

## Dialogue between Israel and the Committee on the Rights of the Child: An Analysis in the Context of Grave Human Rights Violations



**Source: Reuters**

The recent review of Israel, carried out on September 3rd and 4th in Geneva by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as the Committee), takes place at a time when the State part is violating the rights of thousands of children. This

Committee is a United Nations treaty body responsible for monitoring compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), an international agreement ratified by 196 States worldwide. Israel shows resistance to fulfilling its obligations under the treaty,

especially with regard to the occupied territories of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, arguing that it does not have control over these territories, thus ignoring what has been established in several United Nations resolutions, such as Resolution 2334 (2016), which reaffirms previous resolutions and reiterates the illegality of Israeli settlements and the obligation to withdraw from the occupied territories. Even the International Court of Justice has issued two advisory opinions on this matter, one in 2004 and another recently in 2024 (International Court of Justice, 2004; 2024).



Fuente: Associated Press

The Committee has also taken the opportunity to remind the Israeli State that its obligation to protect children's rights under the CRC extends to the occupied Palestinian territories. International law considers these territories to be under occupation, and as such, the civilian population, especially children, must be protected in accordance with international

Human rights law and international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention.

As described in the report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967 (UN Human Rights Council, 2021), *“the creation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is the largest and most ambitious national project of the State of Israel since its founding in 1948. Since the first Israeli settlements were built in the months following the June 1967 war, the entire political, military, judicial, and administrative apparatus of the State has provided leadership, funding, planning, diplomatic coverage, legal basis, protection, and essential infrastructure for the continuous progress of this enterprise. A dual legal system, similar to apartheid, has been established, where full citizenship rights are granted to Israeli settlers while Palestinians are subjected to military rule.”*

In light of this situation, the Committee has highlighted the concerning practice of arbitrary and prolonged detention of Palestinian children by Israeli forces. Additionally, the use of children as human shields in the context of the conflict has been noted, a practice that



constitutes a grave violation of human rights. Likewise, the Committee has insisted on the need for independent and impartial investigations, as established by international law, and has recommended that Israel review its military justice system, which currently allows minors to be tried in military courts, a practice contrary to international standards.

Another key issue addressed by the Committee during the review is the discrimination faced by non-Jewish minorities within Israel, particularly the Bedouins. Children from these communities suffer much higher infant mortality rates than the rest of the Israeli population, in addition to a lack of access to essential services such as health and education. This discrimination has been reinforced by Israel's 2018 Basic Law, which defines the country as the "Nation-State of the Jewish People," institutionalizing a system of segregation that severely affects the rights of non-Jewish children.

One of the most worrying aspects raised during the review is the dehumanization of Palestinian children, whom the Israeli State, from the outset of the dialogue, chooses to refer to as "Arab children," denying their Palestinian identity. This attitude reflects an apartheid-like

approach, characterized by systematic discrimination and violence directed toward a specific ethnic group.

In this context, reports from various human rights organizations have documented serious human rights violations in which Palestinian children are direct victims of Israeli military actions. According to these reports, as highlighted during the dialogue, numerous children have been shot in the head while playing or looking for food, acts attributed to the green light given to the military to use lethal force in situations where security is not compromised. These crimes are being exposed at the same time that Israel continues its public discourse on proportionality in the context of responding to the attacks perpetrated by Hamas on October 7th.

In contrast, the real context is the result of a prolonged process of dehumanization that has been compared to segregation and apartheid practices in other parts of the world and defined as genocide in the report by the UN Special Rapporteur, who was denied entry to Israel. This report was based on hundreds of reports from organizations on the ground, international jurisprudence, investigation reports, and consultations with affected individuals, authorities, civil society, and experts (UN

Human Rights Council, 2024). Such depersonalization and dehumanization, key elements in genocide, facilitate the perpetuation of violence and the justification of systematic violations of fundamental rights, such as the right to life, education, and health, all of which are guaranteed by the CRC.

While the efforts of the State of Israel are focused on publicly justifying its actions within the framework of war and conflict, the consequences for Israeli and Palestinian children are devastating, both in terms of loss of life and long-term psychosocial trauma. The cognitive dissonance and confirmation bias manifested by the Israeli delegation during the dialogue with the Committee, in the context of their speeches about the horrors committed by Hamas, while simultaneously presenting figures and examples of abuses perpetrated by settlers and Israeli forces themselves, constitute a phenomenon worthy of in-depth analysis from the perspective of social psychology and conflict studies. This type of dissonance occurs when an individual or group holds contradictory beliefs or attitudes simultaneously, creating psychological tension that leads to seeking ways to minimize the conflict. In the case of Israel, on one hand, they position themselves as victims of violent

attacks by Hamas, and on the other hand, they deny or justify with the argument of self-defense the systematic abuses documented in the occupied Palestinian territories.



*Fuente: Reuters*

Confirmation bias, on the other hand, refers to the tendency of people to favor information that confirms their own preexisting beliefs or values, while rejecting or dismissing contradictory information, leading Israeli authorities and sectors of society to validate only the information that supports their narrative of justifying violence, such as the attacks by Hamas, while denying or ignoring facts and figures that contradict this stance. The more than 17,000 children killed since October 7 are just one example of this antagonism.

From a human rights perspective, this dissonance and bias present serious implications, as they allow for the perpetuation of systemic violations under the mantle of a



self-defense narrative. Instead of addressing fundamental rights violations, the State of Israel, during the dialogue with the Committee, has sought to justify its repressive actions against the Palestinian population through discourse about the crimes committed by Hamas, creating a framework that obscures its own responsibilities and exacerbates the conflict. This stance not only reinforces structural violence but also blocks the recognition of Palestinian suffering, prolonging the denial of their rights

From a historical perspective, it is also important to remember that the Israeli government's argument that its recent actions are in self-defense, particularly in response to Hamas attacks on October 7, when 240 people were taken hostage and 695 civilians, including 39 children, were killed, must be examined within a broader historical context. Attacks on civilians, regardless of their nationality, are unacceptable and violate the principles of international humanitarian law. What is debatable, however, is the narrative that the war in Gaza began on October 8, 2023, as it ignores decades of occupation, structural violence, and Palestinian suffering. It is crucial to remember that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deep historical roots. The creation of the State of

Israel in 1948 and the establishment of the armistice lines in 1949 came at the cost of the forced expulsion of approximately 750,000 Palestinians and the death of around 15,000 Palestinians between 1947 and 1949. This event, known as the Nakba, marked the beginning of a situation of mass displacement and continuous violations of Palestinian rights. Furthermore, since the Oslo Accords of 1995, which promised the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, the occupation of these territories has persisted (Wells et al., 2024).

It is also important to note that Palestinian civilian deaths have received significantly less media coverage compared to other deaths, contributing to a biased perception of the conflict.

The Israeli delegation also took the opportunity during the dialogue to emphasize their willingness to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, despite recent news of an attack on a convoy in which four Palestinians were killed, and the recognized attack on a UN World Food Program vehicle, which was hit by numerous gunshots on August 28 and 30, respectively (UN News, 2024; Zhang, 2024).

The situation in the occupied territories and



the international response highlights a critical point: we continue to fail in protecting children's rights. Violations of the rights of children, who are being stripped of their fundamental right to life and identity with the aim of causing deep and lasting harm to their lives and the social fabric of their communities, are happening before humanity's eyes with absolute impunity.

**Marta Benítez Brañas**

Psychologist and Social Educator

Specialized in Human Rights

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