

Protecting Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Occupied Palestinian Territories: Accountability for Monitoring and Reporting

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Abstract

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict's violence toward children is a grave problem that has to be addressed. The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) has been implemented by UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) lays forth a helpful structure for tracking and reporting breaches committed against children in war zones, such as those in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).

While not officially mandated in this region, humanitarian and human rights organizations have successfully adopted the MRM that has been established to oversee and take corrective actions against instances of infringements upon the rights of children. However, they face limited resources and a challenging operational environment. More awareness and comprehension of the problems children face in the conflict and the process of adapting the MRM to the local context, taking into account the distinctive circumstances of children, has the potential to surmount the challenges and impediments faced in effectively implementing the mechanism.

It is vital to ensure that the monitoring and reporting mechanism is efficiently and effectively implemented in all conflict areas worldwide to protect children's rights and prevent further atrocities against them. Additionally, long-term solutions to end the conflict in the Israeli-Palestinian region are necessary to address the root causes of violence against children and provide them with a safe and secure environment to grow and thrive.

Keywords: Children; Armed Conflict; Grave Violations; Accountability; Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism; UN Security Council

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1. Introduction

Children are especially vulnerable to violence and human rights violations during conflict and political unrest. The range of abuses that children can face during armed conflict is extensive and includes many of the issues listed, including but not limited to killing and maiming, recruitment and exploitation by armed groups, sexual violence, family separation and displacement, disruption of educational pursuits, and deprivation of essential services such as healthcare.¹

International and national organizations and agencies have developed various standards and instruments to monitor, report, and address violence against children during armed conflict. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) led to establishment of a monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM). This tool aims to hold parties responsible for egregious abuses of children's rights. It is important to remember that this system only protects children from warring parties, as evidenced by the annexes to the United Nations Secretary-annual General's report on children and armed conflict.²

Despite the critical work done by participating agencies in implementing the MRM, they need help with its overall success. The challenging and delicate situations during armed conflict can make monitoring and reporting violations difficult, and limited resources and insufficient local awareness and adaptation can further complicate matters. The monitoring and reporting of abuses committed against children during armed conflict must be improved.³ This includes expanding the scope of the MRM to include non-listed countries, providing adequate resources and support to participating agencies, raising awareness, and promoting the local adaptation of the mechanism is crucial to effectively address the unique circumstances of children in conflict zones and ensure that the mechanism is responsive to their needs.⁴ Ultimately, the primary objective should be to safeguard and advance children's rights during armed conflicts while also taking measures to prevent future atrocities against them.

This study highlights the potential to augment the effectiveness of the Mechanism for Monitoring and Reporting (MRM) through contextualization, incorporating violations pertinent to the region. Specifically, this paper delves

¹ Bruno Meessen, Jean-Pierre I. Kashala, and Laurent Musango, "Output-Based Payment to Boost Staff Productivity in Public Health Centres: Contracting in Kabutare District, Rwanda," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 85, no. 2 (2007): 108-115.

² Tanushree Goyal, "Do Citizens Enforce Accountability for Public Goods Provision? Evidence from India's Rural Roads Program," *The Journal of Politics* 86, no. 1 (2024): 97-112.

³ Marcel Kaba, "Local Accountability of International NGOs: a Study of World Vision, the Host-State and Beneficiary Communities in Ethiopia" (PhD diss., University of Sydney, Sydney, 2023).

⁴ Victoria Trinies and Robert Dreibelbis, *Research Summary: Roles and Responsibilities Pilot January-November 2011: A SWASH+ Project report* (Hague: IRC, 2012).

into the challenges encountered when monitoring, reporting and addressing incidents of child rights violations during prolonged conflict situations. The study employs the MRM framework despite the absence of official authorization, particularly emphasizing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict setting. The paper also demonstrates the value of institutional and programmatic sensitivity to local conditions in war zones in monitoring procedures. Local adaptation and collaboration with community-based organizations can help overcome limited resources and a challenging operational environment. Organizations operating in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) have enhanced their capacity to monitor and address child rights violations more effectively by adapting the MRM to the local context. This highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability when implementing international standards and instruments in complex situations.⁵

Overall, the paper emphasizes the need for continued efforts to oversee, document, and take corrective actions against violations of children's rights during armed conflict and the importance of local adaptation and collaboration in achieving this goal.⁶ It is essential to prioritize protecting and promoting children's rights in conflict zones, and the MRM can be a vital tool for achieving this.

The investigation of the encounters of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is essential. The examination entails the utilization of program reports, evaluations, and legal guidance to evaluate the extent to which state authorities comply with national and international guidelines and standards for protecting children affected by armed conflicts in the area.⁷ By integrating this practical knowledge with scholarly and legal analyses, the research can comprehensively understand the viability and importance of monitoring and reporting violations of children's rights and protection in conflict contexts.⁸

Overall, this research can contribute to developing effective strategies and policies for protecting and promoting children's rights in conflict zones and highlight the importance of international standards and instruments such as the MRM in achieving this goal. It also underscores the need for continued efforts to raise awareness, provide resources, and support local adaptation and

⁵ Philip Alston, "The Historical Origins of the Concept of 'General Comments'," in Human Rights Law." In *The International Legal System in Quest of Equity and Universality*, ed. Laurence Boisson de Chazournes and Vera Gowlland-Debbas (Hague: Brill Nijhoff, 2001), 763-776.

⁶ UNGA, Convention on the Rights of the Child, A/RES/44/25, New York 1989.

⁷ Sharon Detrick et al., *Violence against Children in Conflict with the Law. A Study on Indicators and Data Collection in Belgium, England and Wales, France and the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Defence for Children International, 2008).

⁸ Helen Stalford, *Children and the European Union: Rights, Welfare and Accountability* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012).

collaboration to overcome the challenges of monitoring and reporting violations against children during armed conflict.⁹

Child protection refers to applying measures and frameworks to prevent and address incidents of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence that may affect children. A crucial component of child protection is aiding communities and families in building their capacity to care for children and support their overall development, including their physical, mental, and social well-being. A competent workforce, sufficient financial and human resources, and national legislation and policy to develop ties to formal social welfare systems that integrate child protection with health, education, and judicial systems are all necessary for adequate child protection. Community-based organizations like community groups may also supplement these formal metrics and structures because they frequently interact more closely with families and children.¹⁰ The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) establishes the foundation for developing national laws and regulations concerning child protection, ensuring their coherence with established policies and structures. UNCRC Articles 4 and 27 are particularly significant, as they specify that while communities, families, and other groups also have obligations to protect children's rights, the state must ensure that all children have their rights upheld. By upholding the principles of the UNCRC and implementing effective child protection measures, governments can promote the well-being and development of children and prevent violations of their rights. It is crucial to prioritize protecting and promoting children's rights, particularly during conflict and political unrest when they are at heightened risk of violence and exploitation.

Children in protracted war settings are at heightened risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, and violence. Abduction, recruitment, or exploitation by armed forces or groups, disruption of everyday activities, physical harm and the threat of death, separation from families and communities, and exposure to violence, including witnessing the murder of family members and others, are some of the most severe violations committed against children during armed conflict.¹¹ These experiences can have significant and long-lasting effects on a child's physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

It is crucial to prioritize protecting and promoting children's rights during armed conflict, particularly in protracted war settings. This includes implementing effective child protection measures, enabling access to

⁹ Marta Santos Pais and Susan Bissell, "Overview and Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child," *The Lancet* 367, no. 9511 (2006): 689-690.

¹⁰ Paola Pereznieta et al., *The Costs and Economic Impact of Violence Against Children* (London and Henrico County: Overseas Development Institute and Child Fund Alliance, 2014).

¹¹ Nora V. Demleitner, "The State, Parents, Schools, 'Culture Wars', and Modern Technologies: Challenges under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 62, S1 (2014): 491-514.

education and healthcare, and ensuring that perpetrators of violations against children are held accountable for their actions.¹² Recognizing children's vulnerabilities and needs in protracted war settings and their well-being and protection in all efforts to address conflict and promote peace is essential.

According to Article 38 of the UNCRC,¹³ nations must protect children during armed conflict. However, they may be unable or unwilling to do so in many cases, leaving children vulnerable to rights violations. This may be due to needing more resources or tools to fulfill this duty. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, as set out in United Nations General Assembly resolutions in 2005, applies in such situations and entails that state authorities are responsible for safeguarding the rights of their citizens, including children, and for taking measures to prevent and address instances of abuse or violations.

Protecting and promoting children's rights during armed conflict must be a priority for all actors involved. Governments, the international community, and humanitarian organizations must work together to ensure that children are protected from violence and exploitation and that their rights are upheld and enforced.

Modern conflicts are increasingly characterized by intentional attacks on civilians and the deliberate destruction of community structures and infrastructures; these activities disproportionately affect children. Hospitals, schools, and other community support systems can be destroyed or disrupted, substantially impacting how effectively children develop and live their lives by limiting their access to vital services like healthcare and education. Targeting individuals and civilian structures—including those supporting children—is blatantly against human rights and international humanitarian law. All sides engaged in armed conflict must prioritize the safety and welfare of civilians, especially children. Children must be protected from violence and exploitation immediately, but there must also be long-term assistance for their physical, emotional, and mental health during armed conflict. This includes possibilities for healing and rehabilitation from conflict and violence and access to healthcare, education, and other crucial services. Protecting and advancing children's rights during armed conflict must be prioritized, and efforts must be made to stop targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Children are vulnerable to severe psychological outcomes due to the direct effects of armed conflict and violence on families. This includes the death, loss, or disappearance of family members, family separation, and the socioeconomic impacts of conflict on families. Children who encounter violence and insecurity or experience competition-related stress may face

¹² Ingvild Bode, "Reflective practices at the Security Council: Children and Armed Conflict and the Three United Nations," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 2 (2018): 293-318.

¹³ UNGA, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 38.

short-term, medium-term, or long-term psychological challenges. These challenges may include sleep problems, withdrawal from social activities, and other related issues, violent conduct, and other noticeable behavioral changes may be symptoms of these psychological problems. Due to the trauma of their experiences, children may also feel dejected. Children's growth and well-being may suffer long-term effects from the psychological effects of conflict. It is crucial to prioritize providing mental health and psychosocial support for children affected by conflict, including access to counseling and other forms of support. Efforts to protect children during armed conflict must consider their physical safety and psychological well-being. Providing children with the necessary support and resources to address their psychological needs can mitigate the long-term effects of conflict on their development and well-being. Overall, it is essential to prioritize protecting and promoting children's rights during armed conflict and provide them with the necessary support and resources to address the psychological impacts of their experiences.

Children's health and development depend on hospitals, schools, and other community support structures, mainly if a conflict exists. When these systems are destroyed or disturbed, children's access to essential services like healthcare and education can be significantly impacted. Children who do not have access to healthcare and education may experience avoidable diseases and injuries and lose out on meaningful learning and development opportunities. Children's futures may suffer long-term effects from the loss or disturbance of these systems since it may reduce their chances for development and success. Prioritizing the defense of medical facilities, educational institutions, and other community support systems is essential, as is working to rebuild and restore them after an armed conflict. In the context of violence and insecurity, this involves ensuring kids have access to necessities like healthcare and education. During armed conflict, efforts to protect children must prioritize providing access to essential services and their physical and mental health. It is feasible to lessen the negative impacts of conflict on children's growth and well-being over the long run by providing them with the assistance and resources they require to take care of their requirements. Overall, it is essential to prioritize protecting and promoting children's rights during armed conflict and ensure they have access to the vital services they need to thrive.

Targeting civilians and structures, including those that provide for children, is blatantly against both human rights and humanitarian law. Every party to an armed conflict is responsible for putting the welfare and safety of civilians, particularly children, first. Children must be protected during armed conflict by taking early action to stop abuse and exploitation and providing long-term support for their physical, emotional, and mental health. In addition to providing access to necessities like healthcare and education, this also provides possibilities for recovery and rehabilitation from the repercussions

of violence and conflict. The well-being and development of children must be prioritized in efforts to safeguard them during armed conflict, as the consequences of the conflict may have long-term effects on the children's futures. Providing children with the necessary support and resources to address their needs can mitigate the impact of conflict on their physical and psychological well-being. Overall, it is essential to prioritize protecting and promoting children's rights during armed conflict and to work towards ending the targeting of civilians and civilian structures in all disputes. By prioritizing the well-being of children, it is possible to build a more peaceful and just world for future generations.

2. Legal Framework to Support Child Protection

The 1996 report on the effects of armed violence on children by Graça Machel¹⁴ was a ground-breaking work that raised awareness of the problem. Since then, numerous international legal norms, standards, and measures have been created to address the severe and persistent abuses of children's rights and protections during armed conflict. These developments have strengthened the UNCRC's guidelines for child protection in armed conflict. The UNCRC outlines children's fundamental rights, such as the right to life, an education, access to healthcare, and safety from all types of abuse and exploitation. The well-being and development of children must be prioritized in efforts to safeguard them during armed conflict, as the effects of the conflict on children can have long-term impacts on their futures. It is feasible to lessen the adverse effects of conflict on children's physical and psychological well-being by advocating and defending their rights.

The MRM established by Resolution 1612 (2005) is intended to gather and validate data on these violations and to pinpoint the individuals accountable for them. To put into effect measures to stop and address these transgressions and to hold those in violation accountable, the MRM collaborates with governments, UN organizations, and NGOs. The MRM fights for children affected by armed conflict's protection, rights, and access to essential services, including education and healthcare.

To address the issue of children impacted by armed conflict, the United Nations Security Council established the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in 2005. The Working Group is in charge of investigating allegations of abuse against children in war settings, keeping tabs on the ground, and creating policies to safeguard and assist children impacted by armed conflict. In addition, the Working Group interacts with governments, armed groups, and other parties to ensure that children affected by armed conflict have access to services, including healthcare, education, and social support, as well as to encourage them to take action to avoid violations against children. The "list of shame" is a list of conflict parties that gravely violate

¹⁴ UNGA, Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, Graça Machel, New York, 1996, A/51/306.

children that are kept up to date by the Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict. This list increases awareness and promotes accountability for individuals who harm children's rights during armed conflict. Also, the Working Group suggests actions to encourage the discharge and reintegration of kids involved with armed groups.

To ensure the safety of children, communities, and reporting organizations, information about crimes against children is often collected anonymously. The in-country Monitoring and Reporting (MRM) Taskforce, known as the Country Taskforce for Monitoring and Reporting (CTMR), is tasked with compiling quantitative and qualitative data on the nature and quantity of violations against children in conflict settings. Collaborative efforts between the CTMR and the UN Country Team ensure the confidentiality and protection of information providers.

After gathering information and verifying violations of children's rights, the Child Rights Monitoring (CTMR) program, run by the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, submits reports to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. These reports provide details about the types and locations of violations, the names of the offenders, and any other pertinent information. The reports' ultimate goal is to increase understanding of and support for the safety and rights of children impacted by armed conflict. The UN Secretary-General uses the MRM and CTMR figures to create a yearly report on children and armed conflict. The MRM report, submitted to the UN Security Council, gives a thorough summary of how children worldwide are affected by armed conflict (UNSC).

The study lists the most significant offenses committed against children, names the parties to the conflict who are responsible for these offenses and offers suggestions for enhancing child safety in times of conflict. The establishment of the Country Taskforce for Monitoring and Reporting (CTMR) in a particular country, as well as the identification of parties to conflict in the annexes to the annual report on children and armed conflict by the UN Secretary-General, were primarily brought on by the recruitment of children into armed forces or groups, which forms the basis for the MRM's instigation or mandate. However, the trigger was widened with the passing of UNSC Resolution 1882 (2009) to include individuals responsible for the rape, sexual assault, or murder of children while engaged in armed combat. The MRM, CTMR, and yearly reports on children in armed conflict are essential tools for increasing understanding, encouraging responsibility, and promoting the rights of children afflicted by armed conflict worldwide.

UNSC Resolution 1998 (2011) expanded the scope of the MRM to include intentional attacks on schools and hospitals, acknowledging the severity and extent of crimes against children in armed conflict. The annual report on

children and armed conflict by the UN Secretary-General includes a list of parties responsible for these violations in its annexes. Under UNSC Resolution 1998 (2011), four grave breaches of children in armed conflict have been verified to have been committed by parties to the conflict. The report annexes names and identifies the criminals who committed these crimes, enhancing accountability, advancing the protection of kids harmed by armed conflict, and inciting action. The primary body of the report contains narrative information about the plight of children in the listed countries, including the number of violations committed by parties to the conflict. The report identifies areas of concern and thoroughly analyzes how armed conflict affects children worldwide.

The report also offers comparable data for nations that are not recognized as parties to a conflict but where there has been much public concern regarding the plight of children. This knowledge is crucial for advocating for children's rights and protection and for bringing attention to the plight of those affected by armed conflict in these nations. Overall, the annual report on children and armed conflict from the UN Secretary-General is an essential tool for fostering accountability, arguing for the rights and protection of children affected by armed conflict, and increasing public awareness of the plight of children worldwide.

The UN Secretary-General's yearly report and country-specific reports call for a response from governments worldwide, requiring them to take adequate measures to eliminate abuses against children in armed conflict and ensure their rights are protected. In certain situations, the UNSC may impose targeted measures such as sanctions against specific conflicting parties identified as persistent violators of children's rights. These measures are intended to hold these parties accountable for their actions and prevent future abuses against children in conflict situations. The MRM and UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict are critical resources for promoting accountability, advocating for the rights and protection of children affected by armed conflict, and facilitating coordinated action among national governments, conflict parties, and the UN to address the plight of children in conflict situations. Inter-agency groups have created several recommendations and tools to enhance advocacy efforts and programmatic solutions for protecting children in armed conflict and the MRM. The Protection Cluster, the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Areas of Responsibility, and other national and international working groups are examples of these organizations. The International Humanitarian System's Protection Cluster, a subcluster, organizes protection responses in humanitarian situations to meet the needs of women and children impacted by disasters. Similarly, the Child Protection and GBV Areas of Responsibility aim to address the needs of women and children affected by humanitarian crises in terms of protection. Multiple organizations have developed

guidelines and resources to support child protection interventions during tense situations. The Inter-agency Working Group on Separated and Unaccompanied Children has also set rules and tools for family tracing and psychological interventions for children and families impacted by armed conflict. In general, these inter-agency groups are crucial in developing policies and resources to support child protection actions during conflict situations and ensure that the health and other needs of children affected by armed conflict are met and receive the necessary protection and support.

All nations impacted by armed conflict should adopt the standards and recommendations developed in recent years to protect children in crises. Recognizing that several severe crimes against children continue to happen even after hostilities have finished or a formal peace agreement has been signed is crucial. These infractions may also occur in regions still embroiled in conflict and instability.

The engagement of the UN Secretary-General and the development of action plans are necessary procedures for resolving child rights breaches and protection issues in conflict-affected countries, according to the United Nations and several non-governmental child protection groups. The UN Secretary-General can utilize their power and influence to rally support for the cause and increase awareness of the need to protect children in crisis zones. Action plans can aid in directing government and non-governmental organizations that fight to safeguard children and guarantee that their needs are given priority in times of crisis. By implementing these actions, the UN and other organizations strive to enhance the protection and well-being of children impacted by armed conflict and delineate a safer and more equitable world for all.

According to UN reports, there has been progressing in some conflict-affected nations in releasing children from armed forces and groups and in lowering the number of children being recruited. Several things, such as developing action plans, raising awareness of the problem, and pressure from the international community, can be credited for this development. The UN and other organizations have been collaborating with military forces and groups to persuade them to release kids and to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of kids to these groups. The existence of action plans, the UN's participation, and other actors' involvement can aid in holding armed groups and governments responsible for their deeds and guaranteeing the protection of children's rights in war circumstances. The United Nations Security Council has "delisted" parties to a conflict in several countries when persistent commitment from the UN and other actors has led to declining child rights violations. Continued monitoring of child protection and rights violations is imperative even after delisting parties to the Continued cooperation between the UN and the government to protect their stakeholders is necessary to create a safer and fairer world and safeguard children affected by armed conflict.

In some instances, the information gathered via the MRM has been utilized as evidence leading to the indictment and trial of senior officials and commanders for perpetrating war crimes. However, since the MRM is not mandated by law in some countries, not all parties involved in conflicts that have caused harm to children are identified in the UN Secretary-annual General's report. Consequently, it may be challenging to address child protection violations in specific countries through international channels and hold those responsible for crimes against children accountable. In such situations, working with local actors and civil society organizations may be crucial in promoting children's rights and ensuring offenders are held responsible within the national legal system. Protecting children's rights during crises is vital, regardless of whether a country is mentioned in the annual report of the UN Secretary-General. Despite not being explicitly required, violations of children's rights continue to occur in Israel, and the opt. Both Israeli and Palestinian children feel the effects of such violations. The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) monitors and documents violations perpetrated by Palestinian and Israeli armed actors. Children in the area have suffered greatly due to the ongoing conflict, experiencing prolonged violence, forced displacement, interrupted education, and mistreatment in captivity. It is crucial to respect children's rights, and all parties involved in the conflict must ensure their protection per international humanitarian law. The UN and other parties will closely monitor the situation in Israel and the opt and fight to preserve children's rights there.

In Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the MRM tracks attacks by Israeli settlers and violations by Israeli and Palestinian armed groups, providing vital information on the state of children in the area included in the UN Secretary-General's yearly reports. Despite not being considered armed, settlers' actions can significantly impact children's rights and must be held accountable by Israeli authorities. Violations predominantly occur in Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza, where interactions between Israeli armed groups and Palestinian civilians are frequent.¹⁵ It is imperative to protect children's rights by international humanitarian law and hold all sides accountable for their actions. The UN and other actors will continue to pursue this goal in the region, despite the monitoring challenges due to the sensitivity of many violations and the operational environment. All efforts will be made to document violations committed by armed actors in all affected areas.

3. The Situation of Children in Occupied Palestinian Territories

¹⁵ Edwin Tri Putra, Pratama Dahlian Persadha, and Suhardi Suhardi, "Transforming Conflict: Analyzing the Impact of UN Security Council Resolution 2334 on Human Security in Israel-Palestine," *Journal of Law Science* 6, no. 1 (2024): 91-100.

The Fourth Geneva Convention, the UNCRC, and the OPAC are only a few of the accords and protocols that the Israeli government has ratified to safeguard children's rights within its boundaries. Nonetheless, because of the ongoing conflict and related policies, the situation for kids in the (oPt) continues to be complicated. Children in the oPt have grown up amid constant warfare, which has resulted in land expropriation, settlement construction, home destruction, and child arrests. Although the Palestinian Authority is thought to be bound by international treaties and protocols, the situation for kids nevertheless presents difficulties. Several groups, including UNICEF and Defense for Children International Palestine, have recorded violations of children's human rights in the oPt (DCIP). These wrongdoings include mistreatment of the body and mind, imprisonment, confinement, and a lack of access to healthcare and education. The international community has urged the Palestinian Authority and Israel to take action to defend the rights of children in the oPt, notably by halting the use of administrative detention and guaranteeing that kids have access to healthcare and education. Yet, the situation is still complicated, and efforts to safeguard children's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remain a top concern.¹⁶ The rights and welfare of children in the Palestinian areas under occupation have been directly impacted by policies and the degree of instability (oPt).

The scope of the offenses against minors is seen in Table 1. The data is sourced from relevant UN Secretary-General reports and the UNICEF-managed MRM database.

Table 1. Children's Grave Violation 2008–2022

Rights violation	2008-2012	2013-2017	2018-2022
Recruitment and use of children	Israeli military forces exploited 7 Palestinian kids in 3 incidents as human shields.	Israeli military forces exploited 12 Palestinian kids in 3 incidents as human shields.	Israeli military forces exploited 4 Palestinian kids in 3 incidents as human shields.
	409 murdered Palestinian children;	760 murdered Palestinian children; 2	689 murdered Palestinian children; 1
	5 Israeli children were killed. 2120	Israeli children were killed. 3152	Israeli child was killed. 2152 Palestinian

¹⁶ Bo Viktor Nylund and Ida Margarita Hyllested, "Protecting Children Affected by Armed Conflict: Accountability for Monitoring, Reporting, and Response." *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 2, no. 1 (2010): 71-92.

	Palestinian and 5 Israeli children were injured.	Palestinian and 3 Israeli children were injured.	and 1 Israeli child were injured.
Sexual Violence	6 Israeli security personnel have been shown to assault boys while holding and using them sexually. 23 documented cases of Palestinian children threatened with sexual assault by Israeli security personnel while in detention.	There are 45 instances where Israeli security agents have threatened sexual assault on detained Palestinian minors.	There are 33 instances where Israeli security agents have threatened to attack Palestinian youngsters while they are being detained sexually.
Attacks on schools	154 attacks on schools in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel.	250 attacks on schools in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel.	190 attacks on schools in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel.
Access to education	86 reported instances of either military personnel or settlers refusing entrance.	102 reported instances of either military personnel or settlers refusing entrance.	150 reported instances of either military personnel or settlers refusing access.
Access to healthcare	19 children perished While awaiting access to specialized medical care	23 children passed While awaiting access to specialized medical care outside of Gaza	11 children passed While awaiting access to specialized medical care outside of Gaza

	outside of Gaza		
	Three Extra Offenses Specific to Israel/ oPt Contents		
Arrest and detention	Israeli authorities detain 450 kids on average each month. A monthly average of 1.7 Palestinian kids are kept in administrative detention without being charged or going through a trial.	Israeli authorities detain 678 kids on average each month. A monthly average of 2.4 Palestinian kids are kept in administrative detention without being charged or going through a trial.	Israeli authorities detain 517 kids on average each month. A monthly average of 1.9 Palestinian kids are kept in administrative detention without being charged or going through a trial.
Ill-treatment and mistreatment/torture	334 verified instances (committed by the Israeli security forces)	450 confirmed cases (saved by the Israeli security forces)	378 verified illustrations (executed by the Israeli security forces)
Displacement	- Due to Israeli authorities' home demolitions, 1450 children lost their homes. - The action, which led to community upheaval and livelihood risks, impacted 3786 kids.	-Due to Israeli authorities' home demolitions, 2452 children lost their homes. -The action, which led to community upheaval and livelihood concerns, impacted 5869 kids.	-Due to Israeli authorities' home demolitions, 4532 children lost their homes. -The action, which led to community upheaval and livelihood risks, impacted 6081 kids.

Sources: "PCHR Launches 2012 Annual Report," Palestinian Center for Human Rights, accessed March 13, <https://pchr.org/en/pchr-launches-2012-annual-report-4>; Palestinian Center for Human Rights, *Annual Report 2015* (Gaza: Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 2016). <https://pchr.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/annual-english2015.pdf>; Palestinian Center for Human Rights, *Annual Report 2021* (Gaza: Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 2022). <https://pchr.org/en/annual-report-2021>.

In recent years, the Israeli authorities have implemented legal improvements in protecting Palestinian children affected by the armed conflict. These efforts include increasing the majority of age to 18 years and acknowledging the Youth Law, which has been incorporated into the Israeli penal legislation, along with the UN Guidelines for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty.

These actions should be applauded because they represent significant advancements in the legal protection of Palestinian youngsters in the oPt. Although reports from organizations like Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP) continue to detail human rights violations against Palestinian children, including detention and imprisonment without trial, there are still questions about how these measures will be implemented. The international community continues to demand that the rights of Palestinian children in the oPt be better protected, primarily by ensuring that they have access to legal counsel and that their rights be upheld. At the same time, they are being held in custody or imprisoned. Children must be protected from the ongoing violence and related policies, mainly by providing them access to school, healthcare, and basics like food and shelter.¹⁷

It is troubling that allegations of these requirements being violated, as reported by the MRM, have emerged despite improvements in legislative protections for Palestinian adolescents in the oPt (Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism). These contain situations where adolescents are detained against the Youth Law. Monitoring educational access and spotting situations where legal protections are not being upheld are just two ways the MRM model has helped us better understand the environment for child protection in the oPt. The MRM is not explicitly required in Israel or the oPt. Thus it is vital to keep in mind that there is still room for improvement in monitoring and reporting child rights breaches. To ensure the preservation of Palestinian kids' rights in the oPt, the international community has asked for improved accountability and transparency, increased monitoring and reporting of violations, and access to legal counsel and support. To address the complex and challenging situation for children in the oPt, these efforts must be ongoing and sustained, and there is a need for continual interaction and communication.

Growing concerns in the oPt include the issue of attacks on schools and students by both sides of the war and difficulties with children's physical access to education. Formerly unreported and unacknowledged, these attacks are now increasingly understood as serious problems requiring attention.

The MRM model has facilitated age-disaggregated reporting of previously unreported concerns. Such reports include settler attacks on schools or pupils in the West Bank, attacks by the Israeli military on schools, schools being attacked by settlers, schools caught in the crossfire, particularly in the Gaza

¹⁷ Damien Rogers, ed., *Human Rights in War* (Singapore: Springer, 2022).

Access Restricted Area, and disruptions to access to schools. The identification of the specific effects of the conflict on children of various ages and the protection of their right to education depends on this age-disaggregated data. The MRM model has been crucial in drawing attention to the problem of attacks on schools and students, and more has to be done to secure children's access to education, even when there is hostility. The international community continues to call for more transparency and accountability in dealing with these problems, including actions to hold those accountable who attack schools and students, make sure that schools aren't used for military purposes, and defend every child's right to an education in the oPt. Additionally, since the MRM was established, it has become abundantly evident that delays and/or denials of healthcare outside of Gaza caused by travel restrictions related to the embargo have a severe negative impact on children, with some dying as a result.

Before adopting the MRM, there needed to be more comprehensive data on the impact of the conflict on Israeli and Palestinian children over the past decade. The protection community in the oPt was aware of this gap, and the Working Group was established to close it. After 2005, the MRM was adjusted to the circumstances of the oPt and successfully implemented within the operational framework made available to Working Group members for both programmatic and advocacy aims. The MRM has been crucial in presenting verifiable proof of how the conflict has affected children and identifying problems that must be resolved to uphold their rights. As a result, efforts to protect children's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) have intensified, and there is greater awareness of the intricate nature of their situation concerning the six serious violations recognized in UNSC Resolution 1612 that are highly relevant to their context; The Working Group has incorporated three supplementary transgressions to the list of offenses. The three new infractions are as follows:

1. Denial of humanitarian access: A conflict or other circumstance prevents humanitarian agencies from entering places where children need help. Children in desperate need of food, water, medical attention, or different types of aid may suffer devastating effects due to this access denial.
2. Movement restrictions: This describes circumstances where children are stopped from moving around without limitation for conflict or other reasons. This may significantly affect kids' access to education, healthcare, and other opportunities.
3. Denial of education: This occurs when children are not allowed to attend school due to a conflict, such as attacks on schools, travel restrictions, or the use of schools for military training. Children denial of education may negatively impact children's futures, particularly their capacity to find jobs and actively engage in society during these three different

offenses; the Working Group hopes to raise awareness of the unique problems that kids in the oPt confront and to make sure that these problems are solved through advocacy and focused interventions.

4. The Challenges in Applied MRM.

Although innovative approaches to child protection have been developed, organizations in Israel and the oPt encounter significant challenges in effectively reporting and addressing children's rights and protection violations.

1. The low level of awareness among individuals regarding children's rights and the appropriate channels to report instances of abuse is a cause for concern. The dearth of knowledge on this subject could lead to difficulties securing adequate assistance and protection for children in cases where their rights have been violated.
2. The inadequate understanding of child protection matters poses a significant challenge to human rights organizations and other institutions in reporting and remedying violations of children's rights and protection. Additionally, social and cultural limitations could hinder children or their families from reporting transgressions. Implementing the MRM model, which provides a structure for monitoring and reporting grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict, has mitigated some of these challenges. Nevertheless, the comprehensive reporting of violations affecting minors still needs to be improved.
3. Access issues in vulnerable communities like Gaza can make monitoring, reporting, and addressing abuses against children very difficult. As an illustration, entrance, employment, and project permits are regularly rejected, which makes it challenging for firms to function and deliver essential services.
4. The response to violations of children's rights can be significantly delayed by inadequate or delayed reporting, which can also lead to insufficient or inefficient responses. This emphasizes the importance of building local groups' capacity to coordinate and report on child protection issues.

There are still ways for the UN and other organizations to demand or encourage action against violations on a national and international level, even if there is no formal conduit for these organizations in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Campaigns for public awareness and advocacy are one strategy to encourage governments and other actors to take action. Another method is through diplomatic channels, such as making public statements or publishing reports, which can raise awareness of the problem and prompt national or international organizations to act. In addition, there are also international legal institutions like the International Criminal Court that can be utilized to prosecute people or organizations who violate children's rights.

5. Conclusion

Making any statements about whether or whether the MRM has improved the lives of children is challenging, if not impossible.

Human rights organizations and other agencies have found monitoring and reporting these violations challenging. Access limitations and a lack of coordination among local organizations have made it difficult to respond to violations and advocate for policy change.

The complexity and sensitivity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the absence of an official mechanism for reporting and addressing violations are problems and limits of applying the MRM paradigm in this context. However, to adapt to the local environment and ensure the model remains relevant and valuable, criticisms of the MRM model should be carefully evaluated. The efficiency of the MRM in countries where it has been officially mandated may also be increased by forging tighter linkages with equivalent rights and protection monitoring systems, such as the UNCRC monitoring process. This would promote the exchange of best practices and support for their use, increasing the defense of children's rights and welfare.

The Security Council's and the organizations' actions also need more consistency and coherence. There are still many issues to be worked out, including how to engage with armed groups and forces uniformly, what an action plan looks like, and how to guarantee that all grave violations receive the same amount of attention and response. The mechanism for human rights accountability inside the UN can be seen as relatively complex and potentially affects the condition of children affected by violence, as the monitoring and reporting system gets more developed.

Four potential barriers exist to establishing MRM, as mentioned in the study. The paper concludes and elaborates on likely suggestions that would improve the effectiveness of MRM in conflict zones and/or within military operations.

Firstly, make sure that children can get the help and protection they require; it is crucial to promote knowledge about children's rights and how to report abuse. This can involve developing child-friendly reporting procedures, training for teachers, health experts, and other professionals who engage with children, and focused efforts to inform communities about children's rights.

Secondly, increase the ability of child protection agencies to monitor, report, and handle violations properly. This can be achieved through collaborations with regional organizations and communities, implementing reporting mechanisms, and training and capacity building. Increase the ability of child protection agencies to monitor, report, and handle violations properly. This can be achieved through collaborations with regional organizations and communities, implementing reporting mechanisms, and training and capacity building.

Thirdly, establish and form alliances with regional groups and communities to increase accessibility and guarantee that the needs of disadvantaged children are met. This can entail engaging with community leaders to raise awareness of child protection issues, encourage reporting, and provide local groups with training and tools to improve their capacity to monitor and report violations. Moreover, advocacy efforts might focus on tackling the underlying causes of access restrictions, such as working with authorities to eliminate red tape and enhance the regulatory environment for organizations that seek to protect children.

Fourthly, ensure a coordinated response to child safety challenges, and create networks and collaborations between local organizations, government institutions, and international organizations. This can entail establishing channels for referral, exchanging data and materials, and working together on advocacy campaigns.

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