

# IF AMERICANS KNEW - LOCAL

## *What every American needs to know about Israel/Palestine*

*(Here is a script that you might want to use when you talk to your Congress member's staffer. It's best to speak from your heart, but feel free to use this if you tend to get tongue-tied or forgetful under pressure! The information below is from Defense For Children International – Palestine, and is available [here](#).)*

*(When you visit your rep, it's best to speak from your heart, but feel free to use this script if you tend to get tongue-tied or forgetful under pressure! The information below is from Defense For Children International – Palestine, and is available [here](#). More detail about H.R.2407 is available [here](#). If you can, bring a laptop so you can show the staffer a short film while you're there – they're listed below. This presentation will take about 5 minutes.)*

*Be sure to bring along materials to hand to the staffer! We suggest [this factsheet](#), and [this](#) and [this](#) – all downloadable and printable. (Write your name and phone number on each page!)*

SCRIPT:

Thanks for taking the time to see me. I'd like to tell you about a foreign policy bill that I think Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_ should cosponsor, H.R.2407. The purpose of this bill is to prevent US aid money from being used to incarcerate Palestinian children.

I care about children. I'm a (mom, dad, grandparent, etc. – or whatever is meaningful to you). I hate that my country is enabling children anywhere in the world to be imprisoned or tortured.

Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes 500-700 children in military courts each year. Since 2000, at least 8,000 Palestinian children have been arrested and prosecuted by Israel. Most of them are charged with throwing stones, which can land them in jail for up to 10-20 years. Does that sound extreme to you?

According to UNICEF, ill-treatment in the Israeli military detention system is "widespread, systematic, and institutionalized." About 75% of the children experience violence, and 97% are denied access to a lawyer.

The majority of Palestinian children are taken from their homes in the middle of the night by heavily armed Israeli soldiers. Many children plead guilty even though they've done nothing wrong – because they are threatened or tortured, or they are forced to sign a confession written in Hebrew which they don't understand.

More than half of Palestinian child prisoners are transferred to facilities inside Israel, which violates the Fourth Geneva Convention. Many parents are unable to get permits to Israel, so the children have few or no family visits. Can you imagine how scary that would be?

This whole procedure traumatizing to these children. Many of them are never the same again. They have trouble sleeping and concentrating, are afraid to go outside, act out, or don't want to talk to anyone. This is happening to 500-700 Palestinian children every year.

And it's being done with my tax dollars. I'm aware that we give Israel \$3.8 billion a year. Did you know that? What do you think this treatment does to kids in the long run? (Let them answer.)

(Here, say something about how all of this makes you feel – put yourself in the shoes of the parents or grandparents.)

Israel is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, so it has an obligation to abide by its statutes:

- Detention must only be used as a last resort
- Children must not be subjected to violence
- They must have access to a lawyer and their parents
- They must only be arrested during the day
- They must never be coerced or threatened
- They must never be blindfolded or painfully restrained
- They must be informed of their right to silence
- Interrogations must be video-taped

I want Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_ to know about this situation, and I want him/her to cosponsor H.R.2407.

It would be shameful to not attach his/her name to this bill. This is about the safety of children. I don't care what their nationality is, no child should experience what these Palestinian children are experiencing at the hands of Israeli soldiers.

What do you think? (Let them answer.) Don't you think Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_ should get on board with it? (Let them answer.)

H.R.2407 can not be dismissed as "anti-Semitic." Americans are beginning to recognize the facts about Israel's human rights abuses, and we believe criticism is absolutely in order, and it's absolutely not anti-Semitic.

We want to see H.R.2407 passed because children deserve better than what Israel is giving.

Would you please pass all of this along to the Congressman/woman for me?

(The staffer might ask you some questions for clarification or for more detail. It's ok if you don't know some answers. Just tell them, "I don't know all the details, but I know it's wrong to wake a child up, drag him off to prison, and torture him. I'd be happy to find out that detail and get back in touch with you.")

Then, time-permitting, view one of these short videos with them. (Choose the one that you think is most impactful.)

This film is 7 minutes long, this one is 3 minutes, this one is just 2 minutes. (You can even show clips from this IAK article.)

For more information, visit <https://iakn.us/children> and <https://nwtac.dci-palestine.org/>