation and detention. In light of this sensitivity, the majority of legal systems in the world, including the Israeli legal system, recognize the need for special protections for minors which take their vulnerability into consideration.

²⁰ The affidavit was taken on August 6, 2017.

²¹ The minors are also denied continuous contact with their families, given that the majority of them are classified as "security" offenders or suspects, and as such are denied access to phones. This policy does not take into consideration their young age and the heightened difficulty they experience, being literally cut-off from their families. HaMoked has been corresponding with the IPS on the subject and is working on legal action, the purpose of which is the protection of the rights of the Palestinian minors.

²² See the preamble to the [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#), which states that "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth".

A. International law

International law recognizes the need to treat minors differently during criminal proceedings, as established in the [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#), which was ratified by Israel in 1991. Among other things, the Convention stipulates that the arrest, detention or imprisonment of minors must always be a measure of last resort, to be used only in the absence of other viable alternatives. If, after all, it is decided to place minors in custody and deprive them of their liberty, they must have quick access to legal support, ongoing contact with their families, and they must be treated with dignity and in a manner that does not harm their sense of self-worth.²³ In practice, Israel violates the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its treatment of Palestinian minors from the West Bank, including minors from the annexed East Jerusalem,²⁴ who are not granted the protections set out in the Convention.

The [1990 United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty \(Havana Rules\)](#), define additional safeguards for minors in detention. Among other provisions, the rules clearly stipulate that every minor in detention or interrogation has a right to professional legal assistance (and even to free legal aid), and to ongoing contact with his or her legal counsel. It is also stated that every minor is to be given a written document that sets out his or her rights in a language he or she understands.²⁵ These safeguards are also not realized in relation to Palestinian minors who are arrested by the Israeli security forces.

In this context, it is worth noting the prohibition in international law against the use of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in an effort to pressure suspects into confessing crimes attributed to them. This prohibition is defined in the [United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(1984\)](#), which was ratified by Israel in 1991.

B. Israeli law

Within Israel and annexed East Jerusalem, [the Youth Law \(Trial, Punishment and Modes of Treatment\), 5731-1971](#) (henceforth: "the Youth Law"), dictates the manner in which the police should handle the interrogation of minors. The Youth Law does not apply to Palestinian minors who are residents of the West Bank, even if they are arrested within Israel. Contrarily, the Youth Law is applied to Israeli minors living in settlements in the West Bank.²⁶ The law that applies to arrests and interrogations of Palestinians is the harsh military law, which does not recognize the impact the minors' age has on the way they experience the arrest, and does not provide the special protections the minors are entitled to within Israeli and international law.²⁷ For example, in the military law, there is no reference to the need for parental presence during the interrogation of minors.

HaMoked believes that the standards defined in the Youth Law should be applied to Palestinian minors, even if the Law does not formally apply to them. The Israel Police itself, in

²³ The [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#), Article 37.

²⁴ See joint report by HaMoked and B'Tselem, "[Unprotected: The Detention of Palestinian Teenagers in East Jerusalem](#)", October 2017.

²⁵ The [1990 United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty \(Havana Rules\)](#), Articles 17, 18, 20 and 24.

²⁶ On this subject see report by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), "[One Rule, Two Legal Systems: Israel's Regime of Laws in the West Bank](#)", October 2014.

²⁷ For more information, see summary of B'Tselem report: "[No Minor Matter: Violation of the Rights of Palestinian Minors Arrested by Israel on Suspicion of Stone-Throwing](#)", July 2011.

its response to HaMoked's letters on the subject, claimed that efforts have been made in recent years "to promote the application of the rules in the Youth Law to the interrogation of residents of the Area [the West Bank] as much as possible." In this statement, the police recognized the need to treat minors from the West Bank with the sensitivity appropriate to their age, as prescribed by the Youth Law – though there seems to be no expression of this policy in actual fact.

In this context, [the Criminal Procedures Law \(Interrogation of Suspects\), 5762-2002](#) (henceforth: "Interrogation of Suspects Law"), which applies to Israel and East Jerusalem, is also relevant. The purpose of this law is to regulate the manner in which suspects are interrogated by the Israel Police. Among other regulations, the law sets a series of stipulations regarding the obligation to document interrogations by video and/or audio devices, in order to best protect the rights of suspects. Nevertheless, the documentation obligation does not apply to people suspected of "security offences", even if they are minors. Furthermore, the documentation obligation does not exist in the military law which applies to Palestinians in the West Bank, and even if it did, it is highly doubtful that it would be realized in the majority of instances, as the definition of "security offences" in the military legal system is extremely broad.²⁸

4. HaMoked's advocacy efforts vis-à-vis the Israeli authorities

A. Correspondence with the Israel Police

In recent years, [HaMoked has conducted a correspondence with the Israel Police](#)²⁹ on the subject of night-time arrests and interrogations of minors from the West Bank. [In response to HaMoked's letters](#), the police claims that it is making an effort to close the gaps between interrogation proceedings in relation to minors in Israel versus those relating to Palestinian minors in the West Bank. The police also claims that interrogees are allowed to consult with an attorney as required by law, and dismisses HaMoked's claims regarding night-time arrests, claiming these are carried out by the military, to whom HaMoked should address its claims on the issue.

Many of the cases described in this report give rise to a suspicion of illegal conduct on the part of Israeli police officers. The body charged with investigating such suspicions is the Department for the Investigation of the Police (DIP), within the Justice Ministry. HaMoked's past experience³⁰ indicates that individual complaints made to DIP rarely lead to any meaningful accountability, and complaint files are usually closed without a thorough investigation. All the minors HaMoked spoke to were concerned that filing a complaint would lead to negative ramifications for them, and preferred not to do so. For these reasons, HaMoked chose not to submit individual complaints to DIP, and instead wrote to the police on the principled level about the recurring failings that surfaced from the affidavits.

²⁸ On this subject see report by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), "[One Rule, Two Legal Systems: Israel's Regime of Laws in the West Bank](#)", October 2014, page 33.

²⁹ See also [HaMoked's letter of November 22, 2017](#).

³⁰ See the joint report by HaMoked and B'Tselem, "[Unprotected: The Detention of Palestinian Teenagers in East Jerusalem](#)", October 2017, page 20.

[In response to HaMoked's requests](#) under the Freedom of Information Law, the police repeatedly claimed that it cannot provide the majority of the requested information regarding the arrests of minors in the West Bank, given that the information is unavailable in the computerized system of the Israel Police. This response indicates that the Israel Police does not record vital details regarding the arrests and interrogations of minors (for example – it was unable to provide information regarding the number of minors whose parents were present during their interrogations). In response, HaMoked brought the issue to the Knesset's Special Committee for the Rights of the Child, in an effort to bring about a change in the manner in which the police records the detention of minors.

[In a letter from January 31, 2018](#), the police suggested that HaMoked relay some of the individual affidavits that formed the basis for the correspondence on the subject, removing the teenagers' personal details, in order to enable it to address the issues arising from each case. HaMoked consented to this request, and sent [four of the affidavits to the police on March 20, 2018](#). At the time of writing, HaMoked has yet to receive a response from the police.

B. Correspondence with the military

HaMoked has been closely following a pilot project conducted by the military since 2014, whereby Palestinian minors receive summons to interrogations as a potential alternative to night-time arrests. HaMoked submitted a number of freedom-of-information requests on the subject to the military, and [the responses received](#) indicated the pilot was not conducted seriously, having been applied only to a very small percentage of arrests and with no documentation of its results. The pilot was abandoned in practice in mid-2016, though the military still officially claims that it is ongoing. Additionally, in a [letter from November 6, 2016](#), the military claimed that minors receive summons to interrogations by default, but in some cases there is a "security necessity" to arrest specific minors in night-time arrests.

Despite the military's claim, the affidavits collected by HaMoked in the second half of 2017 clearly indicate that the military continues by default to arrest minors in night-time arrests, rather than summon them to interrogations. HaMoked sent the military a [letter on the subject on February 25, 2018](#), demanding the cessation of the policy of night-time arrests of Palestinian minors in the West Bank, but at the time of writing, no response has been received.

5. Conclusions

The findings of this research show a clear trend of violation of the rights of Palestinian minors from the West Bank in their arrests and interrogations by Israeli security forces. It is apparent that these teenagers are treated by the various authorities purely as a security threat, without any consideration of the vulnerability resulting from their age. Most of the teenagers HaMoked spoke to were arrested at night and underwent a grueling and sometimes violent journey on their way to their interrogations. They were interrogated without having their rights explained to them and without being permitted to consult with a lawyer. Many of them were interrogated in a manner aimed at breaking them physically and mentally (through the use of isolation, sleep and food deprivation, threats and physical violence). The teenagers were completely cut off from their families for days and sometimes even months, experiencing the full force of the hardships imposed on them without any support.

HaMoked's engagement with Israeli authorities was met with a pervasive refusal to examine our concerns in detail, and a denial of the existence of a problem. The Israel Police, the military and the ISA must conduct an in-depth examination of the failings in their treatment of Palestinian minors arrested in the West Bank. They must align their conduct with Israel's legal obligations under international law. Furthermore, Israel must eliminate the gap between the treatment faced by minors who are citizens of Israel versus Palestinian minors, and apply the principles embodied in the Youth Law to Palestinian minors arrested in the West Bank.