

State of Palestine

Association of Palestinian  
Local Authorities



الاتحاد الفلسطيني للهيئات المحلية  
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دولة فلسطين

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للهيئات المحلية

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## Palestine's Plight on World Day Against Child Labour

On the World Day Against Child Labour, observed every June 12<sup>th</sup>, the global community focuses on eliminating the worst forms of child labour. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Labour Organization ILO Convention No. 182, which aims to eradicate child labour globally, this convention was universally ratified in 2020, emphasizing the global commitment to end child in all its forms under SDG target 8.7.

Among the most harrowing impacts of the Israeli Occupation on the Palestinian society, the scourge of child labour emerges as particularly devastating, this grim reality afflicts children whose families have been stripped of income and essential resources through severe economic suppression and restricted freedom of movement. Additionally, the arrest or killing of approximately 10,000 Palestinian fathers and elder brothers—who were the main providers for their families—by means of execution or torture has forced countless children into roles filled with adult-sized burdens and responsibilities. The profound injustices these young individuals face is not only a direct consequence of the occupation but also a stark illustration of its deep, multifaceted inhumanity.

Poverty and the loss of a primary caregiver are fundamental drivers of child labour in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Even before the recent Israeli aggression, which began eight months ago, these communities were already grappling with entrenched poverty and fragile economic conditions, a direct result of an Israeli siege that has lasted nearly 17 years. This prolonged blockade has inflicted severe hardships on Palestinian children, compelling them into the workforce as critical financial contributors for their struggling families, many of whom reside in ruined, inadequate housing. As a result, countless Palestinian families have been forced to make the heart-wrenching decision to withdraw their children from school, thrusting them into labour markets merely to scrape together the bare essentials for survival. This tragic cycle deprives children not only of their education but also of their childhood, extend a legacy of deprivation under the shadow of occupation.

In Palestine, over 29,000 children are compelled to work, and 19,000 of these young souls have been torn away from their education. This dire situation inflicts profound and lasting damage on their mental and physical well-being. In the shadows of unregulated and often risky work environments, these children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, physical and verbal abuse, exacerbating their plight. Perhaps most distressingly, they are thrust prematurely into the adult world, exposed to influences and pressures grossly inappropriate for their age. This exposure often leads them down paths of detrimental behaviors, including smoking and substance abuse, as they struggle to cope with the overwhelming demands and traumas of their daily lives. This is not merely a crisis of labour but a profound humanitarian tragedy that robs children of their innocence and potential.

Today, we are reminded that ending child labour in Palestine is not merely a policy goal but a crucial step towards healing a community deeply scarred by wars and deprivation. This imperative is underscored by the plight of over 43,000 Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip who, having lost one or both parents, have become the primary breadwinners for their families.

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