



Ramallah, 22 October 2016

Dear Representative,

I am writing to you with concern on behalf of the Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (the Coalition), an independent, non-governmental, non-profit coalition of 17 organizations, institutions, societies, and associations dedicated to the promotion and protection of Palestinian rights in Jerusalem.

Recent raids and arrests of students and personnel of the Dar al Aytam School in Jerusalem warrant the attention of the international community. The Dar al Aytam School is a part of the historic 600 year old Dar al Aytam al-Islamiyya complex, located in the heart of the Muslim Quarter in the Old City, near al-Aqsa Mosque.<sup>1</sup> The school is home to 320 children in grades 10-12.

On 10 October 2016 soldiers stationed at the gates to the al-Aqsa compound raided the school under the pretext of students throwing glass and stones at Israeli soldiers, a fact denied by the school's staff members. Mr. Samir Jibril, the director of the educational organization which oversees all the Palestinian schools in occupied East Jerusalem, added that security bars covering all the school's windows make it **nearly impossible for students to throw anything out of the windows**. The teachers and administration were able to prevent the soldiers from entering the classrooms.<sup>2</sup> A day later Muhammad al-Atrash, the director of the school, was banned from entering the old city of Jerusalem for 45 days.

On 17 October 2016, **10 students from the school were arrested**. According to the Wadi Hilweh Information Center, Israeli forces pursued and arrested the students soon after they left the school grounds.<sup>3</sup> They were released one day later and placed under 20 days of house arrest.<sup>4</sup> That same day Mr. Samir Jibril was also arrested. He was released after five hours of interrogation.

The latest raid and arrest took place on 19 October 2016. A seventeen year-old Palestinian teenager in his exam year was arrested. The school's administrative board evacuated the school before the end of the day to prevent any clashes with Israeli forces, sources said.<sup>5</sup>

The Palestinian Ministry of Education has issued a statement denouncing the persecution of students and school staff of the Dar al Aytam School. The Ministry calls upon all humanitarian institutions and international media to combine efforts to put an end to violations of the right to education.<sup>6</sup> UN OCHA commented on the arrests in the

<sup>1</sup> Dar al-Aytam al-Islamiyya Restoration, Archnet, available at: <http://archnet.org/sites/5107>.

<sup>2</sup> Israeli forces raid Jerusalem high school, accuse students of throwing glass, MA'AN News Agency, 10 October 2016, available at: <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=773502>.

<sup>3</sup> The occupation forces arrest 10 students from Dar Al-Aytam School in the Old City of Jerusalem, Wadi Hilweh Information Center, available at: <http://www.silwanic.net/index.php/article/news/76609>.

<sup>4</sup> The Palestinian News and Info Agency, report (in Arabic), 18 October 2016, available at: [http://www.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=sGv9pza725021641575asGv9pz](http://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=sGv9pza725021641575asGv9pz).

<sup>5</sup> Israeli forces storm orphanage for 5th time, Middle East Monitor, 20 October 2016, available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161020-israeli-forces-storm-orphanage-for-5th-time/>.

<sup>6</sup> Statement by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, 17 October 2016, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEducationWzartAltrbytWaltlym/?fref=nf>.

context of an alarming number of Palestinian injuries and arrests at the hands of Israeli occupation in the Jerusalem Governate.<sup>7</sup>

As results of the previous raids, 40% of the students were absent from the school during the latest raid.<sup>8</sup> The constant threat of another raid or arrests makes it impossible for students to exercise their human right to education in a secure and safe environment.<sup>9</sup> Children should not live under the threat of arrest, especially when it is clear that the arrest is not a means of last resort.<sup>10</sup> As the occupying power, Israel has the obligation to facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children. Banning staff from entering these institutions is a clear violation of this obligation.<sup>11</sup>

**CCPRJ calls upon the international community** to give a protective response and to exercise its third-state responsibility for human rights and humanitarian law violations by:

- Diplomatic interventions which ensure that relevant Israeli authorities will abstain from all further efforts to obstruct Palestinian students from going to school;
- Concluding that Israel is **violating the right to education** by detaining students without charge on the basis of poorly substantiated accusations, by putting them under house arrest, and thus preventing them from exercising this right;
- Concluding that Israel is using the arrest of Palestinian school children not as a means of last resort, a **direct violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

The Coalition remains at your disposal for any additional information you may wish to receive.

Sincerely,

Zakaria Odeh  
Executive Director  
Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

---

<sup>7</sup> OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territory, Protection of Civilians Weekly Report | 4 - 17 October 2016, 20 October 2016, available at: <http://www.ochaopt.org/content/protection-civilians-weekly-report-4-17-october-2016>.

<sup>8</sup> The Israeli Forces are targeting the educational process of the students at the Dar Al-Aytam School, Al Quds Newspaper (in Arabic), 20 October 2016, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, New York, 16 December 1966, article 13; Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, 20 November 1989, article 28.

<sup>10</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, 20 November 1989, article 37 (b).

<sup>11</sup> IV Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, 12 August 1949, art. 50.