

## **Joint Urgent Appeal**

**Parallel to its Aggression on Gaza, Israel Escalates its Oppression of Palestinians  
in Every Part of Historic Palestine**

**Submitted by:**

- **Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council, comprising of:**
  - Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
  - Aldameer Association for Human Rights
  - Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
  - Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
  - Defense for Children International – Palestine
  - Hurriyat - Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights
  - Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
  - Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights - Observer Member
  - The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
  - The Independent Commission for Human Rights - Observer Member
- **The Community Action Center at Al-Quds University**
- **The Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)**

**2 November 2023**

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**For the attention of:**

- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, Ms. Francesca Albanese;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Mr. Morris Tidball-Binz;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, Ms. Ashwini K.P.;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Ms. Tlaleng Mofokeng;
- The United Nations Working Group on arbitrary detention, Ms. Priya Gopalan (Chair Rapporteur);
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Ms. Irene Khan;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Ms. Alice Jill Edwards;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Mr. Nyaletsossi Clément Voule;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor;
- The United Nations Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, Ms. Aua Balde (Chairperson);
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ms. Nazila Ghanea;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, Ms. Reem Alsalem;
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Ms. Farida Shaheed; and
- The United Nations Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Ms. Cecilia Bailliet

## 1. Introduction

Since its establishment, Israel has imposed an institutionalised system of racial domination and oppression – in what amounts to apartheid – over the Palestinian people, as a structural element of furthering Zionist settler colonialism, in violation of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and the right of Palestinian refugees to return.<sup>1</sup> With the intention to maintain its settler colonialism and apartheid, Israel, for decades, has systematically and institutionally pursued and committed unlawful policies and practices, including, *inter alia*, arbitrary deprivation of life; denying economic, social, and cultural rights; arbitrary detention and illegal imprisonment; torture and other ill-treatment; collective punishment; persecution and silencing any opposition to Israeli apartheid; which serve to undermine Palestinian resistance to Israeli oppression.<sup>2</sup>

Since the start of Israel’s retaliatory attack against over two million Palestinians in Gaza<sup>3</sup> – which, has killed 8,805 Palestinians, including at least 3,648 children and 2,187 women,<sup>4</sup> destroyed or damaged 45 percent (over 177,000) of all housing units in the Gaza Strip,<sup>5</sup> and rendered over 1.4 million Palestinians internally displaced<sup>6</sup> – Israel has alarmingly escalated its decades-long, widespread and systematic attacks against Palestinians elsewhere in historic Palestine.

Despite the danger of Israeli occupying forces’ (IOF) excessive use of force, settler attacks, and Israeli-imposed movement and access restrictions,<sup>7</sup> our field researchers have continued to document and monitor the deteriorating human rights situation and Israeli oppression of Palestinians throughout historic Palestine. The repressive measures which have been features of recent Israel’s violations include, *inter alia*, systematic use of excessive force, including lethal force; condoning, encouraging, and enabling of settler violence – including by arming the already well-armed Israeli settlers –; movement restrictions; mass campaign of arbitrary arrests; retaliatory measures against Palestinian prisoners and detainees; repression of the rights to freedom of speech and assembly against Palestinians who show support for their people in the Gaza Strip; and punitive measures, arbitrary detention, and degrading treatment of Palestinian workers from Gaza who were present inside the Green Line on 7 October 2023. **Between 7 October and 1 November 2023, 129 Palestinians, including 39 children, were killed in the occupied West Bank, including the eastern part of**

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Haq, “Israeli Apartheid: Tool of Zionist Settler Colonialism”, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 121-167.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Al-Haq, “Al-Haq, Al Mezan, and PCHR Send Urgent Appeal to UN Special Procedures and the Commission of Inquiry on Israel’s Total Warfare on Gaza’s Civilian Population”, 12 October 2023, available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/21878.html>.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as of 2:00 pm on 1 November 2023. OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #26”, 1 November 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-26>.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Gaza Ministry of Public Works and Housing as of 23 October 2023. OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #19”, 25 October 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-19>.

<sup>6</sup> OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #25”, 31 October 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-25>.

<sup>7</sup> Addameer, “Lawyers Working with Palestinian Prisoner Organizations Face Significant Difficulties in Monitoring Detainees’ Conditions”, 11 October 2023, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/news/5149>.

**Jerusalem, by the IOF and Israeli settlers, according to Al-Haq’s documentation.** Moreover, in addition to the aforementioned 129 Palestinians killed, Al-Haq is currently documenting the death of a Palestinian worker from Gaza who may have been mutilated and killed by a Jewish-Israeli inside the Green Line.

In light of the ongoing deterioration of the human rights situation in historic Palestine, this urgent appeal seeks to address key human rights violations committed by Israeli authorities, forces and settlers, during the past 25 days between 7 October and 1 November 2023. It is of paramount concern that this situation continues to escalate, with more Palestinians being killed, detained and suppressed on a daily basis.

As such, while Israel leaves no place safe in Gaza, and subjects the protected 2.3 million population to imminent genocide,<sup>8</sup> our organisations address this urgent appeal to your mandates, urgently requesting your immediate intervention to continue to call for an end to the ongoing Israeli military aggression on Gaza,<sup>9</sup> as well as to address Israel’s repressive attacks against Palestinians across historic Palestine – as Israeli repression of the Palestinian people, regardless of their location, is part and parcel of the broader context of Israel’s settler colonial apartheid regime.

## **2. Israeli Excessive Use of Force: the IOF Killed 119 Palestinians Throughout the West Bank**

Last year was marked the deadliest year for Palestinians living in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, since the Second *Intifada*, with a total of 157 killings recorded.<sup>10</sup> Between 1 January and 6 October 2023, the IOF and Israeli settlers killed 203 Palestinians living in the West Bank, rendering 2023 even deadlier.<sup>11</sup>

Since the start of Israel’s attack on Gaza on 7 October 2023, Israel simultaneously embarked on a ‘shoot-to-kill’ policy against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including the eastern part of Jerusalem, employing systematic use of excessive force, including lethal force. This has, as of 1 November 2023, culminated in the **killing of at least 119 Palestinians, including 38 children, by the IOF, according to the documentation of Al-Haq,<sup>12</sup> and the injury of over 2,270 Palestinians, according**

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<sup>8</sup> Al-Haq, “No Safe Place: Despite ‘Evacuation Order’, Israel Continues to Carpet-Bomb Gaza From North To South”, 18 October 2023, available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/21927.html>.

<sup>9</sup> OHCHR, “Israel/occupied Palestinian territory: UN experts deplore attacks on civilians, call for truce and urge international community to address root causes of violence”, 12 October 2023, available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/israeloccupied-palestinian-territory-un-experts-deplore-attacks-civilians>; OHCHR, “UN expert warns of new instance of mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, calls for immediate ceasefire”, 14 October 2023, available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/un-expert-warns-new-instance-mass-ethnic-cleansing-palestinians-calls>; OHCHR, “UN expert urges immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access as Gaza health sector reaches “breaking point””, 17 October 2023, available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/un-expert-urges-immediate-ceasefire-and-humanitarian-access-gaza-health>; and OHCHR, “Gaza: UN experts decry bombing of hospitals and schools as crimes against humanity, call for prevention of genocide”, 19 October 2023, available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/gaza-un-experts-decry-bombing-hospitals-and-schools-crimes-against-humanity>.

<sup>10</sup> According to Al-Haq’s documentation.

<sup>11</sup> According to Al-Haq’s documentation.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Haq is currently documenting the killing of Randa Abdallah Abel Aziz Ajaj, and is yet to confirm if she was killed by an Israeli settler or by the IOF.

**to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.**<sup>13</sup> Notably, one of those killed, **Mohammad Yousif Al Farra**, was a Palestinian from Gaza who was killed by the IOF in Bethlehem on 11 October 2023, and his body is still withheld by the Israeli occupying authorities, as of the time of writing.

According to Al-Haq’s initial documentation, the majority of those killed by the IOF were killed while participating in confrontations with the IOF in protest of Israel’s ongoing military aggression on Gaza, as well as during confrontations against Israel’s daily military attacks, and sweeping raids and arrests of Palestinians across Palestinian cities, towns, villages, and refugee camps. Friday, 13 October 2023, was one of the bloodiest days for Palestinians in the West Bank in 2023, with 16 Palestinians, including five children, killed. Of the 16 killed, one was killed by an Israeli settler and the other 15 were killed by the IOF.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, on 19 October 2023, the IOF carried out a vicious 28-hour military attack on Tulkarem city, including Nour Shams Refugee Camp, killing 13 Palestinians, including six children and levelling Palestinian infrastructure and properties.

In Jerusalem, Israel has deployed police units in Palestinian neighbourhoods since 7 October 2023, with an intensified police presence in Jerusalem’s Old City and the surrounding Palestinian neighbourhoods, particularly those where Israeli settlers illegally reside in the heart of occupied Palestinian neighbourhoods.<sup>15</sup>

On 13 October 2023, **Mohammad Taher Ali Mustafa, 16**, a Palestinian child, was fatally shot with live ammunition by the Israeli occupying police in Al-Issawiya neighbourhood, located in the eastern part of Jerusalem. According to Al-Haq’s initial documentation, Mohammad was shot in the head and in the chest. According to the Community Action Center’s (CAC) documentation, on the same day, and during the burial ceremony of Mohammad, confrontations with the Israeli police erupted, which continued to use live ammunition against the Palestinian civilian population, and resulted in the killing of **Laith Osama Za’al Abu-Murra, 17**, a Palestinian child who was participating in the burial ceremony of Mohammad. According to Al-Haq’s initial documentation, Laith was shot in the chest.

Moreover, the CAC’s documentation shows that the Israeli occupying police in Jerusalem have been targeting young Palestinian males deliberately and systematically without any justification that warrants resort to force. As Y.I, a young Palestinian Jerusalemite who was relentlessly beaten by the Israeli occupying police, told CAC:

*Suddenly, they [the Israeli police] approached me and asked why I was standing here. I responded that I live nearby. The police then immediately started beating me. I felt the beating wouldn’t stop. I did not do anything. It seemed like they were acting out and driven out of pure vengeance, as if they wanted to seek revenge for what had happened on 7 October 2023.*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #26”, 1 November 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-26>.

<sup>14</sup> According to Al-Haq’s documentation.

<sup>15</sup> According to the CAC’s monitoring.

<sup>16</sup> On file with CAC.

In other documented instances in Jerusalem, the Israeli police approached Palestinian males, and compelled them to unlock their phones, and then the police checked them, including WhatsApp messages and other communication apps. The Israeli occupying police are conducting arbitrary racially profiled stop and search practices, clearly absent reasonable suspicion that certain offences have been committed. For example, the Israeli police have conducted personal searches for videos and/or pictures and/or messages which they consider as expressing support to Hamas, including footage expressing support to Palestinians in Gaza, whereupon the police then harass the phones' owners on the spot. Harassments and violent practices are taking place, in the absence of arrests and detentions, indicating that they are arbitrarily and racially motivated to harass and suppress Palestinians in Jerusalem. In that, this repeated practice in Jerusalem seems to purposely inflict intimidation and humiliation against Palestinians.

Currently, the Israeli government is considering amending the police guidelines to allow the use of live ammunition against protesters. On 3 October 2023, the Israeli Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, confirmed his Ministry's plans to authorise the use of live ammunition against protestors, reportedly "in preparation for the possibility that a scenario may arise in which Arab-Israelis block movement routes for the [IOF], drawing lessons from the 'Guardian of the Walls' [the Unity *Intifada* of May 2021]".<sup>17</sup> Since 7 October 2023, it has been reported that the Israeli government is progressing with the introduction of such a policy, and that the Israeli Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara agreed to expedite the legislation.<sup>18</sup>

- *28-Hour Military Attack on Tulkarem City, Including Nour Shams Refugee Camp: 13 Palestinians Killed*

According to Al-Haq's documentation, on 19 October 2023, at around 2:30 am, a massive Israeli military force, consisting of over 50 military vehicles, along with two D9 bulldozers, carried out a military attack on Tulkarem city, including Nour Shams Refugee Camp, located at the eastern entrance of Tulkarem city. Notably, Nour Shams Refugee Camp has been subject to repeated large-scale Israeli military attacks, however this attack is so far the most extensive, in terms of the quantity of military force and vehicles, as well as the use of an airstrike.

The military presence extended its reach to encompass virtually all directions around the Camp, with a pronounced emphasis on the northern perimeter, which is the primary entrance leading to the Camp's square. This entrance is positioned to the south of Tulkarem-Nablus Street, serving as the eastern gateway to Tulkarem city. In addition, a substantial military presence was strategically positioned in the eastern part of the Camp, encompassing the Wadi Al-Manshiya neighbourhood, as well as the Jabal Al-Nasr and Jabal Al-Salihin neighbourhoods situated in the western and southern areas

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<sup>17</sup> Adalah, "Ben Gvir Confirms His Ministry Plans to Authorize Police Use of Live Ammunition Against Palestinian Protesters", 4 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10894>.

<sup>18</sup> The Times of Israel, "Cabinet said slated to okay police use of live fire against protesters blocking roads during multi-front war", 27 October 2023, available at: [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/cabinet-said-slated-to-okay-police-use-of-live-fire-against-protesters-blocking-roads-during-multi-front-war/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/cabinet-said-slated-to-okay-police-use-of-live-fire-against-protesters-blocking-roads-during-multi-front-war/).

of the Camp. In addition, the IOF were also deployed and stationed within several streets and various buildings across diverse areas of the Camp.

At the commencement of the attack, Israeli military bulldozers started to destroy the infrastructure and sections of the Tulkarem-Nablus Street. These bulldozers, accompanied by a significant convoy of military vehicles, accessed the Camp Square via the northern entry point. Concurrently, an additional bulldozer further destroyed within various roads surrounding the Camp and within the Camp Square itself. It is noteworthy that these same locales had previously undergone similar destruction, with the most recent instance taking place on 24 September 2023.

Shortly after the Israeli military attack had started, at around 3:00 am, **Taha Ibrahim Mohammad Ali Mahmeed, 15**, left his home in the Jabal Al-Nasr neighbourhood, heading a dozen metres west of the Camp via Tulkarem-Nablus Street. Taha was with another young man. As they approached the road and Taha came within sight of the IOF, he was abruptly fired at without prior warning. At this time, as per Al-Haq's initial findings, military vehicles were stationed roughly 80-100 metres from Taha. He was immediately struck and fell to the ground. His friend, situated to the south and behind him, bore witness to this sequence of events. When Taha's friend attempted to approach him, shots were directed towards him but did not result in injury. As Taha was shot close to his home, his father tried to retrieve him but he, too, was also shot, sustaining injuries to his right leg and the right side of his abdomen, before managing to leave the scene. Footage taken by Taha's sister from their home as she was initially filming to joke with her brother saying: "This is stupid Taha", shows the shooting of Taha a second later.<sup>19</sup> Taha's family contacted the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, but the presence of military vehicles and the IOF on Tulkarem-Nablus Street obstructed and blocked ambulance access.

As such, coordination was initiated with the Palestinian liaison and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which ultimately took approximately an hour and a half to facilitate the ambulance's arrival. Taha was then transferred to Thabet Thabet Governmental Hospital, where he was pronounced dead upon arrival, due to his injuries, including a head wound. At the time he was shot, Taha was carrying empty bottles in his hands and did not pose a threat to the IOF, according to Al-Haq's documentation. Notably, despite the ambulance that transferred Taha having already accessed the area, the coordination for medical transfer covered Taha alone. This meant that there was a subsequent delay in transferring his father to the hospital, as another coordination with the Israeli authorities was finalised nearly an hour later. Taha's father was subsequently admitted to the intensive care unit at Thabet Thabet Governmental Hospital, and received medical treatment.

The Israeli military attack on the Camp continued, with bulldozers actively damaging infrastructure. This occurred amid ongoing armed confrontations and the detonation of several homemade explosive devices attached to Israeli military vehicles as they moved within and around the Camp. The IOF also raided numerous homes in the Camp, and often detained some of their residents.

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<sup>19</sup> Twitter, @btselem, 26 October 2023, available at: <https://x.com/btselem/status/1717554938337701929?s=20>



Al-Manshiyya neighbourhood in the eastern part of the Camp was one of the most heavily targeted areas during the military attack. A military bulldozer reached the outskirts of the aforementioned neighbourhood, damaging infrastructure and roads. During this time, armed Palestinians fired shots towards the bulldozer and military vehicles, while some young Palestinians hurled homemade Molotov cocktails toward them.

At around 1:30 pm of the same day, 19 October 2023, two Israeli military helicopters were observed circling in the Camp's airspace, in addition to at least one reconnaissance aircraft. Without prior warning or notification, a missile was launched towards around 20-25 Palestinians, including some armed individuals, along with others carrying homemade explosives, and unarmed Palestinians, who were located in the Al-Manshiyya neighbourhood. In complete disregard of the applicable law enforcement paradigm, the Israeli airstrike was of extraordinary magnitude and unduly excessive, resulting in the killing and injury of all individuals present at the scene.

At the time of writing, ten Palestinians, including four children, were killed in this attack: **Yousif Omar Mahmoud Zaghdad, 11; Odai Ma'moun Khaled Abul Hija, 15; Sari Odai Ali Al Sidda, 16; Mujahed Mohammad Yousif Sa'ayedeh, 16; Osama Sa'ed Khalil Khalil, 20; Ra'ed Ahmad Mahmoud Hmeidi, 20; Ahmad Faisal Abdellateef Ghannam, 26; Mohammad Fathi Ahmad Hamed, 33** (whose wife gave birth to a newborn son about eight days before his killing); **Qaisar Kamal Mohammad Khalil, 36; and Omar Faisal Abdellateef Ghannam, 43** (Ahmad's brother, who was also killed in this attack).



Pictures showing the damage caused by the Israeli missile  
- Al-Haq's field researcher, 20 October 2023 ©

The movement of military vehicles within Tulkarem city exhibited a consistent and persistent presence throughout the entire duration of the military assault, primarily characterised by the rotation and reinforcement of the IOF. One of the neighbourhoods that experienced active movement of military vehicles was the Thunaba neighbourhood in Tulkarem city, situated in close proximity to the Nour Shams and Tulkarem refugee camps. Throughout the 28-hour-long Israeli military attack, confrontations erupted in this area between Palestinian youth and the IOF. As Palestinian youth primarily threw stones, the IOF used live ammunition against the Palestinian demonstrators. At around 4:50 pm of the same day, Israeli occupying soldiers, who were in their fully-armoured military vehicle, fatally shot, **Ali Abdallah Mohammad Sa'eed Khazna, 15**, a Palestinian child, at least twice in his upper front chest area, from a distance of approximately 50 metres. Ali was transferred by a civilian vehicle to Thabet Thabet Hospital, where his death was pronounced upon arrival.

At around 6:30 am on 20 October 2023, the IOF started to withdraw from Tulkarem city, including Nour Shams Refugee Camp. Following the withdrawal of the IOF, a paramedic team from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society was sent to a shrubland area near Nour Shams Refugee Camp. During their search operations, they located the body of **Jameel Jamal Ja'a'rah, 22**, who had succumbed to a gunshot wound near his left eye. Jameel was discovered lying on his back, roughly 20-30 metres away from a partially constructed house, where the IOF, including Israeli snipers, had been positioned. Notably, the paramedic team had received a report indicating the possibility of several Palestinians killed and injured in the shrubland area at around 3:00 am of the same day. Some ambulances were dispatched to the location, but they were blocked and prevented from entering the site by the IOF, who denied such reports and instructed them to leave.

### **3. Organised Settler Violence: At Least Nine Palestinians Killed by Israeli Settlers**

Between 1 January and 6 October 2023, Jewish-Israelis, including settlers, killed 11 Palestinians from the West Bank, according to Al-Haq's documentation. During the reporting period, between 7 October and 1 November 2023, at least nine Palestinians, including a child, were killed by Israeli settlers in the West Bank.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, on 30 October 2023, the family of **Mujahed Nimer Al-Froukh**, announced his passing. According to Al-Haq's initial, ongoing documentation, Mujahed, a Palestinian worker from Sa'eer village near Hebron in the West Bank, was working in Sedrot, inside the Green Line, and went missing on 7 October 2023. The following day, on 8 October 2023, his family received a phone call from an individual identifying as a Jewish-Israeli, informing them that they had killed Mujahed. Later, on 21 October 2023, the Israeli police contacted Mujahed's family to identify his body, but they were unable to do so due to the severe mutilation caused by the attack on him. DNA samples were collected from his family for testing and comparison with the body. On 30 October 2023, Mujahed's family was informed that the tests matched.

According to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), during the first eight months of 2023, there was an average of three settler-related incidents per day, in contrast to the average of two per day in 2022 and

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<sup>20</sup> Al-Haq is currently documenting the killing of Randa Abdallah Abel Aziz Ajaj, and is yet to confirm if she was killed by an Israeli settler or by the IOF.

one per day in 2021.<sup>21</sup> Since 7 October 2023, OCHA reported a daily average of seven attacks by settlers.<sup>22</sup> This increase is a result of the alarming increase in Israeli mobilisation to attack Palestinians since 7 October 2023, coupled with decades-long of impunity for settler violence,<sup>23</sup> genocidal, instigative, and discriminatory statements and measures from Israeli officials, and the ongoing olive harvest season.<sup>24</sup> Such reality indicates a potential dire escalation in Israeli settler violence against Palestinians, spanning both sides of the Green Line.

The already armed Israeli settlers and other Israeli-Jewish citizens have been lately reinforced to hold more arms. For example, on 10 October 2023, Ben-Gvir announced that Ministry is distributing 10,000 firearms, as well as combat gear, protective vests, and helmets, to Israeli-Jewish citizens,<sup>25</sup> – which is yet again another call of encouragement by Israeli officials for settler violence. In his statement, Ben-Gvir said: “[w]e will change the world so that the settlements will be protected”, adding that he has “ordered the massive arming of the civilian standby units in order to protect the settlements and the cities”.<sup>26</sup> Notably, Ben-Gvir has previously praised his Ministry’s policy of arming Jewish-Israelis, saying: it is “important and has proven its usefulness”.<sup>27</sup>

On 15 October 2023, five days following Ben-Gvir’s announcement, the Knesset’s National Security Committee approved new regulations that ease the requirements for citizens - notably Jewish-Israelis - to acquire firearms, “as a step in the government’s broader plan to arm Jewish Israeli civilians”.<sup>28</sup> The recently implemented regulations broaden the range of individuals eligible for firearm acquisition. This includes volunteers in Israel’s Magen David Adom emergency medical service, former police volunteers with a service record exceeding 15 years, individuals aged 21 or older with one year of combatant service or two years of military service, and women with one

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<sup>21</sup> OCHA, “Displacement of Palestinian herders amid increasing settler violence”, 21 September 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/displacement-palestinian-herders-amid-increasing-settler-violence>.

<sup>22</sup> OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #21” 27 October 2023, available at: <https://ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-21>.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Haq, “Institutionalised Impunity: Israel’s Failure to Combat Settler Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Al-Haq, “The Olive Harvest Season Disrupted by Settler Violence and Israeli Restrictions Imposed on Palestinian Farmers”, 7 November 2014, available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/monitoring-documentation/6589.html>; and OCHA, “2020 olive harvest season: low yield amidst access restrictions and settler violence”, 13 January 2021, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/2020-olive-harvest-season-low-yield-amidst-access-restrictions-and-settler-violence>.

<sup>25</sup> The Times of Israel, “Ben Gvir says 10,000 assault rifles purchased for civilian security teams”, 10 October 2023, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ben-gvir-says-10000-assault-rifles-purchased-for-civilian-security-teams/#:~:text=National%20Security%20Minister%20Itamar%20Ben,cities%20and%20West%20Bank%20settlements>.

<sup>26</sup> The Times of Israel, “Deadly violence surges in West Bank as war rages in Gaza region”, 15 October 2023, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/deadly-violence-surges-in-west-bank-as-war-rages-in-gaza-region/>.

<sup>27</sup> Middle East Monitor, “Israel national security minister: ‘Important’ to arm settlers”, 2 August 2023, available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230802-israel-national-security-minister-important-to-arm-settlers/>.

<sup>28</sup> Adalah, “Adalah: Israel Loosening Gun Controls Puts Palestinian Lives in Peril”, 17 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10916>.

year of national or civic service, exempting them from completing their entire service term.<sup>29</sup> This would reportedly make an additional 400,000 Israeli Jews eligible to have a licence for guns.<sup>30</sup>

As this initiative places a special emphasis on Israeli settlers residing in colonial settlements in the West Bank and those living in mixed Jewish-Palestinian cities inside the Green Line,<sup>31</sup> our organisations warn of the possibility of attacks against Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, as we had witnessed in the Unity *Intifada* of May 2021.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, on 10 October 2023, Ben-Gvir threatened Palestinians with a ‘Guardian of the Walls 2’, stating that “preparations will be made for a Guardian of the Walls 2”,<sup>33</sup> in reference to the Unity Intifada of May 2021.<sup>34</sup> On 19 October 2023, Ben-Gvir celebrated the arming of Jewish-Israelis in Bnei Brak and Akka, and the “significant simplifications in the exams [to carry weapons]”, announced that Beer AlSabe’ will be armed in the following day, and reiterated his call on everyone to go “arm yourselves”.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, Israeli settlers have increased their mobilisation over social media platforms, including Telegram and WhatsApp,<sup>36</sup> as more groups have been created since 7 October 2023 to coordinate attacks in the West Bank. For example, reportedly, one group chat on WhatsApp with over 800 participants, has a description telling Israeli settlers to prepare for “the possibility of mobilising for a joint activity with the security forces for the immediate demolition of terrorist houses”, and further urging Israeli settlers to “eliminate” any Palestinian approaching a settlement. Within the aforementioned WhatsApp group, messages, such as, “[f]rom the stories flowing in from the Gaza Strip,

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Haaretz, “ Hamas’ Attack Has Accelerated Israel’s Domestic Arms Race”, 24 October 2023, available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israel-is-basically-telling-citizens-you-need-to-take-care-of-yourself/0000018b-6180-d312-a1fb-f7fb54730000>.

<sup>31</sup> The Times of Israel, “Ben Gvir says 10,000 assault rifles purchased for civilian security teams”, 10 October 2023, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ben-gvir-says-10000-assault-rifles-purchased-for-civilian-security-teams/>.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Haq, “Israel Continues Repression of Palestinian Protests Challenging Israel’s Domination and Oppression on Both Sides of the Green Line”, 31 May 2021, available at: [https://www.alhaq.org/cached\\_uploads/download/2021/06/05/210531-final-website-ws-hrc47-israel-continues-repression-of-palestinian-protests-challenging-israel-s-domination-and-oppression-on-both-sides-of-the-green-line-1622892653.pdf](https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/2021/06/05/210531-final-website-ws-hrc47-israel-continues-repression-of-palestinian-protests-challenging-israel-s-domination-and-oppression-on-both-sides-of-the-green-line-1622892653.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> The Times of Israel, “Ben Gvir says 10,000 assault rifles purchased for civilian security teams”, 10 October 2023, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ben-gvir-says-10000-assault-rifles-purchased-for-civilian-security-teams/#:~:text=I%20have%20given%20instructions%20for,was%20accompanied%20by%20severe%20inter>.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Haq, “Israel Continues Repression of Palestinian Protests Challenging Israel’s Domination and Oppression on Both Sides of the Green Line”, 31 May 2021, available at: [https://www.alhaq.org/cached\\_uploads/download/2021/06/05/210531-final-website-ws-hrc47-israel-continues-repression-of-palestinian-protests-challenging-israel-s-domination-and-oppression-on-both-sides-of-the-green-line-1622892653.pdf](https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/2021/06/05/210531-final-website-ws-hrc47-israel-continues-repression-of-palestinian-protests-challenging-israel-s-domination-and-oppression-on-both-sides-of-the-green-line-1622892653.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Twitter, @itamarbengvir, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1715104978031755310>.

<sup>36</sup> Middle East Monitor, “Israeli settlers using Whatsapp to plot to harass, boycott Palestinians”, 6 September 2023, available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230906-israel-settlers-using-whatsapp-to-plot-to-harrass-boycott-palestinians/>.

it is clear that we cannot rely on the army alone to be able to protect us in a time of chaos”, and “[a]re you ready for war?” were circulated.<sup>37</sup>

On 26 October 2023, Israeli settlers reportedly distributed and placed leaflets, in Arabic, on Palestinian car windshields in Deir Istiya town near Salfit, in the West Bank, threatening to forcibly remove them from their lands.<sup>38</sup> The leaflets read: “You wanted a *Nakba* like what happened in 1948. We will bring down a great *Nakba* on your heads soon. You have one last chance to escape to Jordan in an orderly manner or we will forcibly expel you from our sacred lands that God bequeathed to us. Pack your stuff immediately and leave wherever you are, because we are coming [for you]”.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, when addressing settler violence against Palestinians, contextualising these attacks is essential. These attacks have not only been permitted but further encouraged by the IOF – which provide protection to Israeli colonial settlers; Israeli officials – who openly incite for further violence; and the Israeli judiciary – which grants institutionalised impunity for these attacks.<sup>40</sup>

- *Settler Attack on Qusra Village, Occupied Nablus: Settlers Kill Five Palestinians*

According to Al-Haq’s documentation, on 11 October 2023, at around 3:00 pm, a group of eight to ten masked Israeli settlers, some of whom were armed with automatic weapons and handguns, launched an attack on the village of Qusra, located in the southeast of Nablus, killing three Palestinians, whereby a fourth Palestinian was killed by the IOF. The following day, Israeli settlers attacked the funeral procession of the four Palestinians killed, firing at Palestinians and killing two Palestinians: a father and his son.

The settlers had come from the Israeli colonial outpost, ‘Esh Kodesh’, which translates to “Holy Fire”. This colonial outpost was established in 2000 on Palestinian land to the south of Qusra,<sup>41</sup> approximately 600 metres away from the nearest house in the village. Arriving to the southeast of Qusra, some on all-terrain vehicle (ATV), Israeli settlers initiated their attack on the homes and properties of the Palestinian residents, firing live ammunition directly at residential buildings in the area. Their primary target was the home of Mahmoud Ahmad Zaal Odeh - who was killed in 2017 by Israeli settlers -, where his family of ten members, including five children, resides. As the attack unfolded, Palestinian residents and young men gathered to defend the area and support

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<sup>37</sup> The Times of Israel, “Deadly violence surges in West Bank as war rages in Gaza region”, 15 October 2023, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/deadly-violence-surges-in-west-bank-as-war-rages-in-gaza-region/>.

<sup>38</sup> Haaretz, “Wait for the Great Nakba’: Palestinians Find Threatening Leaflets on Cars in West Bank”, 27 October 2023, available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-27/ty-article/premium/wait-for-the-great-nakba-palestinians-find-threatening-leaflets-on-cars-in-west-bank/0000018b-72aa-d1da-a1bb-7fba5a020000>.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Associated Press, “Israeli settler accused of involvement in killing of Palestinian moved to house arrest”, 9 August 2023, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-west-bank-settlers-attack-bengvir-netanyahu-f59bad22ce74ca2ea99ebc5ce54e727b>.

<sup>41</sup> Peace Now, “Esh Kodesh”, available at: <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements/settlement229-en>.

the occupants of the targeted home. The settlers fired live ammunition directly at the house and the people who had come to defend against the attack.

Throughout the attack, the settlers continued to hurl stones and fire live ammunition at the house and towards the windows. Awad Mahmoud Ahmad Odeh climbed onto the roof of the house to confront the settlers and drive them away. He threw stones and bricks at the attackers and was shot in the neck and face. His 6-year-old daughter, Rahaf Awad Mahmoud Odeh, was also shot in the right shoulder.

Approximately five minutes later, three civilian vehicles, each carrying the Israeli security guard of Esh Kodesh and Ahiya colonial outposts and Migdalim colonial settlement, arrived at the scene. They provided support to the settlers who were attacking the houses and Qusra residents, firing live ammunition at Palestinians upon arrival.

Around 15 minutes later, the IOF arrived, including military patrols from the Israeli border guards. Dozens of Israeli occupying soldiers dismounted from their vehicles and began firing tear gas canisters and live ammunition at the village's residents. Subsequently, the Israeli settlers retreated southward, positioning themselves about 100 metres behind the IOF.

After approximately an hour and a half, reports confirmed that three Palestinians, including a child, had succumbed to their injuries inflicted by live ammunition from the settlers, and were killed. Their names were **Muath Ra'id Mahmoud Odeh, 29**, who sustained a gunshot wound to the chest; **Musab Abdul Haleem 'Aref Abu Raida, 18**, who sustained a gunshot wound to the head; and **'Obadah Saeed Awad Abu Srour, 17**, a Palestinian child who sustained a gunshot wound to the head.

The confrontations in the village of Qusra lasted for over three hours until approximately 6:30 pm. During the confrontations, **Hasan Mohannad Hasan Odeh, 21**, was fatally shot in the head by the IOF. Before withdrawing, the IOF confiscated a surveillance camera recording device from the attacked house, the home of Mahmoud Odeh's family, which had captured the settlers' attack.

Injured individuals were transported by Palestinian ambulances to the Algeria Medical Center in Qusra. Subsequently, they were transferred to hospitals in the cities of Salfit and Nablus. While fulfilling its humanitarian duty of transporting the wounded and killed Palestinians, one Palestinian ambulance came under fire with live ammunition aimed at its front and rear windows, with no reported injuries among the ambulance crew members. Overall, on that day, 12 Palestinians, including two children, sustained injuries after being shot by the IOF and Israeli settlers with live ammunition, while three Palestinians were killed by settlers and one by the IOF.

The next day, 12 October 2023, at around 10:00 am, an organised funeral procession, comprising four Palestinian ambulances and accompanied by approximately 15 civilian vehicles, conveyed the remains of the four Palestinians killed from the Salfit Government Hospital to their hometown, Qusra.

During the course of this journey, a group of Israeli settlers, under the protection of the IOF, obstructed the procession, attacked the vehicles and fired live ammunition. This obstruction included the placement of tires and stones at a crossroad leading to Qusra.

As dozens of Palestinians were participating in the procession to pay their respect for the killed Palestinians, Israeli settlers fired live ammunition, fatally injuring **Ibrahim Ahmed Mahmoud Wadi, 62**, in the right flank, and his son **Ahmed Ibrahim Ahmed Wadi, 25**, in the chest and neck. Ibrahim and Ahmed were transferred to Qabalan Medical Clinic and subsequently to Rafidia Government Hospital in Nablus, where Ibrahim was pronounced dead upon arrival, and diligent efforts of medical professionals and paramedics to resuscitate Ahmed were unsuccessful, pronouncing his death shortly later that day.

A few days later, on 15 October 2023, at around 12:00 pm, the IOF shot **Karam Ayman Moahammad Dweikat, 17**, in the right waist during confrontations with armed Israeli settlers and the IOF at Jabal Al-'Orma, in Beita town, in Nablus Governorate. Karam's death was pronounced at around 1:20 pm at Rafidia Governmental Hospital in Nablus city. The transportation of Karam's body to his hometown, Beita, was obstructed until around 5:30 pm on the same day, as the IOF and armed settlers had closed the 'Awarta checkpoint, west of Nablus city. This followed threats by settlers on social media which called for the killing of any Palestinian who holds a public funeral for Karam, recalling their killings of two Palestinians during the funeral procession in Qusra.<sup>42</sup> The social media post was shared on a Telegram channel, with Karam's photo attached to an Arabic text that reads:

"To the rats of Beita town. You tried to harm the Jews of the area, expanding your aggression toward Jabal Al 'Orma. This time, luckily for you, it ended with the killing of [only] one of you. We warn you not to hold a public and popular funeral for that killed man, advising you to bury him at night and in secret. Learn from the lesson of Qusra residents who thought they could hold a public funeral for their carcasses, which led to two additional killings. Any idiot who attends the funeral of your carcass will be risking his life for instant death..."<sup>43</sup>

The Telegram channel called "the Nazi Hunters" with now more than 7,000 subscribers has been created since the start of the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza, which on a daily basis publishes photos, names and homes' addresses of Palestinian figures, mainly activists, calling on "law enforcement officials to punish them".<sup>44</sup>

- *Israeli Settlers Mobilising to Kill Al-Aqsa Mosque Imam*

Settler violence is also noticeably spiking in the eastern part of occupied Jerusalem.<sup>45</sup> Israeli settler groups are calling for the killing of Sheikh Akrama Sabri, the Al-Aqsa Mosque Imam - incitement that is going unpunished. One settler group published the call on WhatsApp groups, annexing to it a precise mapping of Sheikh Akrama Sabri's place of abode. In addition, another settler group is publicly calling for the destruction of the praying halls at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, sharing posts on their social media for that end.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> According to Al-Haq's initial documentation. Footage by B'Tselem shows the moment Karam was killed is available at: <https://twitter.com/btselem/status/1713544287357489417?s=20>.

<sup>43</sup> On file with Al-Haq.

<sup>44</sup> The Telegram channel can be assessed here: <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@tsayadeyanazim>.

<sup>45</sup> Maan News, "Watch... Sheikh Jarrah: Settlers Throw Molotov Cocktails at Homes", 10 October 2023, available in Arabic at: <https://www.maannews.net/news/2102612.html>

<sup>46</sup> On file with CAC.

#### 4. Settler Violence and Palestinian Dispossession

Since the start of Israel's ongoing military aggression on Gaza, Israeli settlers residing illegally in the occupied West Bank have been also taking this as an opportunity to instil terror in the hearts of the Palestinian population, forcing them to leave to facilitate land appropriation and expand the illegal colonial settlement enterprise. Since 7 October 2023, the escalation of Israeli settler violence has caused an alarming skyrocketing of forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank. At least 98 households comprising 828 Palestinians, including 313 children, from 15 herding/Bedouin communities were forcefully displaced in the West Bank between 7 and 30 October 2023, as documented by OCHA.<sup>47</sup> These herding/Bedouin communities include: Wadi Al-Seeq, Al Mu'arrajat Center, Ein Ar Rashrash, and Jab'eet in Ramallah Governorate; Al Farisiya-Nab'a Al Ghazal and Ein Al Hilwa- Wadi Al Faw in Tubas Governorate; Bariyyat Tuqu in Bethlehem Governorate; Masafer Yatta, Mantiqat Shab Al Butum, Al Ganoub, Khirbet Ar Ratheem, As Samu', and Al Buweib in Hebron Governorate; Shehde W Hamlan in Nablus Governorate; and Mahajir/Ar Ras in Salfit Governorate. Armed Israeli settlers have been raiding the sites they mark in advance, sometimes accompanied by the IOF, and threatening Palestinian communities that they have 24 hours to leave their homes, or they will return the next day and kill them.

More than one third of the 186 settler attacks recorded by OCHA between 7 October and 1 November 2023 involved threats with firearms, including shooting.<sup>48</sup> With those death threats, settlers are succeeding in forcing Palestinian communities, mainly herding/Bedouin communities, to leave their land and seek refuge in nearby places. In some communities where Palestinians fled swiftly to protect their lives, they left all their belongings behind, including solar panels, vehicles, bulldozers, and they reported their deep concern that their belongings will be pillaged, and homes and structures will be vandalised.

The horrific attacks by settlers are unfortunately expected to force more Palestinian displacement. According to the monitoring of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), three Palestinian communities in the Masafer Yatta region in Hebron: Susiya, Khirbet Wadi Jehesh, and Khirbet Tuba, where 55 families, comprising around 550 Palestinians, reside, are at the risk of imminent forced displacement. This is due to escalated settler attacks since the start of the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza. On 28 October 2023, armed settlers raided the three communities, violently assaulted the residents, vandalised property, stole livestock, and issued an ultimatum for them to vacate their homes and lands – failure to do so would result in their murder and subsequent arson of their homes.

Notably, Palestinians in the Masafer Yatta region have been subjected to systemic settler attacks, demolitions from the IOF, and other various violations for decades. The past days have seen escalated settler violence against communities in the region involving shootings; killing threats; beatings; assaults; property arson; theft of home belongings,

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<sup>47</sup> OCHA, "Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #24", 30 October 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-24>.

<sup>48</sup> OCHA, "Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #26", 1 November 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-26>.



cars, and livestock; and cutting the electricity wires supplying these communities, according to the monitoring of the UAWC.

- *Closer Look: the Forcible Transfer of Palestinians from Wadi Al-Seeq, Degradation, Beatings and Sexual Assault of Palestinians*

Wadi Al-Seeq, stretching over around nine thousand dunams, is a Palestinian area located to the east of Deir Dibwan town, near Ramallah city. Since Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, Israel has targeted Wadi Al-Seeq due to its strategic location, as it connects eastern Ramallah with western Jericho. Living in mobile tents and barracks, Palestinians in Wadi Al-Seeq have been, for decades, denied access to basic services, including restrictions on education,<sup>49</sup> and access to water, as well as repetitive demolitions.<sup>50</sup>

Following the 37th Israeli government announcement of its guiding principles and coalition agreements, which make explicit their intent to annex the occupied West Bank in violation of international law,<sup>51</sup> various settler organisations operating in the West Bank have demonstrated a discernible inclination towards a strategy often termed "silent annexation" or *de facto* annexation of agricultural lands within Area C of the West Bank. This strategy has featured "pastoral outposts" as part of their practical steps towards annexing more Palestinian land, through persistently encroaching on the land by exerting pressure on Palestinians to forcibly displace them and gain control of land. These "pastoral outposts" consist of cattle sheds, tents for settlers, and shacks for sheep and cows.

In 2023, Israeli settlers established a "pastoral outpost" near the school in Wadi Al-Seeq. Since then, Palestinians living in Wadi Al-Seeq have experienced an increase in settler attacks, including the prevention of access to pastures, confiscation of water tanks, and raids on their homes, threatening Palestinians with the use of force.

On 11 October 2023, Israeli settlers published on Facebook their plans to 'liberate Wadi Al-Seeq from the Palestinians'. Later that day, and into the early morning of 12 October 2023, a group of armed Israeli settlers raided Wadi Al-Seeq for around three hours, terrifying Palestinians and stealing some of their properties, including a solar power system, as well as personal documents, photographs, and a gold bracelet. Fearing further settler attacks, Palestinians residing in Wadi Al-Seeq fled the community, while keeping some of the structures and their homes intact with the hope of returning at a later time.<sup>52</sup> Notably, Israeli settlers, after they had left Wadi Al-Seeq, stationed themselves at the entrance of the village, brutally attacking the displaced Palestinians.

Two Palestinian workers from the Colonisation and Wall Resistance Commission, Mohammad Hasan Matar Matar, 46 and his colleague, M.N, had went to Wadi Al-Seeq on 11 October 2023 to document and urgently report any settler attacks, and to ensure

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<sup>49</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, "Two more Palestinian schools under threat", 15 November 2017, available at: <https://www.nrc.no/news/two-more-palestinian-schools-under-threat/>.

<sup>50</sup> Bimkom, "Wadi al Seeq", available at: <https://mpcommunities.bimkom.org/wadi-al-seeq/>.

<sup>51</sup> Adalah, "Adalah's Analysis of the New Israeli Government's Guiding Principles and Coalition Agreements and their Implications on Palestinians' Rights", 10 January 2023, available at: [https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/37\\_govt\\_position\\_paper\\_Eng\\_100123.pdf](https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/37_govt_position_paper_Eng_100123.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> Al-Haq Affidavit 2023-10-01021-RB-F-A1-IL-SET, taken from Mohammad Hasan Matar Matar, 46, resident of Kufr Aqab on 17 October 2023.

that every Palestinian had left Wadi Al-Seeq safely, as they had thought that their physical presence could serve “as a form of protection for Palestinians against settler attacks”.<sup>53</sup> Mohammad and his colleague, M.N, and a resident of Wadi Al-Seeq, M.K, ended up brutally attacked, undressed, and humiliated by Israeli settlers on 12 October 2023 for almost nine hours. Mohammad was further urinated at, and sexually assaulted. In his affidavit to Al-Haq, Mohammad recalled the settlers’ attack against him, and his colleague, as they were at Wadi Al-Seeq on the morning of the attack:

*Approximately 10 to 12 settlers got out of [their] cars, some of them were in the back of the open trucks. **They were all armed with M16 rifles**, and two to three of them were wearing masks. They were dressed in military-style clothing. Although I am sure that they were settlers since they arrived in the settlers’ cars and some of their faces were known to us. They were settlers from “pastoral outposts” in the area. They attacked us while we were outside our vehicle, close to the women and children. They threatened us with their weapons, ordered us to lie face down, and began kicking both M.N and I. I received at least ten strong kicks to my sides and head. Some were wearing military boots and others had sports shoes on.*

*They were shouting at us in Arabic... A masked settler ordered us to take everything out of our pockets, so we took out the money and wallet in our pockets, as I had NIS 1,800 in my pockets and NIS 370 in my wallet, and M.N, as I later learned, had NIS 600 in his pocket, and they took them from us. **All of this happened while they were shouting and saying that they would kill us, and there would be no Arabs left here, and that they would send the rest of the Arabs to Jordan.***

*Then, one of the masked settlers told me to open my mobile phone. I refused to open my phone, which had a passcode. He then struck my arms and shoulders with the rifle’s buttstock around five times. I told him that I had to open it using the eye scan, due to the beating I had received. He reluctantly returned the phone, and I tried to unlock it with the eye scan. However, due to the dirt and sweat on my face, I couldn’t get it to open. The settler hit me on the top of my head with the rifle’s barrel, wounding me. Blood began to flow profusely from my head, into my eyes, and onto my face. I then opened the phone using the passcode. The settler took the phone and moved away, and I continued lying face down on the ground, bleeding. The settlers alternated between kicking me sporadically, and [M.N] was nearby, about five metres away from me. He, too, was being subjected to beatings, as I could tell from the sounds of his distress and the blows from the settlers, even though I was facing the ground and couldn’t see him. I continued to bleed and the settlers didn’t provide any medical assistance. **Each time I tried to lift my head and wipe the blood from my face, they stepped on my head and smeared dirt on my face.***

*During that time, I heard one of the settlers screaming in Hebrew, saying, ‘He has a knife’. At that moment, I felt that the settlers were going to kill us for sure, and they would claim that I had attempted a stabbing attack against them. I replied to him in Hebrew, ‘Look, I have a vegetable knife*

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

*and kitchen utensils with me'. Indeed, we had gathered our personal belongings owned by the Colonisation and Wall Resistance Commission, which were in our tent, including chairs, sleeping bags, kitchen equipment, and a cooking gas cylinder, in preparation to leave with the dispersal of the [Wadi Al-Seeq].*

*These belongings were stored in bags in the trunk of the car I was driving, and the trunk was closed. He told me, 'No, this is a knife; you want to attack us'... I also heard the settler saying he had a stick to use against us. Then it crossed my mind that I had a dustpan stick with me, so I told him it was for work. The settlers then brought the wooden stick and started beating both me and M.N with it all over our bodies.*

*While Israeli settlers continued to beat us, two vehicles belonging to the Israeli Civil Administration and a settler's guard car arrived. When I saw these cars, I thought that our ordeal would finally end. Four officers in Israeli occupying army uniforms got out of one of the vehicles. When these cars appeared, the settlers stopped beating us. One of [the Israeli occupying soldiers] approached me and asked for my ID card. I told him it was with the settlers, along with our money and mobile phones. The settlers told him that we had a knife with us.*

*I saw him checking our ID cards on his mobile phone and at that moment, it seemed like he realised that we were previously detained by the Israeli occupying authorities. He told the settlers, 'These were prisoners on security charges; they're troublemakers'. I asked him if they were soldiers or settlers, and he said, 'They are soldiers', even though I was sure they were settlers.*

*In front of the Israeli Civil Administration officers, the settlers tied our hands behind our backs with ropes. He returned my ID card to a masked settler. I overheard the settlers telling the Civil Administration officer, 'These are wanted by the Israeli intelligence (Shabak), and Shabak is on the way'. After that, the officer and the other officers with him left the scene. **It seemed like they gave the settlers the green light to do as they pleased with us.** After that, the settlers resumed beating us with sticks and kicking us.<sup>54</sup>*

The beating lasted for around two and a half hours. At around 12:30 pm, another group of the IOF arrived at the scene; further allowing for Israeli settlers to continue their physical assault and attacks against Mohammad, M.N and M.K. In his affidavit to Al-Haq, Mohammad recounted the following:

*A person dressed as a soldier approached me...He kicked me on my left side and then stood on my head with both feet, grinding my face into the ground with dirt. He kicked me on my right ear. All of this happened while I was lying face down on the ground with my hands bound behind my back.*

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

*Afterward, he pulled me up by my shirt from behind and told me to sit. I adjusted my position and sat on the ground. He said to me in Hebrew, 'Do you remember me?' I replied, 'No'. He told me, 'I'm the cattle herder in Bidiya, you were there some time ago pretending to be Abu Ali and blocking the street'. I told him, 'No, I wasn't in Bidiya (Salfit governorate). I only work in Ramallah'.*

***He kicked me in the chest and then took out a knife and proceeded to tear all of my clothes, except my underwear. I saw him doing the same with M.N. He then removed our shoes and tied a piece of my torn clothes over my eyes. I could partially see under the blindfold, so I saw that he did the same to M.N. After that, we were taken to the edge of the [Wadi Al-Seeq], where there was an empty sheep pen, away from some of the residents who were still present. I genuinely thought that they would kill us and justify our killing by saying we had a knife. Inside the pen, we were forced to lie face down with our hands tied behind our backs and our eyes blindfolded.***

***One settler put his foot on my head and rubbed my face on the ground several times, saying, 'Eat, eat', treating me like livestock as the ground had remnants of straw and sheep food...***

*At that point, I began to feel pain in my chest, as I had previously suffered from heart problems and had undergone a heart surgery. I told him in Hebrew that I had heart problems and had a heart surgery before. He lifted me and told me to show where I had surgery, then kicked me in the chest, saying, 'Die, die'. He pushed my face back to the ground and started jumping forcefully on my back, around 3 or 4 times. I felt that my spine was about to break. The purpose of these beatings seemed to be to cause permanent disability.*

*Afterward, he directed kicks to my sides, near my kidneys, and told me, 'You know that the Jews have gone mad... We will kill all of you... and send you to Jordan'. Later, he left the pen, and I could hear M.N beside me, enduring beatings and pain. Another person was brought in, and I overheard the settlers saying to each other, 'Look at these troublemakers, this guy is a Bedouin'. I realised that the third person who was brought in, whose voice I could hear but was unable to see, was a Palestinian [M.K]...*

***They continued to beat us in rounds, each round lasting for around an hour, and then they would stop for a few minutes, and start with the next round. In one of the last rounds, an Israeli settler urinated on my head and body... During that, he was saying 'you must die'.<sup>55</sup>***

After a settler had urinated at Mohammad, he was further subjected to sexual assault. In his affidavit to Al-Haq, Mohammad recounted the following:

*I began screaming due to the intense pain in my hands, feeling a severe ache in them, as if the blood had ceased to flow, and they had swollen to*

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

*the point of almost cutting off circulation. The settler then approached and untied the ropes on my hands. I thought that he might be offering me some relief from the pain, but instead, he tied them behind my back using a coiled metal wire typically used in construction. The pain intensified, and he continued to beat me with a stick, which I couldn't tell whether it was wooden or plastic, for approximately ten minutes.*

***Following this, he placed the stick in the area of my anus, over my underwear, without removing the underwear. He began to apply pressure, attempting to insert the stick into my rectum, while I resisted, straining to prevent it from going in. He used his full weight and kicked me on my back to make me relax, but I refused. This continued for about two minutes.***

*Under the pressure, I shifted slightly, causing the stick to move away from me. At this point, he started to brutally beat me, and I was in a state of despair, crying out, 'Just shoot me in the head to end this'. After that, I remained in a collapsed state for about half an hour, listening to the ongoing cries of M.N and [M.K].<sup>56</sup>*

At around 7:15 pm, almost nine hours after the brutal attacks against Mohammad, and M.N started, another IOF group arrived at the scene, and released Mohammad, M.N, and M.K. Almost half an hour later, a Palestinian ambulance arrived, transferring Mohammad, M.N, and M.K to H Clinic Hospital in Ramallah, where they received the needed medical assistance. Mohammad is a father of five children aged between two to twelve years old.

## **5. Mass Arrests Campaign**

Since 7 October 2023, the IOF have increased their nightly house raids and arbitrary arrests and detention in the West Bank,<sup>57</sup> as a continuation of Israel's long-established policy of collective punishment used to intimidate and repress Palestinians. Between 7 October and 1 November 2023, the Israeli authorities arrested over 1,830 Palestinians in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner's Society.<sup>58</sup> Notably, 49 women, 17 journalists, and 13 members of the Palestine Legislative Council have been arrested across the West Bank, as of 30 October 2023.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, 872 administrative detention orders have been issued or renewed between 7 October and 1 November 2023.<sup>60</sup> As

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Addameer, "Escalation of arrest campaigns since the beginning of the Israeli aggression... and the conditions of the prisoners in Israeli prisons", 19 October 2023, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/news/5164>.

<sup>58</sup> Palestinian Prisoner's Society, Facebook post, 1 November 2023, available in Arabic at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=732332202259471&set=a.293166409509388>.

<sup>59</sup> Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs, Facebook post, 30 October 2023, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/freedom2pal/posts/pfbid0gtkgwr84RV3eTWtq3cmXRC1oCix8Rk5PHVjhiEinRRj9qZWcoLH2m9Mr4CPYhagel>.

<sup>60</sup> Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs, Facebook post, 1 November 2023, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=732542285571796&set=a.293166409509388>.

such, of those who have been arrested since 7 October 2023 and continue to be detained as of 30 October 2023, 80 percent are imprisoned under administrative detention.<sup>61</sup>

According to Addameer, night-time house raids have been conducted with a significant number of Israeli occupying soldiers, which have resulted in the destruction and vandalism of homes in a manner that may be irreparable.<sup>62</sup> Addameer further monitored the heightened utilisation of excessive force during arrests, involving the beating of detainees and assaults on their families.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, detainees and their families have reportedly faced death threats.

Moreover, many horrific videos, which have started to circulate online since the start of the ongoing Israeli aggression, show inhumane and degrading treatment of Palestinian detainees by the IOF. In one of the most brutal videos, the IOF filmed themselves beating, dragging, and assaulting blindfolded and hand-tied Palestinians after stripping some of them. According to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, the footage is of Palestinians in the town of Yatta in Hebron Governorate, shared on a Telegram channel “in which Israeli soldiers brag about the torture of Palestinian detainees”.<sup>64</sup> Another video shows a detained Palestinian forced to hold the Israeli flag as he is blindfolded and bound. In yet another, an Israeli occupying soldier filmed himself insulting and spitting on a detained Palestinian who was blindfolded and had his hands tied.<sup>65</sup>

Addameer and other Palestinians prisoners’ rights organisations have condemned such detention conditions, which strip Palestinians of their human dignity, adding that “all the information and testimonies we have obtained from the detainees who were released shortly after their arrest during the past period, as well as the testimonies of their families, [reflect] horrifying details of systematic and intensified crimes, which are continuously escalating, reaching the point of direct threats to open fire, in addition to the use of brutal beatings, field interrogations, threats of killing and rape, the use of police dogs, and using Palestinians as human shields”.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, since 7 October 2023, thousands of detention cases have been reported against Palestinians from Gaza. Palestinian human rights organisations focused on the rights of prisoners and detainees, such as Addameer, face significant challenges in obtaining information about Palestinians from Gaza who are detained by the Israeli

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<sup>61</sup> Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs, Facebook post, 30 October 2023, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/freedom2pal/posts/pfbid0WrLT1nUsb1exQoDqy7dAiU4SkhzBbNT2aZz96esjqAXeDezJmEJaLzPYZiMPUK3el>.

<sup>62</sup> Addameer, “Escalation of arrest campaigns since the beginning of the Israeli aggression... and the conditions of the prisoners in Israeli prisons”, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/news/5164>.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Egregious acts of torture, abuse committed by Israeli army against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank”, 31 October 2023, available at: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5906#:~:text=The%20Geneva%2Dbased,of%20Palestinian%20detainees>.

<sup>65</sup> The Times of Israel, “IDF soldiers film themselves abusing, humiliating West Bank Palestinians”, 1 November 2023, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-soldiers-film-themselves-abusing-humiliating-west-bank-palestinians/>.

<sup>66</sup> Addameer, “A Statement by Palestinian prisoners’ organisations”, 1 November 2023, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/news/5193>.

authorities, including Palestinians from Gaza who were working inside the Green Line on 7 October 2023.

Last year, the Israeli authorities granted 27,000 Palestinian residents of Gaza permits to work in the Israeli market.<sup>67</sup> The exact number of Gaza workers who were inside the Green Line on 7 October 2023 is unknown. Yet, all had their permits punitively revoked since the aggression on Gaza.<sup>68</sup> It is reported that Israel has detained around 4,000 Palestinians from Gaza, including workers, since 7 October 2023. Adalah and others petitioned the Israeli High Court, ordering the Israeli authorities to disclose the names and locations of all detainees from Gaza, which the Court refused.<sup>69</sup> The petitioners are aware of two military facilities in the West Bank, being used to hold Palestinians from Gaza, where they are being deprived of their basic rights, and subjected to ill-treatment.<sup>70</sup> The Israeli Minister of Security, Yoav Gallant, has issued an order designating Palestinian detainees from Gaza as ‘unlawful combatants’ in accordance with the ‘Unlawful Combatants Law’ enacted in 2002.<sup>71</sup> The Law “is administrative detention with even less protection for detainees than the restrictive regime in the West Bank, leaving almost no basis for judges to void intelligence agency decisions,” as indicated by Human Rights Watch.<sup>72</sup> This legal framework permits the denial of access to legal counsel for a period of up to 21 days for these detainees.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, it is highly probable that some of them are subjected to interrogations, potentially involving torture, as access to legal representation for these detainees has been denied.

Moreover, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and Palestinian Jerusalemites are facing increased oppression. On 17 October 2023, the Israeli Police disseminated and shared a video on its official Arabic TikTok account, banning any protests in support and solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.<sup>74</sup> In the video, the Israeli Police Commissioner, Yaakov Shabtai, publicly delivered a series of racially charged and incendiary statements, and declared his intention to personally oversee the transfer of Palestinians who have shown solidarity with Gaza to the Gaza Strip, saying: “[a]nyone who wants to identify with Gaza is welcome, I will put them on buses now that are headed there and I will help him get there [to Gaza]”.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli Police Spokesperson publicly incited against Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and Palestinian

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<sup>67</sup> ILO, ‘The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the Director-General - Appendix, 111th Session, 2023’, 2023, ILC.111/DG/APP, para 29.

<sup>68</sup> Gisha, “Israel refuses to reveal information about thousands of Gaza residents being held in Israeli detention facilities”, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://gisha.org/en/illegally-detained-workers-october-2023-en/>.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Gisha, “Thousands of Palestinian permit-holders from Gaza are being held in Israel secretly and illegally” 25 October 2023, available at: <https://gisha.org/en/unlawfully-detained/>.

<sup>71</sup> Addameer, “Israeli Minister of Security, Yoav Gallant, issued an order on 8 October 2023 designating Palestinian detainees from Gaza as ‘unlawful combatants’”, 10 October 2023, available in Arabic at: <https://www.addameer.org/ar/news/5144>.

<sup>72</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Gaza: ‘Unlawful Combatants Law’ Violates Rights” 1 March 2017, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/01/gaza-unlawful-combatants-law-violates-rights>.

<sup>73</sup> Addameer, “Escalation of arrest campaigns since the beginning of the Israeli aggression... and the conditions of the prisoners in Israeli prisons”, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/news/5164>.

<sup>74</sup> Adalah, “Israel’s Police Commissioner Threatens Palestinian Citizens Protesting Against Israel’s Atrocities in Gaza”, 18 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10918>.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Jerusalemites, stating: “[a]nyone who dares, in their extreme audacity, to seek approval for holding a demonstration in support of Gaza ... we will arrive and will not allow it. Those who dare to protest without permission – we will reach and deal with the demonstration by all means... Anyone who dares to step out and utter a single word in praise of Gaza will be behind bars”.<sup>76</sup>

Such a decision, which is part of a broader and unlawful clampdown on Palestinian freedom of speech and assembly, may serve to legitimise the use of arbitrary and violent measures to suppress protests, including arrests, and risking injuries or killings. Israeli officials, including Ben-Gvir, celebrated the “zero tolerance on the part of the policemen” and labelled those who attempted to protest against Israeli crimes committed in Gaza as “supporters of terrorism”.<sup>77</sup>

Notably, in the first ten days following the aggression on Gaza, the Israeli police have arrested over 170 Palestinians with Israeli citizenship or Palestinian Jerusalemites for merely posting, or even liking posts on social media or following specific news agencies on social media - which represents the highest rate of arrests within this time frame in the last two decades, according to Adalah.<sup>78</sup> This comes after the Israeli Attorney General directed the Israeli police to open an investigation into dozens of cases in which Palestinians have allegedly expressed support to Hamas. The all-encompassing direction states that no tolerance will be exhibited towards any post of support to the ‘enemy’, whether implicit or explicit support.<sup>79</sup>

On the other hand, Israeli occupying authorities are allowing - and encouraging - organised Jewish-Israeli groups and individuals to initiate campaigns - both online and offline - of incitement against Palestinians. These campaigns involve threats, harassment, and physical attacks, all conducted with apparent impunity. Notably, during the reporting period, 7 October and 1 November 2023, 7amleh monitored the posting of over 629,000 harmful posts on social media platforms shared in Hebrew, which include hate speech and incitement to violence against Palestinians.<sup>80</sup>

- *The ‘Death’ of Omar Daraghmeh and Arafat Hamdan*

On 24 October 2023, the Israeli occupying authorities announced the death of two Palestinian detainees; **Omar Daraghmeh, 58**, who was held under administrative detention in Megiddo Prison, and **Arafat Hamdan, 25**, who was incarcerated in Ofer prison.<sup>81</sup> Omar and Arafat had been detained by the IOF on 9 and 22 October 2023, respectively. The circumstances surrounding their deaths remain unclear and shrouded

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<sup>76</sup> Adalah, “Crackdown on Freedom of Speech of Palestinian Citizens of Israel”, 23 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10925>.

<sup>77</sup> Twitter, @itamarbengvir, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1715108438605197608>.

<sup>78</sup> +972 Magazine, “‘This is political persecution’: Israel cracks down on internal critics of its Gaza war”, 17 October 2023, available at: <https://www.972mag.com/israel-gaza-war-political-persecution/>.

<sup>79</sup> Israel Hayom, “State Attorney: to investigate, detain and prosecute anyone who publishes support to the atrocities” 15 October 2023, available in Hebrew at: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/law/article/14714230>

<sup>80</sup> 7amleh, “Violence Indicator”, available at: <https://7or.7amleh.org/violence-indicator>.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Haq, “PHROC Sends a Letter to the ICRC to Promptly and Effectively Fulfil its Responsibilities Towards Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees”, 24 October 2023, available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/22022.html>.



in ambiguity, primarily due to the heavily restricted access to lawyers. Nonetheless, we note Israel's well-documented record of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners and detainees over the past decades,<sup>82</sup> as well as the punitive measures against all Palestinian prisoners and the reported torture shared by those released since 7 October 2023. Notably, on the date of his demise, 24 October 2023, Omar had a scheduled video conference with his legal counsel during his court hearing, when he confirmed his good health. Arafat did not have any known health issues apart from diabetes and had not met with his lawyer before 24 October 2023. Notably, as an integral part of the right to life, there is a procedural duty on States to investigate deaths in custody. According to the UN Human Rights Committee, the “[l]oss of life occurring in custody, especially when accompanied by reliable reports of an unnatural death, create a presumption of arbitrary deprivation of life by State authorities, which can only be rebutted on the basis of a proper investigation which establishes the State's compliance with its obligations under article 6”.<sup>83</sup>

- *The Violent Arrest of 17-Year-Old A.M and Threats of Rape and Killing*

On 14 October 2023, at around 4:00 am, an Israeli military unit of around 20 Israeli occupying soldiers forcibly raided a Palestinian home in the village of Beit Awwa, near Hebron city, where a family of five: the parents, and three children, aged 17, 13, and five, reside. As the IOF raided their home, the family gathered in the living room, except for the five-year-old child, who was still asleep in her room. Despite the father's attempts to check on his daughter, he was prevented by the IOF, who also restricted his wife's movement. An Israeli occupying soldier physically assaulted 17-year-old A.M, striking him with his fists, as around seven other soldiers joined in the assault, beating him and throwing him to the ground. They commenced beating A.M on the legs, with punches on various parts of his body, for about three minutes.

When the parents attempted to approach and intervene to stop the physical assault on their son, one of the soldiers forcibly pushed the mother and aimed his weapon at her head. Simultaneously, another soldier gestured menacingly as though he was about to strike her pregnant belly with the rifle butt. Concomitantly, four soldiers encircled the father, with their firearms pointed in his direction, as other soldiers encircled his 13-year-old son, pressing him against a wall while pointing their weapons at him to restrict his movement.

As the soldiers dispersed throughout the house, some of them entered the room of the five-year-old child, whose terrified cries quickly reached her family, who watched her approach them, clearly overwhelmed by fear. During this distressing moment, an Israeli occupying soldier, who had identified himself as 'Captain Jaber', addressed A.M, saying **“You're a good-looking boy, and I'll make the soldiers rape and kill you”**. Furthermore, he directed threatening remarks towards A.M's father, declaring, “I will come back to arrest and kill you”, and menacingly reaffirmed his vow to kill A.M.

Then, a group of Israeli occupying soldiers forcibly escorted A.M outside the house, closing the door behind them. For around five minutes, A.M's father listened to the

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<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Addameer, “Cell 26: A Study on the Use of Torture Against Palestinian Prisoners in Interrogation Centers”, 13 June 2022, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/media/4821>.

<sup>83</sup> Human Rights Committee, “General comment No. 36 on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life”, para 53.

violent and severe beating of his son. Another group was searching the house. After around 15 minutes, the IOF left, having arrested A.M, providing no opportunity for the family to obtain information about his well-being.

Around an hour and a half later, A.M's father received a phone call from an individual introducing himself as a soldier with the IOF, and told him, "We killed your son, and threw [his body] in the settlements. Go and search for him in As Samu' settlements".

Overwhelmed with fear and uncertainty, the family immediately reached out to civil liaison services, human rights organisations and media agencies. Approximately an hour later, A.M's father received a call from a person who identified himself as the military liaison director, who told him, "Your son was indeed beaten during the arrest, but he is alive and currently detained", but provided no further details.<sup>84</sup> The whereabouts and wellbeing of A.M remained unknown for 16 days, until 30 October 2023, when Addameer's lawyer was allowed to visit A.M, who is currently being held and placed under six-month administrative detention.

- *Arrest of A.A*

A.A is a Palestinian Jerusalemite who works with a Palestinian civil society organisation as a lawyer certified by the Israeli Bar Association. On 7 October 2023, she published a post, in Arabic, on her Facebook account: "I feel like I'm in a dream" and followed by three hearts in red, green and black. Then she continued and wrote "Hey - and protect Abu-Mazen" followed by a smiley face. Consequently, she was subjected to a defamation campaign, with hundreds of death and rape threat messages that she received through multiple means of communication. Out of fear for her life and safety, she then deleted the post and published a clarification Facebook post referring to the post she made earlier, and elucidated that she was referring to an intimate event in her personal life and not to the events of 7 October 2023. Notwithstanding, the Israeli police stormed into her parents' house. When the Israeli police raided her house, they first pushed her brother to the wall and called her father a terrorist. Then they told both her father and her brother that if they resisted the search, they had orders to use live ammunition against them. They threatened the father that if he did not bring A.A to them, they would break down the house. When her father said that he did not know where she was, the police wreaked havoc in the house before they left. On 16 October 2023, A.A was arrested and held in an Israeli detention facility for three days, until she was released on 19 October 2023. At present, she is waiting for an indictment to be submitted against her.

## **6. Retaliatory Attacks Against Palestinian Prisoners**

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli Prison Services (IPS) have been implementing arbitrary and collective punishment measures against the 5,200 Palestinians imprisoned and detained in Israeli prisons. Alarming, communications from within the prisons were suspended starting at 9:00 am on 7 October 2023.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, the Israeli Attorney General has granted consent to a proposal that permits prison overcrowding, and the

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<sup>84</sup> The testimony of A.M's father is on file with Addameer.

<sup>85</sup> Addameer, "Escalation of arrest campaigns since the beginning of the Israeli aggression... and the conditions of the prisoners in Israeli prisons", 19 October 2023, available at: <https://www.addameer.org/news/5164>.

Knesset has subsequently ratified an amendment to Prison Service regulations, providing that prisoners sleep on floor mattresses in cases of such overcrowding.<sup>86</sup>

Notable measures taken by the IPS against Palestinian prisoners and detainees include:

- On 7 October 2023, the Israeli suppression forces raided the female prisoner section in the Damon Prison, using tear gas against them. Later, they transferred the female prisoners' representative, Marah Bakir, to the Jalameh Prison, and held her in solitary confinement.
- Closure of sections in all prisons.
- Confiscation of televisions.
- Increased the jamming devices.
- Suspension of family visits.
- For almost a week, lawyers' visits were also suspended. Now, lawyers face restrictions in their work that prevent them from visiting regularly.
- Cutting off electricity in several prisons.
- Restricting water to only one hour per day.
- Closing off the canteen and limiting the prisoners to receiving only two very poor-quality meals a day.
- In some prisons, food items and goods that had been previously bought by prisoners from the canteen were confiscated.
- Denying prisoner and detainees free/yard time.
- Shutting down the prison clinics.
- Sick prisoners were denied transfer, including cancer patients, to clinics. In Ofer Prison, patient Palestinians, including those with diabetes, were denied the necessary medication.
- Direct threats and suppression against prisoners affiliated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad.
- Collective transfers affected Palestinians prisoners from Gaza, who were transferred from the Negev prison to Nafha prison. Due to it being a "desert prison", Nafha prison is extremely cold during the winter and extremely hot during the summer. The prison also contains a section for isolation.

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

## **7. Movement Restrictions**

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli occupying authorities have further tightened their grip on Palestinian movement, including through the closure of checkpoints between cities, towns, and villages across the occupied West Bank, limitations on Palestinian Jerusalemites' access to the Old City, and restrictions on the operation of the Allenby Bridge crossing, which serves as the sole international travel route for Palestinians holding West Bank ID.

In the West Bank, the IOF have implemented more stringent measures and closures at the military checkpoints encircling several Palestinian villages and cities, including Nablus, Tubas, Tulkarem, Jericho, Jenin, Hebron, and Jerusalem. These measures include the shutdown of iron gates at these checkpoints and alternate routes for civilian travel. Consequently, residents have been compelled to embark on lengthy detours to reach their workplaces and residences. At the checkpoints, Palestinians are subjected to inspections, including for their phones – as the IOF compel Palestinians to unlock their phones, and ID card verifications, and exposed to physical assault, arrests, and live ammunition without prior warning. Moreover, the checkpoints have evolved into a substantial impediment, causing considerable hardship for Palestinians moving in and out cities and villages throughout the occupied West Bank. The continuous closures of military checkpoints, along with alternate routes, has led to a disruption in commercial and economic operations, as well as impeding on the Palestinian right to education, as many pupils and teachers' movement is hindered by the checkpoints.

In Nablus Governorate, the Surra checkpoint, located to the west of Nablus, has been entirely sealed off in both directions during the entirety of the reporting period, with Israeli occupying soldiers obstructing any form of approach or passage. Similarly, the Huwwara military checkpoint, located to the south of Nablus, has been completely barricaded in both directions during the entirety of the reporting period, rendering it inaccessible for vehicles and civilians alike. Notably, individuals approaching these military checkpoints in recent times are exposed to the risk of being fired upon by IOF without prior warning. For example, according to Al-Haq's monitoring, on 10 October 2023, at around 9:10 pm, three young Palestinian men from Jenin, who were driving to Nablus in a public vehicle, were targeted by direct gunfire as they were approaching Huwwara checkpoint, resulting in the injury of the three Palestinians by live ammunition. In a separate incident on the same day, another Palestinian was shot in the back and his right hand near Huwwara checkpoint by the IOF.

In Tubas Governorate, the IOF closed off Tayasir checkpoint, a vital passage connecting the city of Tubas to the Northern Jordan Valley, on 11 October 2023 at around 10:00 pm. This closure effectively halted all traffic in both directions, persisting until the following morning. By approximately 9:00 am on 12 October 2023, Israeli soldiers resumed the movement of citizens travelling towards Tubas. However, those seeking entry into the Jordan Valley were only allowed to pass if they possessed identification indicating their residence in Jordan Valley villages. Anyone else was denied passage. Additionally, rigorous vehicle inspections were conducted. Since then, the IOF regularly closes the Tayasir checkpoint every day for 12 hours, from 6:00 pm until 6:00 am the following day.

In Jericho Governorate, Jericho city continues to be under strict surveillance, with Israeli occupying soldiers stationed at all entry points. This extensive control was

achieved by closing all secondary and unpaved roads. Additionally, identity checks are meticulously performed, and every vehicle entering or departing Jericho is subjected to thorough inspections. Furthermore, on 11 October 2023, the IOF positioned at the Hamra checkpoint in the Central Jordan Valley intensified their arbitrary procedures, identity verifications, and actions that disrupted the movement of Palestinians. In the morning of the same day, Israeli occupying soldiers fired tear gas canisters towards Palestinians who had begun vocalising their concerns and frustration due to the protracted closure of the checkpoint, which persisted for several hours. During the entirety of the reporting period, the IOF persisted in implementing stringent measures at Hamra checkpoint that impede the daily movements of Palestinians.

In Tulkarem Governorate, and throughout the entirety of the reporting period, the IOF have upheld the closure of the Shufa checkpoint, positioned to the southwest of Tulkarem city, through the deployment of concrete barriers. This has forced the residents of Shufa village to seek alternative and extended routes for their daily commuting to and from Tulkarem city. Additionally, the IOF intermittently enforce closures at the Anab checkpoint, situated to the east of Tulkarem.

In Jenin Governorate, and throughout the entirety of the reporting period, the IOF have closed off the Jalameh checkpoint, situated to the north of Jenin city. This measure led to the restriction of Palestinian workers' access to inside the Green Line and had a detrimental effect on commercial activities in the city.

In Bethlehem Governorate, Bethlehem city has remained encircled, with closures in effect from all four directions, during the entirety of the reporting period. This measure has effectively isolated Bethlehem from the adjacent villages to the east, west, and south. The closure has been enforced through the sealing of pre-established gates by the IOF or by the installation of concrete barriers. Notably, the Container checkpoint, which is one of the closed-off checkpoints and is situated to the north of Bethlehem city, is the only road connecting cities in the southern, central, and northern regions of the West Bank.

In Hebron Governorate, the Israeli authorities have maintained a series of restrictions on the movement of Palestinians during the entirety of the reporting report. The IOF have enacted the closure of select entry points into the city of Hebron while also implementing restrictions on the movement of residents at other entry points. Notably, on 11 October 2023, Al-Haq monitored the installation of iron gates at key locations, specifically the Tel Rumeida junction in the city centre and the northern entrance, referred to as 'Ras Al-Jura'. These actions have had a disruptive impact on the mobility of residents, impeding their ability to reach their workplaces and causing a significant downturn in commercial activities within the city. Moreover, several Palestinian families that live in the city centre of Hebron, especially in the vicinity of the Ibrahimi Mosque, have been enduring stringent Israeli-imposed measures. These include curfews, the forced closure of businesses, educational institutions, and Palestinian governmental facilities. In addition, Israel has imposed limitations on movement, which is allowed only during specific hours as determined by the IOF - typically, this window of movement extends for just one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening.

Similarly, some Palestinian Jerusalemites, holders of the 'permanent' residency status, have reported being denied entry into Jerusalem when attempting to return home from other parts of the West Bank located on the opposite side of the Annexation Wall.

Meanwhile, Jewish-Israeli settlers are granted unrestricted passage through the checkpoints.

Moreover, the freedom of access and movement within Jerusalem for Palestinian residents of Jerusalem has been significantly constrained since 7 October 2023. The IOF have frequently prevented Palestinian Jerusalemites from entering the Old City of Jerusalem, excluding those who reside within it. The criteria employed by the Israeli occupying police to determine entry into the Old City remains ambiguous. With the exception of a few instances where Palestinian entry was permitted, the situation in Jerusalem's Old City gives the impression of a 'blockade', according to CAC's monitoring.

Furthermore, the Israeli police have placed cement barriers at the entrances to various Palestinian neighbourhoods in the eastern part of occupied Jerusalem, including Al-Issawiya, Sur-Baher, and Shu'fat. While the specific purpose of these barriers is unclear, previous experiences lead us to infer that Israel may be preparing for a future closure. Regardless of Israel's intentions, the presence of these cement blocks creates an intimidating atmosphere in Palestinian neighbourhoods, discouraging many residents from leaving their homes. Similarly, the unwarranted and unprovoked harassment against Palestinian Jerusalemites by the Israeli police has resulted in many residents choosing to remain indoors, out of fear of encountering police violence and brutality.

As part of its collective punishment of Palestinians, the Israeli occupying authorities further implemented a complete closure of the Allenby Bridge crossing in both directions on 7 and 8 October 2023.<sup>87</sup> Subsequently, the operational working hours of the Bridge have been limited, unclear and fluctuating. From 9 to 12 October 2023, the Israeli occupying authorities declared operating hours from 8:00 to 16:00, but facilitated the passage of only approximately 1,000 travellers to and from Jordan. On 13 October 2023, the Israeli authorities exclusively allowed around 1,200 travellers to enter the West Bank while suspending travel from the West Bank to Jordan. On 14, 21 and 28 October 2023, the Allenby Bridge experienced complete closures in both directions - enforced by the Israeli occupying authorities. On the other days during the reporting period, the Israeli occupying authorities restricted the operational hours of the bridge to seven to eight hours per day, allowing for about 1,000 travellers to pass to and from Jordan. Given that the Allenby Bridge is the only pathway connecting Palestinians with West Bank ID with the outside world, these constrained and unpredictable working hours have severely impeded the ability of Palestinians to travel. This has resulted in travellers, including the elderly and children, having to wait on the Jordanian side of the bridge, sometimes on the street, for up to 15 hours, in an effort to ensure that they are among the first 1,000 people to gain passage to get back home.

## **8. Suspension or Termination from Work or University for Expressing Opinions**

Using an additional suppression tactic, dozens of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and Palestinian Jerusalemites are being fired or suspended from their work or Israeli universities on the grounds of 'incitement' or 'support of terrorism' for posts on social

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<sup>87</sup> Wafa, "Israel closes the river crossing with Jordan, and all checkpoints around Jerusalem", 7 October 2023, available at: <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/137961>.

media platforms. Some of these social media posts were solely quoting verses from the Holy Qur'an, while others consisted merely of sharing lists of journalists from the besieged Gaza Strip.<sup>88</sup>

Between 7 and 21 October 2023, Adalah has monitored the suspension or expulsion of 86 Palestinian students from Israeli universities for expressions made on their social media platforms.<sup>89</sup> Israeli academic institutions claim that the aforementioned posts breach their disciplinary rules by either “supporting terrorism” or “sympathising with terror organisations”.<sup>90</sup> Several institutions have issued official statements proclaiming a “zero tolerance” policy towards “support for terrorism” and have subsequently taken actions such as suspensions or expulsions “in a manner that targets Palestinian students whose posts express their Palestinian identity or solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza”, according to Adalah.<sup>91</sup> The Israeli Minister of Education, Yoav Kish, publicly backed these disciplinary actions, and issued a letter stating that educational institutions must “immediately suspend any student or employee who supports the barbaric terrorist acts currently experienced in the State of Israel”, and that, “[i]n cases where there is indeed incitement, [you must] order a permanent expulsion”.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, on 16 October 2023, the Attorney General’s Office announced that it had “instructed some of the heads of higher education institutions, who contacted it following cases of students who published words of praise for terrorism, to forward the details to the Israel Police, so that their case could be dealt with as soon as possible at the criminal level, beyond the disciplinary level handled by the educational institution. At this time we will examine the case of several Israeli students who allegedly published words of praise and support for Hamas”.<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, the newly-formed Civil Society Coalition for Emergencies in the Arab Community has reported that at least 30 Palestinians with Israeli citizenship were fired from their jobs in various sectors, such as retail, automotive companies, restaurants, and within the Jerusalem Municipality, on the basis of online expression.<sup>94</sup> For example, a Palestinian teacher was reportedly suspended from her work, because she was following the Instagram page ‘Eye on Palestine’.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, on 11 October 2023, Israel’s Civil Service Commission issued a letter to governmental bodies, public hospital directors, and statutory organisations, effectively encouraging the monitoring of employees’ personal social media accounts and the potential implementation of discriminatory measures against them.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Adalah, “Adalah received complaints from around 80 Palestinian students, citizens of Israel, expelled or suspended from their Israeli universities and colleges due to their social media posts”, 12 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10903>.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Adalah, “Crackdown on Freedom of Speech of Palestinian Citizens of Israel”, 23 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10925>.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> +972 Magazine, “‘This is political persecution’: Israel cracks down on internal critics of its Gaza war”, 17 October 2023, available at: <https://www.972mag.com/israel-gaza-war-political-persecution/>.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Twitter, @kann\_news, 17 October 2023, available at: [https://twitter.com/kann\\_news/status/1714160752473292938?t=wcB7M0XMSu\\_zevilAi0X6A&s=19](https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1714160752473292938?t=wcB7M0XMSu_zevilAi0X6A&s=19).

<sup>96</sup> Adalah, “Crackdown on Freedom of Speech of Palestinian Citizens of Israel”, 23 October 2023, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10925>.

## 9. Collective Punishment against Palestinian Workers from Gaza

Since 7 October 2023, Palestinians from Gaza who were employed within the Green Line have had their work permits punitively revoked.<sup>97</sup> On 11 October 2023, Palestinians from Gaza were alarmed to discover that the Israeli work permits they possessed had been revoked, effectively transforming Palestinians from Gaza who had been legally working in Israel into ‘illegal aliens’.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, when they attempted to verify their permit status through the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories’ (COGAT) *Al-Munasiq* app, an Israeli platform for Palestinians to monitor the status of their permit applications, they found no record of their permits.<sup>99</sup> Subsequently, COGAT officially confirmed to Gisha that it had revoked all work permits previously issued to Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, adding that these permits “will not be reinstated”.<sup>100</sup>

Such punitive measures against around tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from Gaza rendered the presence of those who were inside the Green Line since 7 October 2023 “illegal” and subjected their safety and security to danger amidst a climate of increased vengeance against Palestinians. Indeed, since 7 October 2023, many workers from Gaza have been detained and physically assaulted by the Israeli authorities, and many others have been forced to the West Bank.<sup>101</sup> Following degrading treatment, some were eventually released, though many had their money and official documents confiscated and stolen. On the other hand, other Palestinians remain in detention with limited information available regarding their location and well-being.<sup>102</sup> Currently, workers from Gaza who have been forced to the West Bank are hosted in public facilities, while fearing for the safety of their beloved ones under bombardment in Gaza, and further being detained by the Israeli occupying authorities. Meanwhile, others are reportedly unable to reach the West Bank, due to concerns of potential Israeli attacks, namely detention and physical attacks by the military or Jewish-Israelis.<sup>103</sup>

Gaza residents have seen recent developments in their access to the Israeli labour market, as the number of permits issued by Israeli authorities in 2022 more than doubled in comparison to 2021. A total of 27,000 permits were granted last year, marking the highest number since the inception of the blockade.<sup>104</sup> While this may be viewed as a positive development, it is important to contextualise both the quantity and the nature

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<sup>97</sup> Gisha, “Israel refuses to reveal information about thousands of Gaza residents being held in Israeli detention facilities”, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://gisha.org/en/illegally-detained-workers-october-2023-en/>.

<sup>98</sup> Gisha, “Israel refuses to reveal information about thousands of Gaza residents being held in Israeli detention facilities”, 19 October 2023, available at: <https://gisha.org/en/illegally-detained-workers-october-2023-en/>.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #18”, 24 October 2023, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-18>.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Al Jazeera, “Israel detains, expels to West Bank hundreds of Gaza Palestinian workers”, 12 October 2023, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/12/israel-detains-expels-hundreds-of-gaza-palestinian-workers-to-west-bank>.

<sup>104</sup> ILO, ‘The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the Director-General - Appendix, 111th Session, 2023’, 2023, ILC.111/DG/APP, para 29.



of these permits, as well as the impact of Israel's occupation and closure on the broader economic situation in Gaza.

Gaza has witnessed a significant decline in productive capacity over the years, resulting in a GDP per capita that is now merely two-thirds of its pre-blockade level in 2006.<sup>105</sup> The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip hovers at 46 percent, and the monthly minimum wage there stands at NIS 717 (approximately USD 200).<sup>106</sup> Even prior to the ongoing aggression, the majority of Palestinians in Gaza have faced a critical need for humanitarian assistance, with nearly 80 percent of Palestinians in Gaza relying on humanitarian assistance,<sup>107</sup> and nearly one-third of households are classified as being in either 'catastrophic' or 'extreme' conditions of need.<sup>108</sup>

Crucially, Israel establishes quotas for Palestinian work permits and issues such permits, which can be arbitrarily revoked and annulled by the Israeli authorities or Israeli employers, in line with Israel's "political objectives and economic needs", as highlighted by the UN Conference on Trade and Development.<sup>109</sup> The International Labour Organisation indicated that only three percent of the permits that Palestinians from Gaza received allowed their holders wage protection and social benefits under Israeli labour law.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, Israel merely issues work permits to Palestinians working in specific, low-wage industries that do not pose any competition to Jewish-Israeli workers, and further utilises permits as a disciplinary mechanism.<sup>111</sup> As such, Palestinian workers demanding rights, unionising, or participating in any political activities are rendered to extortion and are vulnerable to permit revocations.<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, as early as the Second *Intifada*, Israel reduced the issuance and increased the termination of work permits as a collective punitive measure.<sup>113</sup> As a continuation of its routine policy,<sup>114</sup> the revocation of work permits of all Palestinians from Gaza testify to the use of these permits as "bargaining chips".

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<sup>105</sup> ILO, 'The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the Director-General - Appendix, 111th Session, 2023', 2023, ILC.111/DG/APP, para 33.

<sup>106</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), "Press Release On The Results Of The Labour Force Survey Second Quarter (April– June, 2023)", available at: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4559>.

<sup>107</sup> UNICEF, "Fifteen years of the blockade of the Gaza Strip: Briefing by Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General", 3 July 2022, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/fifteen-years-blockade-gaza-strip>.

<sup>108</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview, Occupied Palestinian Territory", January 2023, p. 9.

<sup>109</sup> UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", 2017, p. 16.

<sup>110</sup> ILO, 'The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the Director-General - Appendix, 111th Session, 2023', 2023, ILC.111/DG/APP, para 29.

<sup>111</sup> International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), "Workers' Rights in Crisis: Palestinian Workers in Israel and the Settlements", 2021, pp. 9–10.

<sup>112</sup> Who Profits, "Exploited and Essential: Palestinian Labour under COVID-19", 2020, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> B'Tselem, "Israel Revokes Permits of 20 Members of One Family, Leaving Them Jobless for Nearly Three Months and Counting", 1 May 2018, available at: [https://www.btselem.org/freedom\\_of\\_movement/20180501\\_revocation\\_of\\_work\\_permits\\_from\\_qabah\\_a\\_family](https://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/20180501_revocation_of_work_permits_from_qabah_a_family).

<sup>114</sup> See, for example, i24 News, "Israel Suspends 1,500 Palestinian Work Permits after Rocket Attack", 16 July 2022, available at: <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1658001770-israel-suspends-1-500-palestinian-work-permits-afterrocket-attack>.

Alongside the arbitrary revocation of work permits, those Palestinians ‘fortunate’ enough to be released, or those who were forced into the West Bank have shared harrowing accounts of the inhumane treatment and physical violence they endured at the hands of the Israeli police.

- *The Degrading Treatment of A.A*

On 7 October 2023, A.A, a 30-year-old Palestinian father of two children from Gaza, was in Askalan, inside the Green Line, where he resided with six fellow young workers within a shared accommodation. Fearing potential rocket strikes or retaliatory attacks by Jewish-Israelis, they all chose to remain inside the accommodation, and attempted to contact their employer, but these efforts proved futile, as his phone was found to be switched off. In the evening of the same day, Israeli border police forcibly raided their residence, accompanied by a significant number of police dogs. The Israeli police forced all six Palestinians to stand against a wall, made them undress, leaving them only in their underwear, physically assaulted all six Palestinians, and released police dogs to attack them. In his affidavit to Al-Haq, A.A recalled the following:

*They blew up the door of the accommodation. At that moment, we were scared and we hid in one of the rooms. The border police officers then pursued us into that room. There, they forced us to stand against the wall, and ordered us to undress, leaving us with only our underwear. Our hands were firmly bound behind our backs, and plastic restraints were tightly fastened around our legs, inducing severe pain, especially for me, as I had previously suffered an injury during Israel's military offensive on Gaza in 2014, which necessitated the insertion of metal plates.*

*We were forced to stay in that position for about twenty minutes. It was a really scary time for me. I couldn't even look back, even though I could hear the Israeli officers loading their weapons multiple times. Every time I heard that sound, I genuinely thought they might shoot us, and I was really afraid I might die. They even pushed me with the barrel of a rifle onto my back and shoulders a few times.*

*While I was up against the wall, they hit me several times on my body. At one point, they pushed me to the ground and started stomping on my head and body. They treated the other workers the same way. To make matters worse, they even set a police dog on my back, and it stayed there for about a minute. **During all those moments, I felt like the police officers could actually kill me, and no one would ever know about it. I was almost certain of that.**<sup>115</sup>*

Following this ordeal, the police officers forcibly dragged the six Palestinian workers down the stairs, and loaded them into a jeep. In the rear cabin, the Palestinian workers were crowded together, all in their underwear, within a confined space. The six Palestinians were then taken and transferred for interrogation. In his affidavit to Al-Haq, A.A recounted the following:

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<sup>115</sup> Al-Haq Affidavit 2023-10-01038-GA-F-A1-IL-NTG, taken from A.A, 30, resident of Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza City, on 12 October 2023 in Ramallah.

*Then the police officers forcefully took us, dragging us down a five-sectioned staircase, as our apartment is on the second floor of a residential building.*

***When we left our residence, I saw the lifeless bodies of two individuals who had been shot, lying on their backs with blood stains on their heads and abdomens. I believe they were [Palestinian] workers from Gaza, as their clothes had paint stains. Around them, two settlers were urinating on their dead bodies. Later, a third settler arrived and kicked the shoulder of one of the deceased workers. The six of us workers were attacked by the settlers who had gathered upon seeing us. They attempted to break through the police lines to reach us and assault us, but the Israeli border police prevented them.***

*The police compelled us into an olive-coloured jeep belonging to the border police. We were piled on top of each other in the jeep's rear cabin, wearing only our underwear. The space was no larger than two square metres. We were loaded on top of each other, and the jeep drove for about an hour. Inside the vehicle, we weren't physically beaten, but our eyes were blindfolded, and our hands and legs were tied, as I mentioned earlier. The car moved while we heard gunshots, missiles, and explosions.<sup>116</sup>*

A.A underwent an interrogation concerning his presence within the Green Line. He was questioned by an Israeli interrogator dressed in civilian attire, who was armed with a handgun. Following the interrogation, he was escorted to an enclosure, enclosed by an iron fence on three sides, with a cement wall on the fourth side, located in an outdoor yard. He was kept in this enclosure for approximately three hours. Afterward, A.A and the other six Palestinian workers were transported to a different location, blindfolded, with their hands and feet securely bound. Powerful floodlights illuminated their surroundings. In this state, they endured the cold, exhaustion, hunger, and thirst until the early morning hours when A.A could feel the warmth of the sun's rays.

Subsequently, they were moved to another location by vehicle, a journey that lasted nearly an hour. Upon arrival, their blindfolds were removed, but their hands remained tied behind their backs, and they were left in their underwear. A bag containing their phones, wallets, and identification cards was placed in their hands. They were guided through a revolving iron door and soon found themselves in a passageway at a military checkpoint, which they crossed on foot. They encountered a man, informing them that they were in the vicinity of the Israeli military checkpoint of Qalandia, located to the north of Jerusalem. The man removed their restraints and took them to his home, providing them with clothing, meals, and access to shower facilities.

Eager to connect with their loved ones, they reached out to their families. In his affidavit to Al-Haq, A.A recalled the following:

*When I called, my wife answered, her voice trembling. She asked, 'What happened to you? Why was your phone off? We were so worried about you'. I reassured her that I was safe. She went on to tell me that our neighbour's house had been bombed by the occupying forces, causing*

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

*severe damage to our home. To stay safe, she and my siblings had taken shelter in a nearby school.*

*Right now, I'm in Ramallah... But I'm unsure about what the future holds and how I'll be able to return to Gaza. I cannot stop thinking about my family and children, as well as my friends, many of whom were killed in the Israeli attack on Gaza.<sup>117</sup>*

A.A is a Palestinian father of two children. He holds a university degree in both business administration and electrical engineering. Despite his qualifications, he encountered challenges finding employment within Gaza, as many other Palestinian youth in Gaza. Consequently, he pursued and obtained a work permit in Israel, where he has been working in the field of electricity for approximately one year and two months. While Askalan is geographically close to the Gaza Strip, being just half an hour drive, A.A spends an extended period, approximately two weeks, away from his family in Askalan. He returns to the Gaza Strip for only about two days every other week, primarily due to the intricate and time-consuming procedures associated with passing through the Israeli military checkpoint at Erez. As of 7 October 2023, A.A had been in Askalan for around 18 - 20 days. At the time of writing, he had not seen his family and loved ones for nearly a month.

## **10. Conclusion and Recommendations**

In light of the above, the escalation of arbitrary and punitive attacks against Palestinians in historic Palestine needs to be understood within the framework of collective punishment against Palestinians and contextualised within Israel's settler colonial apartheid regime. We warn of such measures as they stand in stark contrast to Israel's obligations under international law, and intended to suppress any Palestinian resistance to Israeli oppression, to continuously deny the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Therefore, we call on the relevant UN Special Procedures to:

- i. Demand Israel to immediately cease its aggressive military offensive on the Gaza Strip; including by stopping the wilful killing of civilians and its patterns of indiscriminate attacks on civilian properties, and to cease its attacks on Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line;
- ii. Demand Israel to immediately and unconditionally allow the unimpeded access of fuel, water, food and humanitarian aid, including medical supplies, into the Gaza Strip, and to allow the immediate and unconditional transfer of patients from Gaza to receive healthcare treatment;
- iii. Demand Israel to immediately bring their rules of engagement for the use of live ammunition in line with international human rights law, as recommended by the UN Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests and adopted by Member States of the Human Rights Council in accountability resolution 40/13 of 22 March 2019;

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

- iv. Demand Israel to halt its continuous attacks against Palestinians across historic Palestine, and to ensure that the Palestinian rights to peacefully assemble and to freedom of expression are protected;
- v. Demand Israel to guarantee the protection of Palestinians in historic Palestine by taking all necessary measures to ensure effective law enforcement against Israeli settler perpetrators and investigation into incidents of settler violence;
- vi. Demand Israel to end its institutionalised impunity for settler violence and afford all victims of settler violence access to justice and effective remedies, including by ensuring the investigation of incidents, the prosecution of potential perpetrators, and reparations for its wrongful inaction;
- vii. Demand Israel, the Occupying Power, to immediately halt the planning, construction and expansion of its unlawful settlement enterprise and progressively undertake measures to dismantle all existing settlements and their infrastructure and withdraw Israeli settlers from the occupied West Bank;
- viii. Demand Israel, the Occupying Power, and the IPS to ensure and uphold Palestinian political prisoners' right to life and the highest attainable standard of health and mental health, and to avoid and end all forms of arbitrary, retaliatory, and collective punishment imposed against Palestinian political prisoners;
- ix. Demand Israel to release all Palestinian political prisoners, and to end its widespread and systematic use of arbitrary detention, including administrative detention, and the commission of torture and other ill-treatment against Palestinian detainees, and prisoners;
- x. Demand Israel to abide by its obligations under international human rights law, especially in light of rights violations based on freedoms of speech and assembly among Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and Palestinian Jerusalemites;
- xi. Demand Israel to immediately lift its 16-year-long illegal blockade and closure on the Gaza Strip, and end its 56-year-long illegal occupation and 75-year-long settler colonial apartheid regime;
- xii. Demand Israel to disclose the names, locations, and details of detention of Palestinians from Gaza, ensure their rights are respected, including their right to legal representation, and refrain from ill-treatment and torture against them;
- xiii. Publicly denounce and condemn Israel's collective punishment against Palestinian workers from Gaza, and call on the Israeli authorities to release all detained workers;

- xiv. Condemn Israel's designation of Palestinian detainees from Gaza as 'unlawful combatants' in accordance with the 'Unlawful Combatants Law' enacted in 2002 and call on Israel to repeal the aforementioned law;
- xv. Recognise the institutionalised impunity towards Israel's widespread and systematic human rights violations against Palestinians, from within Israeli judicial mechanisms, forming part and parcel of Israel's apartheid regime of systematic racial oppression and domination over the Palestinian people as a whole;
- xvi. Urge all states to immediately mobilise to enforce a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, and to push Israel to reinstate the supplying of fuel, water, food, electricity and medical and humanitarian aid, necessary for the survival of the protected population;
- xvii. Call on states to implement a mandatory and comprehensive arms embargo nationally or multilaterally against Israel, that include:
  - a. Prohibition of the provision to Israel of arms and related material of all types, including the sale or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, security equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned; and
  - b. Termination of all existing and forthcoming contractual arrangements with and licences granted to Israel relating to the manufacture and maintenance of arms, ammunition, military equipment, vehicles, and security and surveillance equipment.
- xviii. Urge all states to take immediate and concrete measures to halt Israel's attacks and use of excessive force against Palestinians, including by imposing sanctions and a two-way arms embargo on Israel;
- xix. Recognise and urge all states to recognise Israel's excessive use of force, collective punishment, arbitrary arrests against the Palestinian people, as well as its suppression of the opposition as policies and measures designed to maintain an institutionalised regime of racial domination and oppression over the Palestinian people as a whole, amounting to the crime of apartheid; and that Israel's suppressive policies and measures coupled with its system of impunity, prevents the Palestinian people from effectively resisting Israel's apartheid;
- xx. Call on the ICRC to abide by its responsibilities as the authorised international organisation to closely monitor the situation of Palestinian detainees and visit them in the newly established military camps;
- xxi. Call on the ICRC to demand visits to prisons to assess the condition of the prisoners, including Palestinian workers from Gaza, after the violations they have endured, and inform the detainees' families of their place and the conditions of their detention;

- xxii. Call on the international community and all High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their legal obligations towards upholding Palestinian human rights and enforcing the implementation of international humanitarian law;
- xxiii. Urge the ICRC to raise compliance to the legal humanitarian obligations and guarantees under the Fourth Geneva Convention that enlist the rights of prisoners in occupied territories;
- xxiv. Call on the High Contracting Parties to fulfil their legal obligation under Article 146 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the Convention;
- xxv. Recognise the root causes underpinning the ongoing Israeli military aggression on Gaza and continuous and systematic violations against Palestinians elsewhere in historic Palestine – inherent in Israel’s apartheid regime, as a tool of its settler colonialism, and the denial of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including their right to return;
- xxvi. Call for the realisation of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, including by calling for a complete end to Israel’s occupation and dismantling of Israel’s settler colonial and apartheid regime;
- xxvii. Call on the European Union to ban the import of products, goods, and services originating from Israeli colonial settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, namely by supporting the proposal for a wide ban of trade with and support for colonial settlements;
- xxviii. Call on the UN Security Council to implement economic sanctions and other countermeasures until Israel adheres to its obligations under international law; and
- xxix. Call on the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to expedite the investigation into the Situation in Palestine with full resources and onsite visits as promised in December 2022.