



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

# ***FLASH REPORT***

## **The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem**

7 October - 20 November 2023

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**

## THE REPORT

- 1 Analyses the further and rapid deterioration of the human rights situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem between 7 October and 20 November 2023.
- 2 Highlights that Palestinians live in constant terror of discriminatory use of Israeli State force and settler violence.
- 3 Warns that the situation may further deteriorate if Israel does not adopt urgent measures to comply with International Human Rights Law (IHRL) & International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DOCUMENTED BY OHCHR

- A Increase in the use of unnecessary or disproportionate force by Israeli security forces (ISF) resulting in unlawful killings.
- B Mass arbitrary arrests, detentions and reported torture and other ill-treatment by ISF, raising concerns of collective punishment.
- C Exponential increase in attacks by armed settlers leading to mass displacement of Palestinian herding communities.
- D Ongoing discriminatory movement restrictions affecting daily life and choking the local economy.

## USE OF UNNECESSARY OR DISPROPORTIONATE FORCE RESULTING IN UNLAWFUL KILLINGS (7 OCT – 27 DEC 2023)

**291** Palestinians in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem were killed by ISF from 7 Oct – 27 Dec 2023

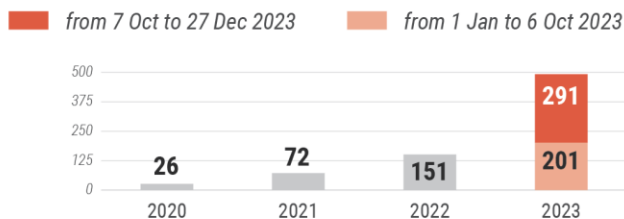
👤 men: **211** (including men with disability: **3**) 👤 children: **79** 👤 women: **1**

**201** 201 fatalities were recorded during ISF operations or confrontations, **NOT involving exchange of fire between Palestinians and ISF.**

**105** At least 105 fatalities (👤 men: **82** and 👤 boys: **23**) were recorded during ISF law enforcement operations involving use of **airstrikes and other military tactics** in refugee camps and other densely populated areas.

## Palestinians killed by ISF in the West Bank incl. EJ in 2020-2023, per year

Since 1 Jan to 27 Dec 2023, ISF killed **492** Palestinians, the highest number of Palestinians killed by ISF since UN records began in 2005.



In 2020, ISF killed **26** Palestinians

👤 men: **19**  
👤 women: **0**  
👤 children: **7**

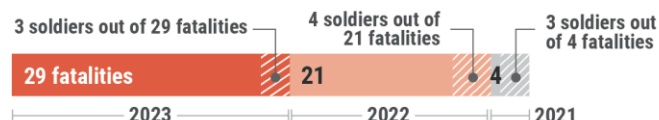
In 2021, ISF killed **72** Palestinians

👤 men: **55**  
👤 women: **2**  
👤 children: **15**

In 2022, ISF killed **151** Palestinians

👤 men: **111**  
👤 women: **5**  
👤 children: **35**

## Israeli fatalities in attacks by Palestinians in WB in 2021-2023, per year



## MASS ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DETENTIONS AND ILL-TREATMENT RAISING CONCERNS OF COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

- From **7 Oct to 27 Dec**, ISF carried out daily **mass arrests** and arrested around **4,785** Palestinians, in most cases not linked to the commission of a criminal offence.
- Arrests were regularly accompanied by physical and psychological abuse and humiliation of detainees by ISF, including **sexual and gender-based violence against men and women.**
- In East Jerusalem, a dedicated unit of the Israeli police closely monitored social media activity of Palestinians and carried out **arrests following publication of social media posts.**
- Israeli authorities dramatically worsened conditions and treatment for Palestinians detained by Israel on "security" charges, including through beatings, isolating them from the outside world, and denying medical care. **Six Palestinians died while in Israeli detention.**

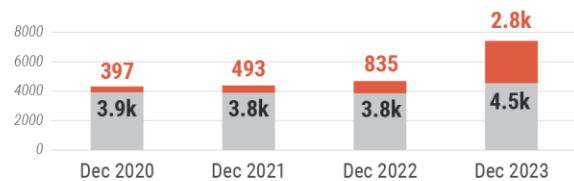
## Since 7 Oct to 13 Dec, according to the Palestinian Prisoners Commission:

**4,000** Palestinians arrested by Israeli Forces, of whom,  
👤 children: **255** 👤 women: **123** 📰 journalists: **45**

## Figures on arrests and detention of Palestinians in the period 2020-2023

Palestinians **detained** by Israel on "security" grounds: (figures by the Israeli Prison services).

■ administrative detainees (held without trials or charges)



## FURTHER RISE IN SETTLER VIOLENCE, ALREADY AT RECORD-HIGH LEVELS (7 OCT - 27 DEC 2023)

- Arming and mobilizing settlers as reservists further blurred the line between ISF and settlers.
- Armed settlers coordinated to prevent olive harvest, stole olives, poisoned and vandalized trees.
- Settlers took advantage of the permissive environment after 7 October to accelerate displacement of Palestinian herding communities and expand Israeli control over Area C.

**8** Palestinians killed by settlers from 7 Oct to 27 Dec. Of whom, there were 👤 men: **7** and 👤 children: **1** **1** Palestinian man killed either by ISF or by settlers

✳️ **367** Settler attacks resulting in casualties and/or property damage. Of which, **one third involved the use of firearms** as recorded by OCHA.

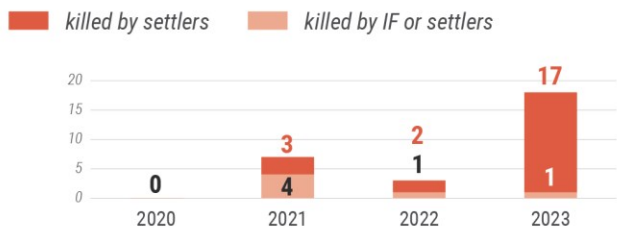
🚶 **1,208** People including 👤 children: **586** from **15 herding communities** were displaced due to settler violence and access restrictions as per OCHA.

- Despite hundreds of settlers being involved in attacks, **only two settlers** were under arrest (administrative detention) as of **27 Dec 2023.**
- No indictments were filed.

## ESCALATION OF SETTLER VIOLENCE IN FIGURES 2020-2023

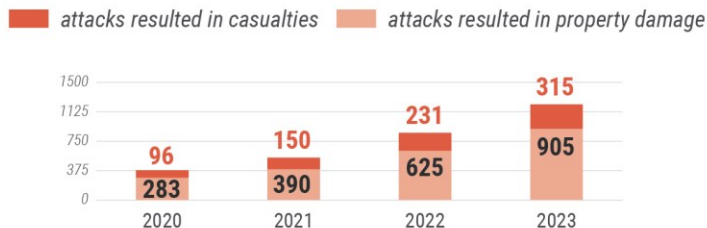
### Palestinians killed by settlers in the West Bank in 2020-2023, by year

In 2023, **17** Palestinians were killed by settlers. This included **16** men and **1** boy. Additionally, **1** man was killed either by the ISF or settlers.



### Settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties and/or property damage in the West Bank in 2020-2023, per year

As per OCHA, In 2023, settler attacks causing property damage rose by **45%**, and those causing casualties increased by **36%** compared to 2022.



## SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

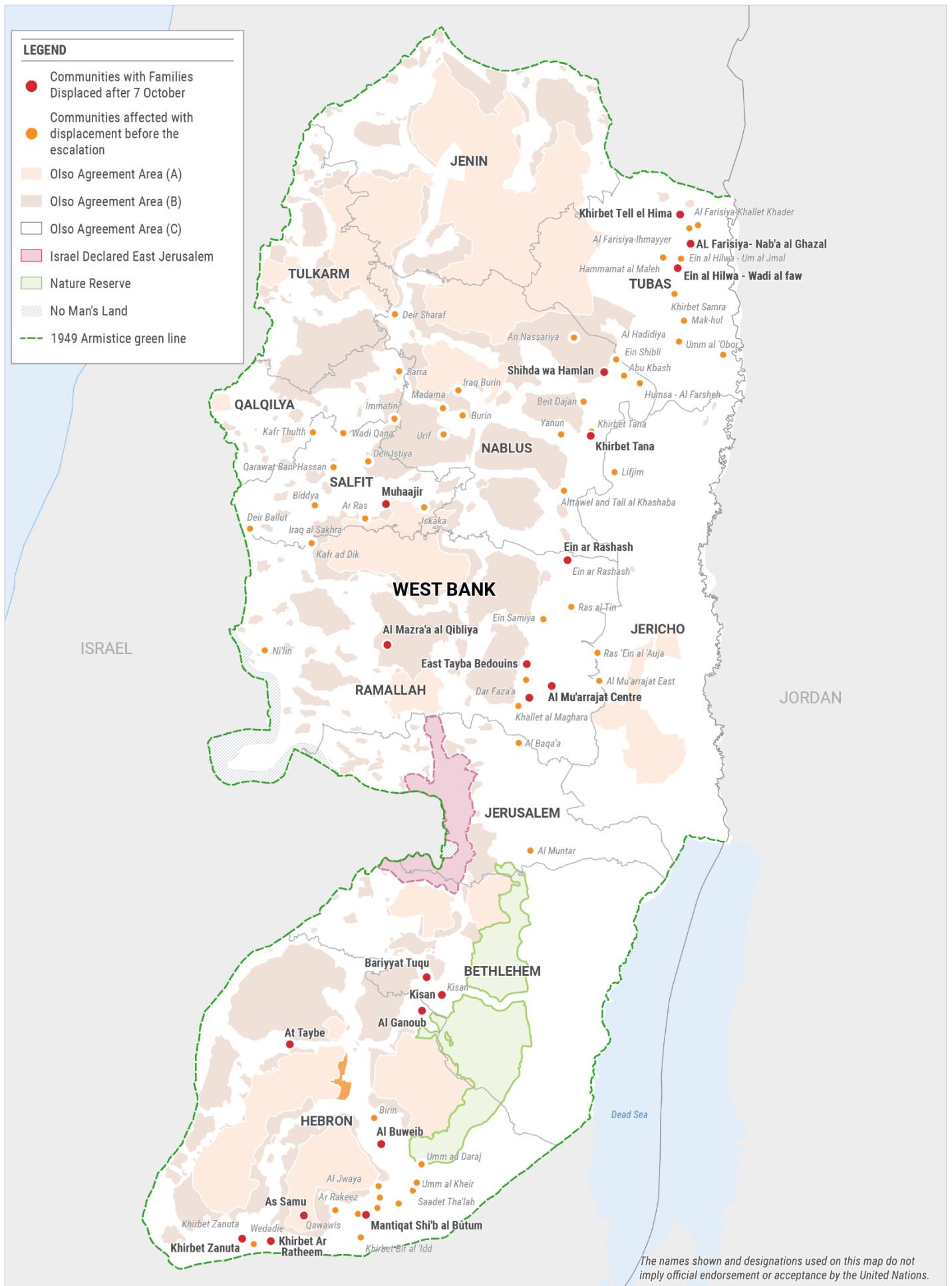
### To the Government of Israel

- Urgently take steps to end killing and injury of Palestinians during operations in the occupied West Bank and ensure that all use of force is in full compliance with international law and standards governing law enforcement operations, by strictly regulating the use of live ammunition, ensuring that security forces are adequately equipped and trained in the use of less-lethal weapons and that all operations are planned and implemented to minimize the threat to life, and imposing appropriate disciplinary and penal sanctions for members of security forces who do not respect such regulations.
- Immediately end the use of military weapons and operations in the maintenance of public order through law enforcement in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Issue clear and unambiguous orders to all Israeli security forces to ensure the effective protection of the Palestinian population against settler violence, and hold to account members of the Israeli security forces who fail to comply with such orders.
- Ensure that all incidents of violence by settlers and Israeli security forces against Palestinians, including violence against women, and damage to their property, are promptly, effectively, thoroughly, and transparently investigated; that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions, and that victims are provided with effective remedies, including adequate compensation, in accordance with international standards;
- Lift all discriminatory movement restrictions across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and ensure Palestinians' ability to travel safely throughout the territory.

- Immediately and completely cease and reverse all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in compliance with international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions, such as Security Council resolution 2334 (2016).
- Release Palestinians arbitrarily arrested in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel since 7 October. Ensure that detention conditions strictly conform with international norms and standards, end all practices that may amount to torture or other ill-treatment of Palestinians detained and ensure that all allegations of such violations are promptly, impartially, thoroughly and independently investigated, and that perpetrators are held to account.
- As loss of life occurring in custody, in unnatural circumstances, creates a presumption of arbitrary deprivation of life by State authorities, conduct prompt, impartial, thorough and transparent investigation, through an independent body, into Palestinian deaths in Israeli custody.

### All States, especially States with influence, should immediately take urgent and concrete measures to:

- Ensure full respect for and compliance with international human rights law, as well as the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.
- Ensure that, in accordance with international standards, those responsible for settler violence are appropriately held to account.
- Prevent further deterioration of human rights in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.



The names shown and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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## I. SUMMARY

1. From January to October, 2023 had already seen the highest levels of violence from Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since United Nations records began in 2005. This was against a backdrop of ever-growing settler population and increasing risks of annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank and of forcible transfer Palestinians out of their homes, especially in Area C.
2. The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has nevertheless further deteriorated rapidly since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, when Al Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, and other Palestinian armed groups, as well as armed and unarmed Palestinian civilians, attacked civilians and civilian objects as well as military objectives in southern Israel. Since 7 October and as of 20 November, ISF and Israeli settlers have killed 209 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This followed, notably, an increase in the use of military tactics and weapons in law enforcement contexts, the use of unnecessary or disproportionate – and therefore unlawful - force to suppress Palestinian protests and to enforce broad movement restrictions imposed on discriminatory grounds. Mass arbitrary detentions and consequential unlawful detentions, and reported torture and other ill-treatment of Palestinians by IF raised concerns of collective punishment and deepened the crisis. The number of attacks by settlers exponentially increased, leading to further displacement of Palestinian communities, including of Palestinians out of Area C of the West Bank.<sup>1</sup>
3. ISF have claimed that their actions in the West Bank are preemptive,<sup>2</sup> and thus not responding to an actual deterioration in the security situation in the West Bank. Further, the scale of violations and the rhetoric of retaliation by Israeli officials, are exacerbating tensions and creating conditions to ignite an already volatile situation. Palestinians live in constant terror of the discriminatory use of State force and settler violence against them and, while the situation is already dire, all indications are that it may further deteriorate unless urgent measures are taken by Israel to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law and ensure the rights of protected persons.

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<sup>1</sup> Trends described continued beyond 20 November 2023 and are ongoing as of publication. As of 27 December 2023, 300 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, including 291 by the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and eight by settlers, and one either by settlers or by ISF. Four Israelis were killed in Palestinian attacks in the West Bank in the same period, and four others were killed in Israel. As of 27 December, ISF had arrested 4,785 Palestinians in the West Bank (including those arrested and released later). As of December, the Israeli Prison Services held 7,417 Palestinians on “security charges”, including 2,873 held under administrative detention without charge or trial. From 7 October until 27 December, settlers had killed eight Palestinians (with one more Palestinian killed either by settlers or ISF), and carried out 367 attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties (36 incidents), damages to Palestinian property (285 incidents), or both (46 incidents). A total of 1,208 Palestinians from 15 herding communities had been displaced as of 27 December, due to settler violence and access restrictions.

<sup>2</sup> See for example: “[IDF, Shin Bet: Terror cell planning 'imminent attacks' targeted in West Bank operation](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/13/jenin-west-bank-violence-palestinians/)”, [The Times of Israel](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/13/jenin-west-bank-violence-palestinians/); <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/13/jenin-west-bank-violence-palestinians/>

4. For decades, as recorded in reports prepared by OHCHR, ISF have used unnecessary and disproportionate force with impunity in the occupied West Bank,<sup>3</sup> while it facilitated the transfer of its own citizens into unlawful settlements.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Israel has failed to protect Palestinians from settler violence, and affected Palestinians have been gradually forced out of their homes. However, the coercive environment has escalated in the last months, making an already oppressive situation worse for Palestinians, and risking a further escalation. In many parts of the occupied West Bank, shops are shut, streets are deserted, and communities cut off, closing down businesses and starving parts of the region of economic activity.
5. Findings in this report are based on human rights monitoring undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in accordance with its standard methodology on human rights monitoring, which involves the gathering and corroboration of information from multiple independent sources in order to establish the facts and analyze violations.
6. Incidents that are included are emblematic of patterns of wider violations of the human rights of protected persons.

## **II. PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS KILLED AFTER 7 OCTOBER IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM**

7. Two-hundred Palestinians were killed by ISF (191) and settlers (9) in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 1 January and 6 October 2023, the highest number since UN records began in 2005. After 7 October 2023, the situation worsened. By 20 November, at least 209 more Palestinians had been killed (including 53 children, one woman, at least three persons with disability) by ISF or by Israeli settlers. Of the fatalities verified by OHCHR, ISF killed at least 201 Palestinians (52 children, one woman) and settlers killed eight Palestinians, including one boy. In addition, two Palestinian men were killed in the West Bank, one killed by an unidentified perpetrator during armed clashes that took place in Jericho on 13 October, and one Palestinian man whose body was handed over by ISF to his family in Salfit bearing visible marks and bruises on 2 November, also killed by an unidentified perpetrator. Furthermore, two Palestinian men from the West Bank were killed in Israel under unclear circumstances, and their bodies were returned by Israeli authorities to the families.<sup>5</sup> One Palestinian man was killed near Tulkarem by shrapnel from a rocket launched by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza, or from an Israeli Iron Dome missile, on 10 October.

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<sup>3</sup> A/78/502 paras. 13-25; A/HRC/52/75, paras. 17-28.

<sup>4</sup> A/78/554, A/HRC/52/76, para. 5.

<sup>5</sup> In one of the two cases, a Palestinian man in his 20s from Saeer, Hebron, was a worker without permit in Sderot, Israel. The man communicated with family for the last time on 8 October when he stated he was attempting to go back to the West Bank. Reportedly, the next time the family called the man on the phone, on 8 October, an Israeli civilian picked up the call and stated that he had killed the man. On 30 October, the family received a phone call from an Israeli officer asking the family to identify the body in Lod. As the body was disfigured, identity was reportedly verified through DNA testing. On 2 November, Israeli authorities handed over the body to the family for burial.

8. Four Israelis (three men, one woman) including three soldiers (two men, one woman) were killed in Palestinian attacks in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
9. Nearly 3,000 Palestinians, including at least 355 children, had been injured by ISF in demonstrations, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).<sup>6</sup>
10. In the same period, three Palestinians (one man, one boy, one girl) were killed as Palestinian Security Forces (PSF) used force to disperse peaceful protests held in the West Bank in solidarity with Gaza population. OHCHR verified that two (one man, one boy) died after being injured by PSF in demonstrations in Ramallah and Tubas on 17 and 18 October respectively. A 9-year-old Palestinian girl was also killed in this context on 17 October in Jenin, although it remained unclear who killed her as PSF used force to disperse protests and, subsequently, clashes developed and there was an exchange of fire with armed Palestinians.

### **ISF use of unnecessary or disproportionate force and unlawful killings**

11. Most fatalities occurred in the context of confrontations and clashes between Palestinians and ISF, including during ISF incursions and operations in Palestinian towns including to carry out demolitions of Palestinian homes in violation of international law, and in the context of protests. Of the 209 Palestinian fatalities since 7 October and as of 20 November, 146 took place in the context of ISF operations and during confrontations not involving exchange of fire. OHCHR also recorded 7 fatalities where ISF shot at Palestinian motorists apparently in the context of enforcing extensive and discriminatory movement restrictions. At least 24 of the Palestinians killed by ISF were reportedly bystanders in clashes or confrontations and in many other cases ISF used unnecessary or disproportionate force against Palestinians involved in confrontations and clashes, resulting in unlawful killings. Adding to unlawful use of force concerns, in at least 11 cases ISF was reported as preventing the prompt provision of first aid to those injured including by targeting Palestinian ambulances and paramedics.
12. In one case, on 7 October, an ISF sniper shot in the chest and killed 16-year-old Yousef Nader Suleiman Idrees in Hebron H2, near the settlement of Kiryat Arba. Video footage deemed credible by OHCHR and consistent with witness accounts showed that the Palestinian boy was sitting and not posing any threat at the time he was shot,<sup>7</sup> while confrontations between ISF and Palestinians were reportedly taking place in the area. In another case, on 30 October, ISF shot in the chest and killed 23-year-old Foa'd Abu Sabha, a Palestinian man with a mental disability following a students' protest in Yatta, Hebron Governorate. Video footage reviewed by OHCHR suggests that he did not pose any material threat when he was shot.<sup>8</sup>

### **ISF use of airstrikes and military tactics in context of law enforcement operations**

13. ISF's unlawful use of military tactics and weapons of war in law enforcement operations was first reported during 2022 and gained prevalence during the first nine months of 2023. It

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-46>.

<sup>7</sup> Video on file with OHCHR.

<sup>8</sup> <https://x.com/Nawajaa/status/1719749284386451939?s=20>



escalated sharply throughout the reporting period with the use of unmanned air vehicles (UAV) and other airstrikes (reported on at least 12 occasions), the use of shoulder-fired missiles, and massive deployment of jeeps (or light utility vehicles) accompanied by armored personnel carrier and bulldozers in refugee camps and other densely populated areas during operations in the Northern West Bank, resulting in high numbers of Palestinian fatalities including children (at least 67 Palestinians, among them 17 children), and extensive infrastructural damage. These cases raise concerns of unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, targeted killings and violations of the obligations to plan law enforcement operations in a way that minimizes use of force and the threat to life.

14. In an emblematic example, on 19 and 20 October, during a 30 hours-long military operation in Nur Shams Refugee Camp, Tulkarem, ISF killed 14 Palestinians including six children (aged 11, 12, 15, 15, 16, 16), injuring at least 20 others, and arresting ten Palestinians. Three of those killed, including a 15-year-old child, were claimed as members by the so-called Prompt Response Brigade, a loose group of armed Palestinians from different political groupings. ISF presence in the camp triggered confrontations including launching of IEDs which resulted in the critical injury of one Israeli soldier who later died from his wounds. Reportedly, shortly afterwards, Israeli forces launched an airstrike killing ten Palestinians, including four children (aged 12, 15, 15, 16) with an air to ground missile, allegedly to target an armed cell.<sup>9</sup> According to information gathered by OHCHR, the unmanned air vehicle struck an area far from the actual exchange of fire, killing two armed Palestinians claimed as members by the Prompt Response Brigade (including the 15-year-old child) and eight unarmed Palestinians not involved in clashes or confrontations. Palestinian paramedics were prevented by ISF from accessing the injured. In addition to those killed in the strike, four male Palestinians were killed by ISF gunfire, including an 11-year-old boy shot from inside an ISF military vehicle as the boy was throwing stones, a 16-year-old boy who was walking with his father, as shown in a video-recording,<sup>10</sup> when fatally hit by three bullets, and one armed Palestinian killed in exchange of fire with ISF.
15. In another instance, during the morning of 9 November, ISF raided Jenin city, deployed snipers, bulldozers and ground troops and conducted at least four airstrikes in different areas at the heart of the Jenin refugee camp, resulting in the killing of 17 Palestinians including five children<sup>11</sup>. According to OHCHR monitoring, a 30-year-old female paramedic was shot in her abdomen and seriously injured while sitting in the back of an ambulance when the driver attempted to drive closer to an injured man lying on the ground. ISF stated that they were carrying out a “counter-terrorism” operation in Jenin, during which they carried out arrests and seized weapons and that during the operation, “a remotely manned

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/police-say-10-officers-wounded-in-explosion-during-idf-raid-in-tulkarem](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/police-say-10-officers-wounded-in-explosion-during-idf-raid-in-tulkarem)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/reel/3116819928613576>, consistent with eye-witness testimonies taken by OHCHR.

<sup>11</sup> Including three Palestinians, including a 16-year-old boy, who died later from wounds sustained during the operation.

aircraft attacked an armed terrorist squad” that “endangered” ISF “in the area”, resulting in “several terrorists” killed.<sup>12</sup>

16. On 17 November, ISF killed in airstrikes three Palestinian men (ages 23, 28 and 34) and injured at least 15 others in an overnight ISF raid in Jenin refugee camp, during which seven Palestinians were arrested. Reportedly, two of the fatalities were due to an ISF air to ground missile, reportedly one of them claimed as a leader of Al Quds brigade. During the raid, ISF reportedly surrounded Ibn Sina hospital, and asked paramedics to leave the ER unit and one paramedic was reportedly arrested.
17. In some cases, airstrikes have been used in a manner raising concerns of unlawful, targeted killings. On 18 November, ISF killed four Palestinians, including a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, in an airstrike on Fatah facilities in Balata Refugee Camp, marking the first time that ISF launched an airstrike in Nablus since the Second Intifada. According to information gathered by OHCHR, ISF struck the camp three or four times shortly after midnight while no clashes were taking place and ISF had not been deployed in the camp. While Israeli media claimed that three of the fatalities were reportedly responsible for shooting attacks and were planning an “imminent” attack against Israel,<sup>13</sup> this situation cannot be considered to amount to an imminent threat to life or of serious injury or to comply with requirements of necessity and proportionality that would justify, under international law, the use of lethal force in a law enforcement context, considering the wide range of means available to Israel to prevent such attacks. Their killing therefore raises concern of unlawful, targeted killing.

### III. ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION AND ILL-TREATMENT

#### Home raids and mass arrests, beating and ill-treatment

18. Since 7 October, ISF has conducted daily incursions into towns and cities of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and carried out mass arrests of Palestinians including former members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and other political figures, community leaders, activists, journalists, students, and family members of wanted persons. According to figures provided by the Palestinian Prisoners Commission, between 8 October and 17 November, ISF arrested 2,800 Palestinians, including at least 17 journalists, in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, during such operations as well as during arrests at checkpoints, with an average of 60 Palestinians arrested every day, including many released hours after arrest. Israeli Security Forces have claimed that since the war in Gaza started, their troops have arrested 1,750 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including more than 1,050 affiliated with Hamas.<sup>14</sup>
19. ISF carried out arrests reportedly as a preemptive measure, in many cases solely on alleged political affiliation and characterized by violations of procedural guarantees. The arrests

<sup>12</sup> [כמו כן, בעקבות זיהוי של רחפני יחידת 636, כלי טיס " צבא ההגנה לישראל \(IDF Hebrew account\) on X: " מאוישים מרחוק תקפו חוליית מחבלים חמושה שסיכנה את כוחותינו במרחב. נהרגו מספר מחבלים כתוצאה מהתקיפה "](#)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-18/ty-article/.premium/idf-kills-five-west-bank-palestinians-it-says-planned-terror-attack/0000018b-e17c-dffa-edef-e77c09630000>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-shin-bet-terror-cell-planning-imminent-attacks-targeted-in-west-bank-operation>

have been facilitated by changes in the law, which have included activation by the Israeli army of Article 33 of Military Order No. 1651, which sets out procedures for arrest "in a military campaign to combat terrorism." This allows the detention of a person for eight days before being presented to the court, instead of 96 hours, automatically preventing them from meeting their lawyer for two days. Many of those arrested since 7 October have been placed in administrative detention without charge or trial, the others reportedly received delayed and limited legal counsel. Israel passed emergency regulations and military orders which allow the holding of hearings via video conference or even audio if the visual is not available,<sup>15</sup> raising concern as to meeting even a minimum standard of effective review, which is necessary to ensure fair trials and prevent torture and other ill treatment.

20. Arrests are often conducted in a brutal manner, accompanied by beating of detainees, and other inhuman and degrading treatment in some cases possibly amounting to torture. ISF subjected those arrested to, for instance, acts of violence including kicking, slapping, punching, and hitting with rifles. Palestinians were stripped-naked, blindfolded and restrained for long hours with handcuffs and with their legs tied, while Israeli soldiers stepped on their heads and backs, were spat at, slammed against walls, threatened and insulted. In several cases, Israeli actions also raised concerns of sexual and gender-based violence, including one detainee who was beaten in the genitals, forced nudity of several detainees as shown in videos, sexual slurs against one woman, and women including two pregnant women threatened with rape, while in detention, "as Al-Qassam did with Israeli women". In most cases, OHCHR recorded violent searches of private houses with what appeared to be willful damage to building structures and contents.
21. On 31 October, Israeli media reported that dozens of pictures and videoclips were published by Israeli soldiers depicting themselves abusing, degrading and humiliating Palestinians apprehended in the West Bank, including pictures of detainees stripped naked or half-naked, blindfolded and handcuffed, and screaming in pain while physically abused and humiliated including by being forced to pose with the Israeli flag, sing songs in Hebrew or forced to dance with soldiers.<sup>16</sup> In one of the videos, a Palestinian man, subsequently identified through monitoring as having been arrested on 31 October, is seen kneeling, blindfolded and with hands tied behind his back, being kicked several times in the stomach by a soldier, who spits on him and insults him. On 1 November, IDF reportedly stated they would investigate the abuses and that one reserve soldier had been dismissed from reserve service. In addition to raising concerns of widespread ill-treatment and torture, these cases raise concerns of

<sup>15</sup> תקנות שעת חירום (דיוני מעצרים), התשפ"ד-2023 | מספר החלטה 938 | משרד ראש הממשלה (www.gov.il) Emergency Regulations (Detention Hearings), 2023 – Government Decision no. 938 ; 2-הצו בדבר-קיום-דיונים-בהיוועדות-חזותית-בהשתתפות-עצורים-אסירים-וכלואים-בחירום-2.pdf (www.idf.il) IDF Order No' 2141 "Order regarding the holding of hearings in a visual conference with the participation of detainees, prisoners and inmates in an emergency (time order)-2023". <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-soldiers-film-themselves-abusing-humiliating-west-bank-palestinians/>; see also <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-09/ty-article-magazine/.premium/growing-number-of-idf-soldiers-are-documenting-and-posting-their-own-abuse-of-palestinians/0000018b-ae60-dea2-a9bf-fefe96070000>. <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1716768738546983082>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-soldiers-film-themselves-abusing-humiliating-west-bank-palestinians/>; see also <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-09/ty-article-magazine/.premium/growing-number-of-idf-soldiers-are-documenting-and-posting-their-own-abuse-of-palestinians/0000018b-ae60-dea2-a9bf-fefe96070000>

collective punishment, given that in all cases monitored by OHCHR the ISF personnel would explicitly state that ill-treatment was in retaliation for the atrocities committed by Hamas in southern Israel on 7 October.

### **Arbitrary arrests and abuse of family members of wanted persons**

22. In several cases, ISF violently raided family homes, ill-treated, and arrested family members of Palestinians wanted by Israel, in order to pressure them to surrender to ISF. The family members were not charged and were released when wanted persons handed themselves in. In one such case from Beit Liqiya, Ramallah, ISF arrested, on different dates between 19 and 29 October, the father of a Palestinian man wanted by Israel, his two adult brothers, and his three-month-pregnant wife. The 30-year-old pregnant woman was held for more than 12 hours and told OHCHR that, she had been strip-searched in the house and in the detention facility, cursed, and yelled at by ISF, denied medication required for her fetus on two occasions, and forced to walk for an hour while hands tightly cuffed, and was driven to a location blindfolded. During her interrogation, she was threatened that her husband and other family members would be killed, and her house be demolished if her husband did not turn himself in. Taken into detention at 4:00 hours of 29 October, she was released at around 16:30 after her husband turned himself in. In another case in Beit Ummar, Hebron, three Palestinian men (aged in their fifties and sixties) were arrested on 24 October, ill-treated and released after 24 hours, following their sons' surrender to ISF.

### **Arrests and abuse at checkpoints**

23. ISF soldiers assaulted Palestinians at checkpoints while enforcing extensive discriminatory, as applicable only to Palestinians and not to settlers, movement restrictions in place in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 7 October. In four separate incidents between 29 October and 2 November, ISF officers stationed at the Bethlehem checkpoint physically abused Palestinian men who were driving through, in some instances after seizing and opening their phones. In one of the cases, the victim was beaten unconscious.

### **Arbitrary and discriminatory arrests based on charges of incitement in East Jerusalem**

24. In East Jerusalem (as well as in Israel itself), dozens of Palestinians were arrested on charges of incitement after the Minister of National Security established a task force within the Israeli police to closely monitor social media<sup>17</sup> and the Israeli State Prosecutor authorized the police to open investigations into freedom of expression related offences without the prior approval of its office. Between 7 October until 1 November, the police stated that they had arrested at least 75 Palestinians from East Jerusalem, including women and children, over incitement to violence, mainly on social media. Despite a marked increase in hate speech and incitement to hatred and violence against Palestinians including Palestinian citizens of Israel, no arrests in this regard have been reported, raising concerns both in the application of new discriminatory laws and the discriminatory application of existing laws in this

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<sup>17</sup> <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1716768738546983082>

regard.<sup>18</sup> As of 7 November, seven Palestinians from East Jerusalem had been reportedly indicted.<sup>19</sup> OHCHR is aware of cases in which Palestinian men and women residents of East Jerusalem who were arrested or dismissed from their employment for posts identifying with the suffering in Gaza. However, OHCHR could not receive consent from any victim to document their cases, likely due to the prevailing climate of fear and intimidation in the city. Consistent reports indicate that these arrests were accompanied by beating, physical abuse, and humiliation. At least twenty cases were reported on social media of young men who showed pictures of extensive bruises and signs of violence all over their bodies after being detained and interrogated by ISF.

### **Arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention and ill-treatment of workers and patients from Gaza**

25. Thousands of Palestinians from Gaza who were staying in Israel lawfully for medical treatment or employment reasons on 7 October, were detained after Israel revoked their permits by 11 October. Israeli authorities refused to provide information about their whereabouts or legal status, raising concerns regarding arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, access to legal counsel and contact with family and the outside world. Media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) estimated that, by 17 October, at least 4,000 Palestinians from Gaza were held at Anatot military base, Ofer prison and other security facilities in Israel and the West Bank, without any contact with the outside world or access to legal counsel. After the Israeli Cabinet decided to return the Gazan workers to Gaza, on 2-3, and on 6 November, Israel transferred some 3,000 workers into southern Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing. As of 20 November, Israel had refused to indicate how many Palestinian workers and patients from Gaza it continued to hold, in *incommunicado* detention.
26. Consistent reports, including the testimonies of those released, indicate that while in ISF detention, the workers and patients were subjected to beatings and humiliation and were held in inhumane conditions, including being held for days blindfolded in the open-air, being denied sufficient food, and being detained in cage-like structures without access to sanitary installations. Upon release, ISF took their phones and identification cards. OHCHR interviewed a group of patients and workers from Gaza who were first detained by ISF at Ofer prison and afterwards released by ISF into the West Bank, who stated that they were stripped and held naked, cuffed and wearing nappies which were changed every three days (as they were not allowed to access any toilet). They also stated that they were subjected to other forms of ill-treatment and sexual violence, including that they were only given a sip of water per day and a piece of bread which inmates had to share with each other, and that they were beaten at the will of the officers and threatened with rape.

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<sup>18</sup> For example, on 8 November, the Israeli Knesset passed an amendment to the Israeli 2016 Counter-terrorism Law criminalising the “systematic and continuous consumption of publications of a terrorist organization under circumstances that indicate identification with the terrorist organization”, and designating Hamas and ISIS as the terrorist organisations to which the new criminal offence applies. The amendment criminalises also passive use of social media, targeting Palestinians’ rights to information and freedom of expression, potentially entailing unlawful and discriminatory surveillance.

<sup>19</sup> Out of 57 indictments issued against Palestinians residents of East Jerusalem and citizens of Israel, see <https://www.gov.il/ar/departments/news/police1dsdsd071100202023>.

27. In addition to those detained by Israel, approximately 6,000 workers and patients from Gaza have been housed at shelters run by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank, often in poor conditions. Starting on 9 November, the PA, in coordination with Israel, transported at least 900 workers and patients who had allegedly requested to return to Gaza. Reports from partner NGOs indicated that before being released into Gaza, ISF kept them blindfolded and handcuffed and confiscated their personal belongings including mobile phones.

### **III-treatment and torture of Palestinian prisoners held on security charges**

28. By the end of October 2023, Israel held 6,704 "security" inmates, the vast majority of them arrested in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, consisting of 2,313 sentenced prisoners, 2,321 remand detainees, 2,070 administrative detainees held without trial. Israel also held 105 people as "unlawful combatants". No information is available to OHCHR about their conditions of detention and the status of legal proceedings against them. The figures above exclude the remaining Palestinians from Gaza, workers and patients, who had been detained by Israel after it revoked their permits. Most Palestinian detainees and prisoners continued to be held inside Israel. The transfer of protected persons, including those accused of offences, to the territory of the occupying Power is prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.<sup>20</sup>
29. Following 7 October, the conditions of detention for Palestinian prisoners in Israel have further deteriorated. On October 7, the Israeli Prisoners' Ombudsman and the Minister of National Security announced that "all prisons will enter a state of emergency". Information received by prisoners' rights organizations indicates that, since the announcement, the basic rights of the prisoners, such as access to water and electricity, medical treatment, family visits and the right to consult with legal representatives, have been severely restricted or completely revoked. The amount of food provided was reduced immensely, food was confiscated, personal belongings, books and electric devices like kettles were also confiscated and canteens closed. For three days after 7 October, no food was given to the prisoners. Many prisoners slept on the floor, or on iron beds without mattresses and pillows. The Israeli Prison Service (IPS) stopped the broadcast of all media channels to the prisons and confiscated all electronic devices, isolating prisoners from the outside world and not allowing them to follow the news, allegedly to prevent them from directing terror through smuggled phones and fear of disorder following the situation outside the prisons. Prisoners' organizations reported extreme overcrowding, with inmates spending 23.5 hours a day inside their cells with only half an hour to shower and exercise in the yard. They also reported that prisoners were denied access to medical treatment or attention.
30. There were reports of violence by IPS personnel against security prisoners, female and male, including elderly and sick prisoners, leading to injuries including broken ribs and injuries to heads; and that they were not provided with medical treatment. Prisoners who met with lawyers or attended hearings on video conference reported that they were beaten in retaliation, and thereafter refused to attend hearings or meet lawyers again, with other prisoners doing the same for fear of beatings. A released prisoner from Gilboa prison said the floors of the section were bloody from the prisoners who were beaten by IPS. OHCHR

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<sup>20</sup> GCIV, Articles 49,76.

continues to document cases where ISF's raids and arrests were conducted in a brutal manner.

31. Between 7 October and 20 November, six Palestinian men died while in Israeli detention, in unclear circumstances. Of the six men, four were held by Israel on "security" charges and two were Palestinian males from Gaza. Among those who died in Israeli detention, was 25-year-old Aarafat Yasser Hamdan, who was arrested during a mass ISF arrest on 22 October in Beit Sira, Ramallah and was announced dead on 24 October. Eyewitnesses who were arrested with Hamdan told OHCHR that ISF physically assaulted and ill-treated all those arrested and that Hamdan was held for at least 12 hours, with his head covered with a thick wool cap at Ofer and Etzion detention facility. OHCHR learnt through lawyers that the man was insulin dependent. His death, along with the other three deaths announced by IPS, was reportedly being examined or investigated by Israeli authorities.
32. On 6 November, following an inquiry from by Israeli media, Israeli authorities confirmed that two Gazan workers had died while in detention (one of them remains unidentified) reportedly in the week after 7 October attacks. Haaretz noted that the IPS had not announced the deaths or any investigation by the military police, contrary to their standard practice, likely because the men had died while at military bases and would therefore be under custody of the IDF.

#### IV. EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS, ARMING OF SETTLERS AND ESCALATION IN SETTLER ATTACKS LEADING TO DISPLACEMENT OF HERDING COMMUNITIES

##### Continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank including East Jerusalem

33. Israel continued the unlawful transfer of its citizens into settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territory, as successive Israeli Governments consistently advanced and implemented policies of settlement expansion and takeover of Palestinian land over the past decade. The number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, concentrated in Area C, currently stands at around 465,000, and in East Jerusalem stands at more than 230,000, taking the total to about 700,000.
34. Since 7 October, settlers, with the political backing of key ministers, are taking advantage of a generally permissive environment to accelerate displacement of Palestinians from their land, raising concerns of forcible transfer seeking to create facts on the ground making the existence of a viable Palestinian state almost impossible.<sup>21</sup> According to Israeli organizations monitoring settlements expansion, settlers have built at least four new outposts since 7

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<sup>21</sup> See [The Times of Israel](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ultranationalist-mk-tzvi-succot-appointed-head-of-knesset-west-bank-subcommittee) [Ultranationalist MK Tzvi Succot appointed head of Knesset West Bank subcommittee](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ultranationalist-mk-tzvi-succot-appointed-head-of-knesset-west-bank-subcommittee) stating he would "develop settlements as much as possible"; see <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1723435457558569102?s=20>, from Minister of National security calling for all Hamas supporters to be "eliminated"; <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1722867468262134050?s=20>, by the Minister of National Security, on denial of settler violence; see also [לכבוד \(amazonaws.com\)](https://www.amazonaws.com), on the order reportedly given by the Minister to the police not to enforce the law against settlers in the West Bank ; see <https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html> on the Minister of Finance asking to create "sterile zones" around settlements to prevent olive harvest.

October, and at least nine new roads leading to settlements, marking a growth in illegal construction by settlers unprecedented since the second Intifada.<sup>22</sup> In addition, settlers, who have been heavily armed by Israeli authorities, have intensified their attacks against Palestinians, aimed at terrorizing them to leave their homes and lands.

35. Already prior to 7 October there were serious concerns that the policies of the Israeli Government aligned, to an unprecedented extent, with the goals of the Israeli settler movement to expand long-term control over the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and, in practice, to further integrate these areas within the territory of the State of Israel.<sup>23</sup>

### **Arming of settler militias by Israeli authorities**

36. In the aftermath of the Hamas attack of 7 October in southern Israel, ISF under the auspices of the Israeli Minister for National Security and the Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense responsible for settlements, reportedly distributed 8,000 army rifles to civilian “settlements defense squads”<sup>24</sup> and “regional defence battalions” established to protect settlements in the West Bank<sup>25</sup> after many troops were redeployed from the West Bank to Gaza.

### **Escalation of attacks by armed settlers including killings**

37. Beside further blurring the line between settlers and the Israeli army, these developments translated into a further escalation of settler violence, already at record-high levels, across the West Bank, and as flagged by numerous human rights organizations and media outlets, attempted creation of new facts on the ground. Between 7 October and 20 November 2023, OCHA recorded 254 settlers’ attacks against Palestinians, resulting in Palestinian casualties and/or damage to property, with an average of six incidents per day, compared with three since the beginning of the year. Over one-third of these incidents included threats with firearms, including shootings.
38. Hundreds of settlers are estimated to have carried out attacks including shooting, burning homes and vehicles, and uprooting of trees. Israeli media reported that, since the escalation of hostilities in Gaza and up to 13 November, the Israeli intelligence agency (Shin Bet), had counted 120 “hate crimes committed”, with no charges been brought in any of the cases.<sup>26</sup>
39. In many incidents, settlers were accompanied by ISF, or were themselves wearing ISF uniforms, and carrying army rifles. For example, on 12 November, three settlers in partial ISF

<sup>22</sup> <https://peacenow.org.il/en/new-roads-and-outposts-flourish-in-the-west-bank-amid-gaza-war>.

<sup>23</sup> A/78/554, para. 5.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Settlements defense squads’ are civilian teams entrusted with the protection of settlements (as well as communities along the Gaza fence), originally envisaged to operate only within settlement boundaries, and to respond to “life-threatening” situations.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Regional defense battalions’ are ISF battalions of reservists, deployed in the West Bank after 7 October, often constituted of settlers. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-02/ty-article/.premium/israels-army-to-recruit-settlers-with-no-army-experience-to-guard-west-bank-settlements/0000018b-8f63-d7a8-afcf-afe3a9b00000>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-13/ty-article/.premium/israeli-settlers-attack-palestinians-and-create-a-new-reality-in-the-west-bank/0000018b-c965-dd8b-abbf-dfff567c0000>



uniform and wearing balaclavas reportedly arrived in a military vehicle without a license plate at the At-Tuwani school, Hebron, forced all the 180 students to leave and removed the Palestinian flag from the school. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly stated that two reservist soldiers were discharged following the incident for “acting in contravention with IDF rules and procedures”.<sup>27</sup>

40. According to OHCHR monitoring, Israeli settlers killed at least eight Palestinians, including a boy, during this period, in three separate incidents. On 11 October 2023, 8-10 Israeli masked settlers, four of whom were carrying rifles and pistols, attacked the town of Qusra, south of Nablus. They were later joined by settlement security guards<sup>28</sup> and attacked Palestinian houses with stones and live bullets. During ensuing confrontations, one settlement security guard shot and killed 28-year-old Awad Mahmoud Ahmed Odeh and injured his 6-year-old daughter in the right shoulder. Subsequently, while withdrawing, settlers continued to shoot and killed three Palestinians, including a 17-year-old boy. The following day, settlers, in the presence of ISF, attacked the funeral procession of the four Palestinians killed the day before and killed 62-year-old Ibrahim Ahmed Mahmoud Wadi and his 25-year-old son Ahmed Ibrahim Ahmed Wadi.

### Settlers’ attacks to prevent olive harvest

41. The imposition of stringent movement restrictions since 7 October coincided with olive harvest season in the West Bank and, together with heightened settler and ISF violence, effectively prevented Palestinian farmers from harvesting their olives, affecting a main source of livelihood for 80,000 to 100,000 Palestinians. Since 7 October, Israeli authorities have not allowed Palestinian farmers to access their lands, including for the purpose of olive harvest in the seam zone, representing 9% of the West Bank. On 6 November, the Israeli Minister of Finance and Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense<sup>29</sup> called for the enforcement of “sterile security zones” around settlements and roads used by settlers, off-limits to Palestinians including farmers owning land in those zones.<sup>30</sup>
42. OHCHR documented multiple incidents of settlers attacking Palestinians harvesting their olives, including with firearms, and forcing them to leave their land, stealing their harvest and poisoning or vandalizing their olive trees. There are multiple NGO reports that settlers have been coordinating a systematic campaign, including through social media messaging applications to identify and share locations of Palestinians picking olives, and systematically

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-idf-reservists-booted-out-of-the-army-for-entering-palestinian-school/>

<sup>28</sup> ‘Settlements security guards’ are established roles to protect settlers inside and outside settlements, along with ISF. They are often paid for, trained, and armed by ISF, granted certain law enforcement powers, and subject to the military discipline system. A/77/493, para. 40.

<sup>29</sup> While the Minister of Defence retains security powers, the Additional Minister, formally under the supervision of the Minister of Defence, has administrative functions pertaining to the majority of the governing powers in the West Bank, including land designations, planning and coordination of demolitions, see A/78/554, para.6.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-calls-for-palestinian-free-buffer-zones-around-west-bank-settlements/>

disrupt their harvest.<sup>31</sup> Israeli forces did not protect Palestinian farmers, and OHCHR documented cases of ISF preventing Palestinians farmers from harvesting olives and requesting they leave their lands, claiming the state of war as a ground to do so. Human rights defenders are increasingly threatened with violence if they document violations. Settler violence adversely affects the rights of Palestinian people, including the rights to security of person, freedom of movement, privacy, family life, an adequate standard of living, work and education and is an important factor of the coercive environment that may leave some Palestinians with no other choice than to leave their places of habitual residence.

43. On 28 October, one of four settlers in civilian clothes,<sup>32</sup> armed with an M16, shot several times and killed 40-year-old Bilal Muhammad Shaheen Saleh as he was picking olives with his family on their land in the community of Al-Desa in Al-Sawiya, Nablus. On 31 October, an ISF officer was arrested in relation to the shooting, but was subsequently released.<sup>33</sup> Since 7 October and as of 18 November, two settlers had been reportedly placed in administrative detention for four months under accusations of assault, damage to property and rioting.

### Displacement of herding communities

44. Settler attacks intensified against Palestinian herding and farming communities, taking advantage of the political and security atmosphere to accelerate the displacement of these communities from their homes and practically expanding Israeli control over Area C of the West Bank. According to OCHA, between 7 October and 20 November, a least 143 households and 1,014 people, including 388 children, from at least 15 herding communities of the south Hebron Hills, the Jordan Valley and in herding areas east of Ramallah, were displaced due to settler violence and access restrictions. Such displacement may amount to forcible transfer, a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.
45. According to OHCHR's monitoring, settlers' attacks leading to displacement which may amount to forcible transfer followed similar patterns in the affected communities, with settlers arriving mostly at night, masked, armed and sometimes wearing uniforms, and destroying tents, solar panels, water pipes and tanks, verbally abusing Palestinians and threatening that they would be killed if they did not leave within 24 hours. Hate speech and incitement to violence added to the threats, with repeated calls made by settlers through social media to shoot at Palestinians, burn their homes as well as leaflets urging Palestinians to flee to Jordan, to avoid "another Nakba".
46. OHCHR monitored the displacement which may amount to forcible transfer of (i) the 12 remaining families of Al-Ganoub community, Hebron, between 9 and 30 October; (ii) the community of Wadi Al Seeq, Ramallah (at least 30 families, 142 persons including 40 children leaving on 12 October); and (iii) the community of Hizma, East Jerusalem (two families

<sup>31</sup> See for example [The Third Front: Settler Violence in Gaza War's Shadow and the Impact on Area C - Peace Now](#)

<sup>32</sup> Jack Khoury. "משרד הבריאות: עדויות על התקפות במספר מטעי זיתים הפלסטיני דווח על הרג מירי מתנחלים. בלאל סאלח בן 40 נפגע מכדור חי בחזה. עדויות על התקפות במספר מטעי זיתים. בגזרת שכם." (Unofficial translation: *Elsavia village near Nablus. Documentation of settlers in Palestinian olive groves. The Palestinian Ministry of Health reported a death from settler gunfire. Bilal Saleh, 40, was hit by a live bullet in the chest. Evidence of attacks on a number of olive groves in the Nablus sector.*) <https://t.co/jTHrN50tdn>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-idf-reservists-booted-out-of-the-army-for-entering-palestinian-school/>

totaling 17 Palestinians who left on 8 and 30 October). In each case, settlers escalated the use of violence to force communities from their homes, destroying homes and stealing livestock while threatening Palestinians with firearms, in all cases with complete impunity, and in some cases wearing ISF uniforms. OHCHR had documented that 7 families of the community of Al Ganoub had left between 2018 and May 2022 due to the coercive environment, in particular settler violence.<sup>34</sup> After 7 October, settler attacks intensified to the point of forcing the remaining 12 families in the community to leave their homes. One community representative told OHCHR that they used to be attacked by settlers with sticks, while after 7 October the settlers would come into the community with automatic rifles. After 40 settlers threatened them at gunpoint to leave on 9 October, seven families were forced to leave and spend several days in the wilderness without shelter, as settlers were keeping blocked the road leading to other villages. The remaining five families left after armed settlers went back on 30 October and 1 November, giving them a 24-hour ultimatum to leave.

## V. MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS, SEPARATION AND ISOLATION OF PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES

47. Since 7 October, Israeli authorities have imposed severe and systematic restrictions on the movement of Palestinians across the West Bank including East Jerusalem, which remained in place as of 19 November. ISF has closed almost all entrances to Palestinian villages and towns to vehicular access and disconnected Palestinian cities and towns from main roads by closing road gates, placing earth mounds or concrete roadblocks, erecting flying checkpoints at main road junctions.<sup>35</sup> In some cases, closures such as earth mounds have also been erected by settlers.
48. Main checkpoints and entrances remain closed and, when they are opened, extensive searches are imposed, which creates delays in vehicular movements as well as exposes drivers to the risk of being arrested and ill-treated by ISF. According to Yesh Din, it is the most limited movement that Palestinians in the West Bank have had since the Second Intifada.<sup>36</sup>
49. The closures, along with massive presence of ISF and armed settlers on roads, have resulted in significant movement restrictions for Palestinians and the inability to access services, for example, access of Palestinians to ambulances, medical treatment, and other basic services, also contributing to food shortages and price increases in several communities. Movement restrictions do not apply to Israeli settlers, despite the massive increase in settler violence, and therefore appear both arbitrary and discriminatory against Palestinians, exacerbating existing systematic discriminatory movement restrictions targeted at Palestinians. They also raise concerns of collective punishment.
50. Palestinians living near settlements and already isolated communities have been the most vulnerable to the increased severity of movement and access restrictions. In the closed area

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<sup>34</sup> A/77/493, para. 50.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-22>. See also 'Palestinians in West Bank face closures, attacks amid Israeli offensive' - Al Jazeera.

<sup>36</sup> ['The West Bank Is Being Reshaped Along With Gaza Post-Oct. 7' - Bloomberg](#)

of H2 in Hebron, Israeli authorities have placed 7,000 Palestinians under strict curfew, including a closure of all shops and services, and given limited hours to enter or exit through the main checkpoints every other day to access goods and services outside of H2. On 1 November, OHCHR received video footage from residents showing ISF physically assaulting, pushing, beating, and kicking a boy standing in front of a Palestinian shop in Hebron H2 that was opened in alleged lack of compliance with the closure imposed by ISF since 9 October. The footage also shows ISF mistreating the Palestinian owner inside the shop. On 7 November, Israeli soldiers prevented three Palestinian women from accessing a clinic operated by Doctors Without Borders in the neighborhood. Meanwhile, settlers were allowed to move freely in the area, and, on 7 November, settlers marched through Palestinian neighborhoods in H2, chanting “death to Arabs” through loudspeakers.

51. For 40 days, ISF imposed a complete closure on the town of Huwwara, Nablus, prohibiting movement of Palestinian vehicles and pedestrians and shutting down commercial activities. Since 7 October until 12 November, ISF closed to Palestinian access a 3-kilometer stretch of road 60 passing through the town, in order to ensure safe passage for settlers. In addition, ISF also closed side roads connecting from the main road to inner neighborhoods, effectively splitting the town in two. Although Palestinians could, in theory, cross the highway on foot, this remained difficult, if not impossible, to many. It was reported, for example, that one Palestinian elderly man tried to cross the road to go to the mobile clinic, but he was detained by ISF. Reportedly, schools remain closed. This includes seven public and private schools and six kindergartens that have been closed since 7 October and remain so at time of writing, with school students being taught remotely. On 12 November, together with the opening of the first section of a bypass road, the ISF ordered the reopening of the part of road 60 passing through Huwwara.
52. Within East Jerusalem, ISF has imposed restrictions on access of Palestinians to Jerusalem’s Old City and to the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound. Since 7 October, ISF have installed *ad hoc* checkpoints preventing Palestinian non-residents from entering the Old City, and Al Aqsa Compound. For several consecutive weeks, ISF has prevented thousands of Palestinians from attending Friday Prayer at Al Aqsa Compound, bringing down from 50,000 to 5,500 the average number of Palestinian Muslims attending the prayers within Al Aqsa Compound.

## **VI. EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE, ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ILL-TREATMENT BY PALESTINIAN SECURITY FORCES**

53. Palestinian Security Forces unlawfully used force including live ammunition and beating to disperse protestors demonstrating in Ramallah and other cities of the West Bank on 17 and 18 October, after the explosion at the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza. In addition, at least two Palestinians were killed by PSF in these circumstances. Use of lethal force against peaceful protesters is prohibited under international human rights law. Palestinian human rights organizations reported that several were arrested, brutally beaten during arrest and criminally prosecuted, with further legal proceedings pending. OHCHR also received reports of Palestinians arrested, interrogated and ill-treated by PSF since 7 of October on the basis of their perceived affiliation with Hamas and, in at least one case, based on political opinions that they had expressed on social media in which they had criticized policies of Palestinian authorities in the West Bank.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 54. To the Government of Israel:

- a. Urgently take steps to end killing and injury of Palestinians during operations in the occupied West Bank and ensure that all use of force is in full compliance with international law and standards governing law enforcement operations, by strictly regulating the use of live ammunition, ensuring that security forces are adequately equipped and trained in the use of less-lethal weapons, and that all operations are planned and implemented to minimize the threat to life, and imposing appropriate disciplinary and penal sanctions for members of security forces who do not respect such regulations.
- b. Immediately end the use of military weapons and operations in the maintenance of public order through law enforcement in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- c. Issue clear and unambiguous orders to all Israeli security forces to ensure the effective protection of the Palestinian population against settler violence, and hold to account members of the Israeli security forces who fail to comply with such orders.
- d. Ensure that all incidents of violence by settlers and Israeli security forces against Palestinians, including violence against women, and damage to their property, are promptly, effectively, thoroughly, and transparently investigated; that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions, and that victims are provided with effective remedies, including adequate compensation, in accordance with international standards;
- e. Lift all discriminatory movement restrictions across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and ensure Palestinians' ability to move safely throughout the territory.
- f. Immediately and completely cease and reverse all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in compliance with international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions, such as Security Council resolution 2334 (2016).
- g. Release Palestinians arbitrarily arrested in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel since 7 October. Ensure that detention conditions strictly conform with international norms and standards, end all practices that may amount to torture or other ill-treatment of Palestinians detained, and ensure that all allegations of such violations are promptly, impartially, thoroughly and independently investigated, and that perpetrators are held to account.
- h. As loss of life occurring in custody, in unnatural circumstances, creates a presumption of arbitrary deprivation of life by State authorities, conduct prompt, impartial, thorough and transparent investigation, through an independent body, into Palestinian deaths in Israeli custody.

**55. To the Government of the State of Palestine:**

- a. **Ensure full respect for freedom of expression and right to peaceful assembly, including by providing clear instructions to its security forces not to use lethal force to disperse peaceful protesters, and ensure prompt, transparent, and independent investigation into killings of Palestinians by Palestinian security forces and provide effective remedies to victims.**
- b. **End all practices amounting to arbitrary detention and fully guarantee fair trial rights; immediately end all practices that may amount to torture or ill-treatment, ensure that all violations are promptly, impartially and independently investigated, hold perpetrators accountable, and guarantee that victims have access to an effective remedy.**

**56. All States, especially States with influence, should immediately take urgent and concrete measures to:**

- a. **Ensure full respect for and compliance with international human rights law, as well as the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council;**
- b. **Ensure that, in accordance with international standards, those responsible for settler violence are appropriately held to account.**
- c. **Prevent further deterioration of the situation of human rights in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.**