



Israel is targeting Palestinian education, even in its prisons

## Description

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Israel demolishes Gaza school

The [Palestinian National Prisoner Movement](#) has had a long and proud history. Decades of struggle inside the walls of Israel's jails and detention centres have seen important advances in basic rights for those incarcerated, [including in education](#).

## Israel's tally of abuses against detainees

But since the start of the genocide in Gaza, Israeli occupation authorities have reversed and cancelled these gains. Prisoners have been stripped of all their rights by the occupation. Instead, they are systematically humiliated, abused, and tortured.

Students of all ages are being arrested and imprisoned by Israeli occupation forces (IOF). These detainees must not only cope with the catastrophic conditions faced by all those incarcerated by Israel. They are also deprived of their childhood, [their right to education](#) and therefore their academic future.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, 65 secondary school students are currently detained and barred from sitting their final matriculation exams.

The spokesperson for the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, Ayman Al-Najjar, said that for the third year in a row, high school students are prevented from taking their exams in Israeli prisons. [pic.twitter.com/EcgLsp7Rou](https://pic.twitter.com/EcgLsp7Rou)

Al-Jarmaq News (@Aljarmaqnetnews) [June 21, 2026](#)

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## Punishing high school students

The [Palestinian Centre for Prisoners' Advocacy](#) has called the targeting of these Palestinian high school student detainees, a "retaliatory crime" by the occupation. It says:

"Using education as a tool of punishment exposes the fascist Israeli mentality, which pursues Palestinians even inside their prison cells."

According to the centre:

"Preventing high school students from sitting for their exams constitutes a moral and legal crime that requires international condemnation and accountability."

The occupation also continues to target students in Gaza. On 22 June, an "Israeli" [airstrike in Gaza killed](#) a displaced high school student, Raghad Hussein Ashour, 18. She was the only child of a man martyred during one of the military assaults. While on her way to sit her exams, Israel launched an [airstrike](#) targeting a car, killing young Raghad.

<https://www.thecanary.co/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/1.mp4>

Israel launches airstrikes, killing 18-year-old Raghad Hussein Ashour.

Also in Gaza City, just two days earlier, an airstrike targeted the al-Safadi family apartment. Students and sisters, Zeina and Lana Hussein al-Safadi were killed, along with their parents. The family has now been completely erased from the civil registry.

Israel launches strikes in which sisters Zeina and Lana Hussein al-Safadi were killed. Israel eliminates members of Al-Safadi family, erased from the civil registry.

## Calls for international intervention

In a statement, the Ministry of Education has called these crimes "a blatant violation of all [international conventions](#)" It is demanding intervention to protect students in Gaza.

Palestinians have the highest level of education in the Middle East. In 2022, [the literacy rate stood at 98 percent](#) while the global average [was around 86 percent in 2016](#)

The Israeli occupation knows the future of Palestine depends on education. The prevention of education has seen Israel using every dirty trick, and legislation to dismantle and deprive Palestinians, even in prison, access to teaching systems. This includes the deliberate bombardment of schools and universities, [as we've seen in Gaza](#) Since late 2023, the IOF has [destroyed](#) civilian and cultural infrastructure, including formal and informal schools.

These war crimes, as the [UN has described them](#), expose Israel's extermination mindset.

Israel is using these same tactics in the West Bank and outside of prison cells. Its ongoing freezes on Palestinian tax revenues have restricted the school week to [three days instead of five](#). Violence and intimidation by the [IOF and illegal Israeli settlers](#) against students at schools and universities, are also on the rise.

But as Sundos Hammad, coordinator of the [Right to Education campaign](#) at Birzeit University, previously told the Canary, education is part of Palestinian resilience and existence. The occupation will not succeed in dismantling it, no matter how hard it tries.

*Featured image via the Canary*

By [Charlie Jaay](#)

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