

21 May 2022

Situation of Children in Gaza: The European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights Hosts a Troubling Event

Dear Members of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI),

We write to you to express our concern over DROI's scheduled May 22 "Exchange of views on the situation of children in Gaza," featuring Save the Children's local country director Jason Lee and Al-Mezan Director-General Issam Younis. Based on detailed evidence, committee members should be alarmed by the obvious false claims, omissions and distortions that will likely characterize the presentations.

Al-Mezan: Cooperation with Terrorist Organizations

Al-Mezan has collaborated and given platform to EU-designated terrorist organizations, including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It also is a leader in the campaign for the indictment of Israelis by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

On March 18, 2023, Nafez al-Madhoun – an Al-Mezan board member participated in "[Jurists Confronting the Occupier](#)," a legal event organized by the Hamas-affiliated International Center for Law Studies. Speakers included Hamas political bureau members Mahmoud Al-Zahar and Musa Abu Marzouq, as well as [Hamas Palestinian Legislative Council member](#) Mohammed Faraj Al-Ghoul.

Madhoun served as [Director General of the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Legislative Council](#), from at least [2010](#) through at least [June 2022](#).



Nafez al-Madhoun (2nd from left) participating in an October 2010 Hamas workshop alongside Hamas spokesperson Taher al-Nunur (far right), Hamas co-founder Mahmoud al-Zahar (2nd from right), and senior Hamas official Mohammad al-Ghoul (center) <https://web.archive.org/web/20200618083729/http://drah.ps/ar/index.php?ajax=preview&id=2828>

Revealing his rejection of Israel's legitimacy, in an October 2010 workshop, al-Madhoun demanded to "take steps to start discussing what is the legality of this entity [Israel]...pointing to the illegality of the Israeli entity, even in respect to decisions by the UN...This entity, by its nature, is temporary...It does not have a territory nor sovereignty, and its existence is contrary to international law decisions...It is forbidden that anyone forgive even an inch of Palestine to the occupation..."

Similarly, on April 9, 2015 Al-Mezan, [hosted a conference in Gaza](#) about the opportunities for prosecuting Israelis presented by Palestinian ascendancy to the ICC. The event featured Hamas, PIJ, and PFLP representatives. Younis addressed the participants.

According to [Al-Mezan](#), the conference dedicated a panel to "The Vision of the Palestinian Factions," featuring Hamas' [Khalil Al-Hayya](#), [Islamic Jihad's Khaled Al-Batsh](#), and the PFLP's Saleh Nasser. Al-Mezan's description of the session included these organizational affiliations.

Dar al Huda Kindergarten

On May 18, 2018, Save the Children and other partners, [sponsored a workshop](#) at the Dar al Huda kindergarten in Gaza.

One week later, on May 26, 2018, [Dar al Huda](#) held a graduation ceremony that included [the mock killing and kidnapping of Israelis by children](#) dressed as combatants. The simulation included sophisticated equipment such as drones, body cameras, military fatigues, body armor, and sniper camouflage. Children wore PIJ headbands.

According to the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Dar al Huda held similarly exploitative military-style events in in [2017](#) and [2016](#).



Children conduct a mock assault on an Israeli position, kidnapping a soldier and a civilian at the Dar al Huda kindergarten in Gaza
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7403163/Palestinian-children-dress-terrorists-play-attacking-Israelis.html>

Recruitment of children by terrorist organizations

This kindergarten highlights the widespread phenomena of incitement to violence and recruitment by terrorist organizations, to which Palestinian children are subjected.

Since January 2018, NGO Monitor has identified [approximately 90 Palestinian minors killed](#) while engaging in violence against Israelis, including shootings, stabbings, lobbing explosives, Molotov cocktails, and stones, and other violent acts. These include at least 37 teens affiliated with designated terrorist organizations, including Hamas, PIJ, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Lions Den, PFLP, and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Notably, Gazan children killed in rounds of fighting between Israel and Palestinian terrorist organizations are often the victims of the deliberate comingling of military and civilian infrastructure by terrorist organizations, as well as the inaccuracy of Palestinian rockets that often land in Gaza.

According to the IDF, in the May 2023 conflict with PIJ, over [20% of the rockets](#) launched by the terror group landed in Gaza, [killing at least 4 Gazans](#).

Such crucial context will likely be absent from the presentations made by the Al-Mezan and Save the Children representatives to DROI. Alongside Al-Mezan's efforts to encourage ICC investigations of Israelis, Save the Children is a leading member of a campaign to blacklist the IDF by presenting it as violating the rights of Palestinian minors. As discussed in [multiple NGO Monitor publications](#), Save the Children reporting on Israel is rife with methodological flaws, missing context, and invented standards calibrated deliberately to cover Israeli policy and practice.

Sincerely,

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