

tool 36 Monitoring Grave Violations through Child Protection Networks in the Gaza Strip

Case study

This case study summarizes findings documented in 'Protecting the rights of Palestinian children affected by armed conflicts through community-based mechanisms in the Gaza Strip and North Lebanon', Regional Workshop 9 – 12 May 2011, Amman/Jordan, Save the Children Sweden.

No Israeli or Palestinian armed actors are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, and as such there is no MRM in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). However, the impact of the armed conflict on children in this area has been featured in the body of the report as a 'situation of concern' since 2003. In 2007, UNICEF established an informal working group to collect data on the grave violations, bringing together the UN and national and international NGOs, to collect information on grave violations and submit regular reports to UNICEF headquarters and to the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. Save the Children is an active member of this working group and working together with a national partner NGO, during 2008, established a Child Protection Network (CPN) composed of 21 NGOs and community-based organizations across the Gaza Strip to advocate with authorities, communities and international bodies for stronger protection of children. One staff member from each CPN organization was appointed focal point for grave violations and was tasked to collect information on incidents using a standard form. The CPN collaborated with Child Protection Committees (CPC), also established by Save the Children in areas most affected by the conflict. The CPCs were composed of elected influential community members (religious leaders, teachers, doctors, etc.) and tasked to raise awareness of child protection, as well as to facilitate referrals and assistance to families.

In a regional workshop organized by Save the Children to review best practices and lessons-learned, the following **positive outcomes** resulted from the OPT experience:

- Increased awareness of the international legal framework to protect children in conflict.
- Improved referrals and access to services for children victim of conflict-related violence.
- Ability to conduct evidence-based advocacy, thanks to continuous documentation of abuses.

The following **challenges** were identified:

- High turnover and limited commitment of monitors due to the fact that they collect information on a voluntary basis. This led to knowledge gaps and affected the ability of the CPN to document violations systematically.
- Bias: only violations perpetrated by specific actors, and not all, were reported.
- Overlapping reports due to uncoordinated monitoring by many different actors, in particular human rights NGOs.
- Frustration within the CPN due to lack of feedback from the UN on information submitted by the CPN.
- Frustration among communities due to insufficient response services for victims of the conflict.

The following key **recommendations** were formulated:

- Analyze data on grave violations and use it to improve coordination and fundraising to strengthen child protection systems.
- Use data on grave violations as a basis for local advocacy and creating opportunities to provide feedback on these efforts to affected communities.
- Devise non-financial strategies to acknowledge the efforts of community volunteers (certificates, participation in learning events, etc.).

related tools

-  [tool 34 – Factsheet 'Opportunities and challenges of engaging with communities to monitor and respond to grave violations'](#)