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PMO: Israeli Authorities Continue to Abuse Palestinian Children

Ramallah – Today, Prime Minister Hamdallah condemned the ongoing abuse of Palestinian minors held in Israeli jails and their ill-treatment in interrogation rooms.

“This pattern of abuse by Israel is inhumane and very troubling,” said Prime Minister Hamdallah. “It is cruel and unlawful, and sadly leaves a lasting psychological impact on our children.”

Recently, two minor detainees, Mu’men Hamayel and Oday Bader, told the attorneys from the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs that they have been physically abused and severely beaten after their arrest in the West Bank.

Sixteen-year old Oday Bader from the town of Abu Dis near Jerusalem, said that he was shot four times in the back, arms, and legs. Afterwards, he was beaten by Israeli soldiers and his head was repeatedly rammed into a wall; the beating continued while he was being transported in a military jeep to an Israeli hospital. Mu’amen Hamayel, also 16, from the town of Kufur Malik said that Israeli soldiers blindfolded him and took him to a nearby settlement where they physically attacked him with their fists and boots before taking him to a hospital.

“Israel continuously violates Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which it ratified in 1991. Child defendants have a right to request the presence of a parent during questioning and should not be subjected to interrogation practices that might lead or coerce them to acknowledge guilt,” said Jamal Dajani, Director of Strategic Communications & Media at the Office of the Prime Minister.

In an unprecedented move, the Israeli Knesset recently approved a legislation that allows the arrest of children under 14 years old; keeping them detained in Israeli jails until the end of the legal procedures. More than 300 Palestinian children are currently held in Israeli prisons, according to prisoner rights group Addameer. They are often arrested at night, blindfolded and transported to Israeli prisons outside of the West Bank, in violation of article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In the majority of the cases, the children have no access to a lawyer during the interrogation and their parents are prevented from being present, according to a report by Defense for Children International-Palestine. 86 percent of them endure some form of physical violence following their arrest, including beating, kicking and violent shaking. At the end of the interrogation, the children are forced to sign ‘confessions’ in Hebrew, a language that most of them don’t speak.