

## Children Everywhere Have Rights

### Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Non-discrimination)

*The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.*

**Case studies- Extracted from *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak* by Deborah Ellis. Children from Israel and Palestine were asked what they would wish for if they had 3 wishes.**

**Read and discuss the following case studies. Complete the venn diagram to show similarities and differences between the Israeli and Palestinian children.**

1. Mona is an 11 years old Palestinian girl who lives between Jerusalem and Ramallah in the State of Palestine. She is a student in Rawdat El Zahur school in Jerusalem.

*I am a Palestinian, I wouldn't want to be anything else, but I wish life could be a little easier here. I know life is easier for kids in other places and I wish it were easier for us, just for a little while. I get tired of all the troubles. There never seems to be an end to them.*

*I have 3 brothers and sisters. When there is a curfew and we are all locked inside, we have nothing to do but fight. When the curfew is over, and we can go outside and get away from each other, then we can get along.*

*Where I live is not far from my school, but I have to leave my house at half past five in the morning to get through the checkpoint in time to get to school. I don't like getting out of bed when it is still dark, especially in the winter.*

*I just want to go to school. I don't want to blow anything up. The soldiers don't see me as a child. They see me as an enemy. I don't like them, but I'm not their enemy. I just want to go to school.*

*Soldiers scare me more than anything else. Guns and soldiers. You don't have to be a bad person to get shot by them. Mostly, it is good people who get shot. You should have to do something bad to get shot but here everybody gets shot.*

*The fighting is between the Palestinians who have nothing and the Israelis who have everything. I don't know any Israeli children and I don't want to because they have the same beliefs as their parents. They believe I am not as good as they are.*

*When there is peace we will be very happy and we will be able to go anywhere we want to in our land without having to cross a checkpoint or explain ourselves to a foreign soldier. I don't know how or when this peace will come. I can't really imagine it.*

2. Gill is an 8 year Israeli old girl who lives in Jerusalem

*I am in year 4. My best subject is art. I love drawing, especially horses.*

*I was born in Ukraine, but I was adopted when I was two months old and brought to Israel. I don't know anything about Ukraine, except that it gets very cold there.*

*I hear a lot about the war. I'm eight, which is not too young to know about war and bombs.*

*We have guards at our school to keep the Palestinians from blowing us up. One of the guards there was killed by a bomb. He wasn't killed at our school, but somewhere else. I was very sad when I heard about it. I was afraid, too. Guards are supposed to protect us, but he couldn't protect himself. If a bomb can kill a guard, it can also kill me or my family.*

*There is always a lot of talk about war. I have my own gas mask. All the kids at my school have one. This way, we can still breathe if someone drops gas on us. There should be gas masks for horses too.*

*I don't want to hurt anybody and I don't want anybody to hurt me. I just want to ride horses. I don't know if there are any Palestinian girls who love horses as much as I do. I don't know any Palestinian girls.*

3. Michael is an 11 year old Palestinian boy who lives in East Jerusalem

*I am a Palestinian Christian. Many Palestinians are Muslims and many of us are Christian. It doesn't matter what religion we are. We are all Palestinians.*

*I live in Terra Sancta Boys Home in the Old City of Jerusalem. The home is run by monks, it's for boys who don't have parents or who have parents who can't take care of them. I don't have a mother but I have a father. He is in America and can't take care of me or my brothers or sisters right now.*

*I don't know very much about the war other than that it means the Palestinians have to live apart from each other. My family isn't the only one that is split up. Families should be together or should at least be able to visit each other whenever they want to, but that's not the way it is for most Palestinian families. We all seem to be separated from each other because we are not allowed to cross the roadblocks and can't get through the checkpoints if we don't have the right papers. Sometimes when I'm out walking or in church I see families all together and my inside aches.*

*I have never met any Jewish boys. When I see Jewish boys my age, they look at me and I look at them but we don't say anything. I don't know anything about them and they don't know anything about me.*

*We hear a little bit about the fighting between the Israelis and the Palestinians but I don't really know what's going on, or why they are fighting. I wish the fighting would stop because I don't like the idea of people hurting each other. Also, if the war ends maybe my family could live together again.*

4. Gul is a 12 year old Israeli boy who lives in West Jerusalem

*My favourite subject is English. I live with my mother, father and older brother in a flat on the top floor of a small block of flats. It's a very nice area with lots of trees along the streets. I like living in Jerusalem. It's the centre of everything in Israel. There's a lot to do here like films, sport, lots of things. We live in the new part of the city.*

*I don't like it that I will have to join the army in a few years' time, but I don't have a choice, maybe by then I'll feel differently, but I don't think so .*

*Something the army goes into Palestinian cities like Hebron or Bethlehem. They take Palestinians out of their homes, they bulldoze the homes so there is nothing left. They do that in case there is a bomb inside the house. The soldiers might have to be rough to get the Palestinians out of their house because they won't want to leave. It's their home and they want to stay there.*

*My mother doesn't want me being rough and mean to people when I'm a soldier. She says she's brought us up to be kind to people. She thinks going into the army will change the kind of person I am. I don't see how that can happen. I am who I am. How can anything change that?*

*I have an older sister, Ori. She's eighteen now and decided to do National Community Service instead of going into the army. She thinks the occupation is bad, and doesn't want to be part of it. She says if she went into the army she'd have to kill people if she was ordered to and she doesn't want to do that.*

*It's easier for her to not go in the army because she's a girl but I have heard a lot of people arguing with her about it. They think it's everyone's duty to defend Israel.*

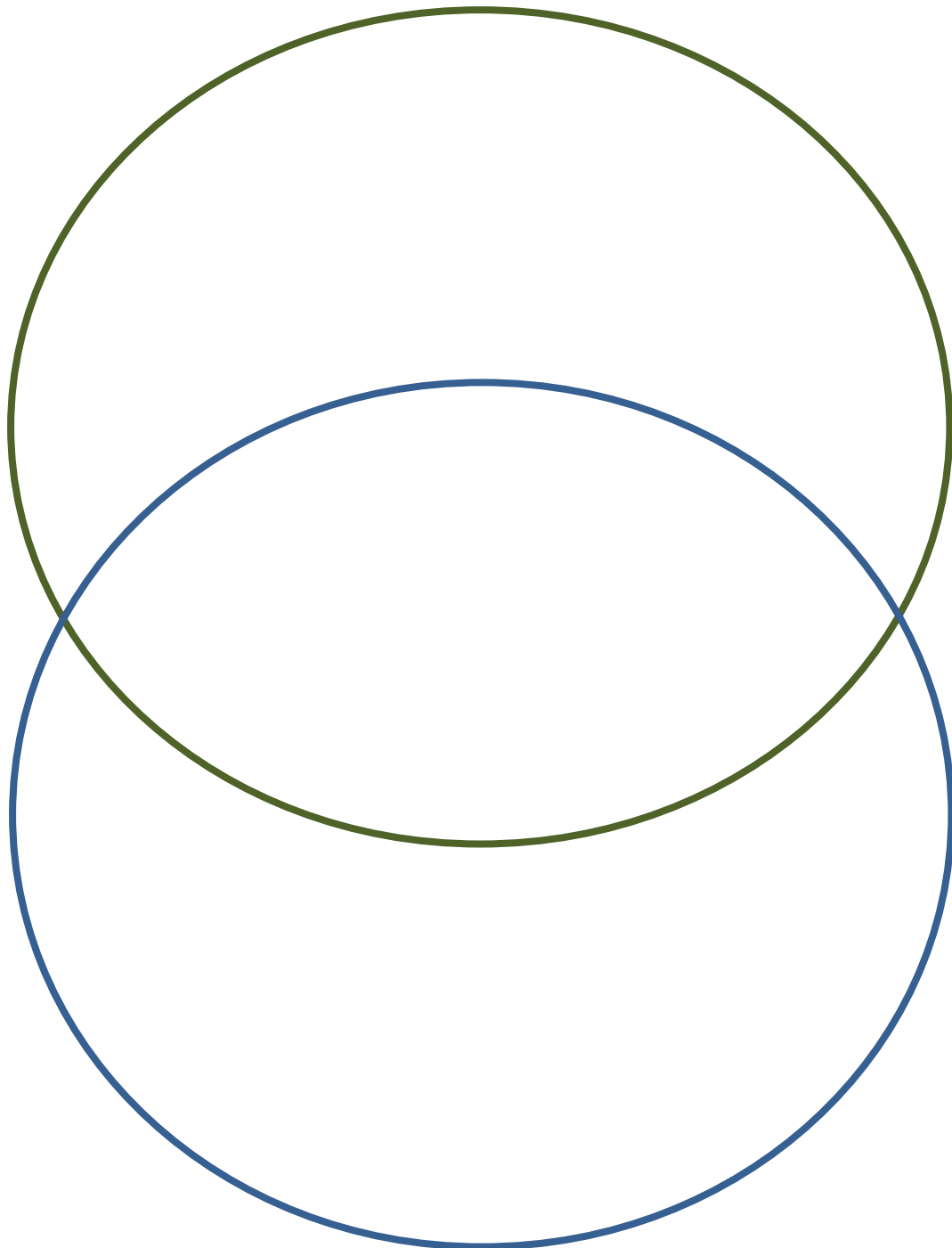
*Sometimes I think it would be fun to be in the army. I look at all the soldiers in the streets and they can do so many things and work radios and they look strong and smart.*

*I try to imagine myself being one of them, doing things like searching Palestinian homes and driving a tank into their cities. Maybe by the time I have to join the army there will be peace and I won't have to do those things.*

*All I know about this war is that it's about this country, this land. The Palestinians want it, and we want it so we're fighting over it. I don't know how it will end or if it will ever will.*

*I met some Palestinians once in Abu Gosh a village near Jerusalem. There were pretty nice kids, no different from me. I don't know any Palestinians now, though. They can't come here and it's too dangerous for us to go there.*

Complete the Venn diagram to show differences and similarities between the children. Place facts relating only to Palestinian children in the green shape, facts relating only to Israeli children in the blue shape and facts common to both where the shapes overlap.



**Palestinian**

**Both**

**Israeli**