

## STATEMENT

Leiden, August 3, 2021

### **Israeli forces raid on children's rights organization Defence for Children International Palestine**

On Thursday, July 29 at around 5:15 AM, Israeli forces [raided](#) the Defence for Children International Palestine headquarters in Al-Bireh's Sateh Marhaba, near Ramallah (Area A). The forces confiscated six computers, two laptops, hard drives and client files belonging to children who are being represented by lawyers from Defence for Children International Palestine in Israeli military courts. Defence for Children International Palestine has not been informed about the reasons of the raid, and no receipt of materials seized was left behind.

Defence for Children the Netherlands condemns the raid. Children in the occupied Palestinian Territory have the right to protection and legal assistance. The fact that Israeli forces seized files related to children that are assisted by Defence for Children International Palestine in their legal proceedings, is an unacceptable violation of the rule of law. The raid jeopardizes the possibilities of Defence for Children International Palestine to assist children and defend their rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Moreover, the use of the military forces instead of civil authorities, are at odds with the rule of law.

For 30 years, Defence for Children International Palestine has been active as an independent, local Palestinian children's rights organization dedicated to defending and protecting the rights of children in the occupied Palestinian territory. Defence for Children International Palestine Investigates human rights violations against Palestinian children; provides legal aid to children and holds Israeli and Palestinian authorities accountable to universal human rights principles, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for Palestinian and international humanitarian and human rights organizations to do their work in the occupied Palestinian territory. The raid on the office of Defence for Children International Palestine is by no means an isolated incident, but is part of an increasingly difficult working environment and shrinking civic space. On the same morning of July 29, the [Bisan Center for Research and Development](#) was also raided. Earlier in June and July, raids took place on the [Union of Agricultural Work Committees \(UWAC\)](#) and the [Health Work Committees](#). This harassment of civil society has been intensified and widely documented.<sup>1</sup> Civil society is faced with restrictive legislation, financial restrictions, smear campaigns and criminalization & delegitimization of human rights work. In a resolution (43/16), the UN Human Rights Council calls on States to respect and protect the work of human rights defenders.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2019/08/21/The-clampdown-on-Palestine-civic-space-continues-as-Israel-steps-up-smear-campaign-against-CSOs>

Defence for Children the Netherlands condemns the raid on the office of Defence for Children International Palestine. Together with War Child, Plan International the Netherlands, Terre des Hommes the Netherlands, The Rights Forum, gate48 - kritische Israëli's in Nederland, Kairos Sabeel Nederland, Een Ander Joods Geluid en Palestine Link, we call on the Dutch government and the international community to strongly condemn this conduct of the Israeli government and to ensure that the Israeli government respects the work of human rights defenders. This means that Israel must stop the illegal raiding civil society organizations and stop making the work of Palestinian human rights defenders impossible.

Mirjam Blaak, managing director, Defence for Children the Netherlands  
Ramin Shahzamani, director, War Child the Netherlands  
Garance Reus-Deelder, director, Plan International the Netherlands  
Leonard Zijlstra, director, Terre des Hommes the Netherlands  
Gerard Jonkman, director, The Rights Forum  
Galit Saporta, director, gate48 - kritische Israëli's in Nederland  
Kees Blok, chairman, Kairos Sabeel Nederland  
Jaap Hamburger, chairman, Een Ander Joods Geluid  
Ghada Zeidan, director, Palestine Link

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### **Background information**

Defence for Children Palestine's message about the raid on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)  
See the full story and CCTV footage of the raid on the Defence for Children International Palestine office on their [website](#).

[Article](#) on the close down of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UWAC).

### **Defence for Children International**

Defence for Children International Palestine (DCIP), is a member of the international network of [Defence for Children International](#), as is Defence for Children the Netherlands. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the basis of the work of Defence for Children International. Defence for Children works with governments and puts children's rights on the agenda when they are at threat.

Defence for Children the Netherlands and Defence for Children International Palestine are partners in a multi-year program on girls' rights and gender equality in the Middle East and towards the Arab League, with funding from the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [www.defenceforchildren.nl](http://www.defenceforchildren.nl)