



JOINT SITUATION REPORT

58 Years of Occupation, The Two-Year War in Gaza

The Platform – Israeli NGOs for Human Rights

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel; Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights; Breaking the Silence; Combatants for Peace; Emek Shaveh; Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement; HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual; Ir Amim; MachsomWatch; Physicians for Human Rights Israel; The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel; Torah of Justice; Yesh Din

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This report was written by 13 human rights organizations, some of which receive most of their funding from foreign political entities. Even during this period, we are proud of the support of those who believe, as we do, that the occupation is not an internal Israeli matter and who insist on preserving human rights. Lists of supporters are detailed on the websites of the organizations and on the website of the Registrar of Nonprofits.

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Introduction

The third Platform Report, covering the 58th year of the Israeli occupation, is being released two years after the October 7 massacre. It offers a summary of the two years of Israel's devastating war in Gaza in the wake of October 7, and the grave human rights and international law violations across all Palestinian territories that have taken place during that time.

This report is presented by thirteen human rights organizations working in Israel. We have engaged in documentation and research in the Occupied Territories for years, driven by the conviction that human rights are universal, that the occupation, illegal and immoral in itself, has led to widespread human rights abuses, breaches of international humanitarian law, and increasingly entrenched apartheid, and, in the context of the war in Gaza, and violations of the laws of war—some so grave they constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The trauma of the events of October 7 and the dramatic aftermath has changed everyday life in Israel beyond recognition, unsettling the sense of safety across every segment of the population.

In these challenging times, practices Israel employed even before the war have intensified to the point where they have become routine and unprecedented in scale. They include: the widespread killing of civilians, including children and the elderly; mass destruction of homes, neighborhoods, and essential infrastructure that has left hundreds of thousands of Gazans displaced, homeless, and without access to basic necessities such as water and shelter; and the broad use of Palestinians as human shields, as they are exploited, placed in harm's way, and denied their liberty. Palestinians held as security detainees and prisoners have seen their prison conditions deliberately and extensively worsened, and the draconian enforcement of the Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law with oversight scaled back further in accordance with the law's latest amendment. In the West Bank, settler violence and forced expulsions of Palestinian communities have surged, unchecked by authorities, alongside the increased use of bureaucratic tools to entrench de facto annexation, tighter restrictions on movement, and deepening dispossession in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, space for civil protest and dissent, especially in Israel's Arab society, has been narrowed by targeted attacks on freedom of expression, the right to demonstrate, and the ability of civil society organizations to operate and speak out.

Moreover, we have seen new and deeply troubling trends that not too long ago would have seemed inconceivable. Most shocking are the creation of mass hunger and a humanitarian crisis, among the worst in the world, brought about by the destruction of Gaza's food production infrastructure and the blocked entry of food, medical aid, and other basic humanitarian assistance, followed by attacks on thousands seeking aid at food distribution centers in Israeli-controlled areas. Hospitals have been struck, and medical, rescue, and aid workers have been

killed and detained. Detainees, meanwhile, have been subjected to unbridled systemic abuse, often resulting in irreversible harm, and have been denied medical treatment or provided with care that fails to meet ethical standards. Dozens have died in custody.

While the ceasefire brought some relief for Palestinians in Gaza, the broader reality of the occupation today gives cause for alarm: the ongoing occupation, lethal violence, and harm to Palestinians continue the erosion of fundamental principles such as the sanctity of life, universal human rights, respect for the law and the laws of war and accountability for violations. These values have been compromised to a degree that cannot be rectified without thorough investigation, admission of responsibility, and accountability. To end the war and begin the process of healing, recovery, and calm in the region, all parties must honor the cease-fire agreement, fulfill their obligations under international law, and refrain from causing further harm to civilians. Israel, for its part, must ensure the immediate flow of food and aid in necessary quantities and at the necessary rate; allow the evacuation of thousands of sick and wounded for medical treatment outside Gaza, including to the West Bank; open crossings for the movement of civilians, goods, and aid workers; allow for the reconstruction and restoration of infrastructure; and withdraw, with the required international coordination, from the areas it currently controls. In addition, Israel must bravely and honestly investigate its actions during the two years of fighting, acknowledge war crimes and violations of the law, and draw the necessary conclusions.

Public discourse surrounding the injustices of the occupation and the grave crimes associated with it is at best absent, and often violent and inflammatory. Crimes are rarely investigated by military or civilian law enforcement. In the absence of a resolute systemic response, there is little to prevent these wrongs from escalating, as evidenced by the continued destruction of infrastructure and buildings in Gaza even during the ceasefire, and the rampant violence in the West Bank.

The information presented in this report was rigorously gathered, verified, and cross-checked through sustained efforts. It is difficult to read and absorb. Still, we hope you will engage with it and join us in calling for action and for redressing the injustices it exposes.

This report highlights major trends in the areas of expertise of the partner organizations. Due to space constraints, it does not purport to detail every violation committed by Israel against the Palestinian residents of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Nor does it contain legal analyses, but instead refers to the publications released by the organizations for further reading.

By definition, the report focuses on human rights violations related to the occupation and to civilian resistance against it in Israel. Other rights violations, inside or outside of Israel, by the State of Israel or any other actor, certainly merit attention in other reports.

1. Gaza Strip

From the time Israel captured the Gaza Strip in 1967 until its unilateral withdrawal in 2005, Gaza was governed by military rule. Following the withdrawal, Israel continued to control many aspects of the residents' lives, mainly through tight supervision over the access of people, goods, and fuel to and from Gaza, as well as the provision of services. Since Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, Israel has stepped up its efforts to isolate Gaza, significantly contributing to a chronic humanitarian crisis.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas led a planned and extensive attack on dozens of civilian communities and military bases in Israel, killing more than a thousand civilians and soldiers and injuring over 3,000, while committing numerous documented war crimes, including taking civilian hostages, among them infants, children, women, and the elderly, as well as soldiers, into Gaza. Israel responded with a massive military offensive that resulted in a war lasting over two years and marked by extensive harm to the civilian population, blatant violations of international law, and unprecedented levels of death, destruction, hunger, and deprivation, as detailed in this section.

Once the ceasefire entered into effect on October 10, 2025, the Israeli military withdrew to an area comprising about 58% of the Strip's total territory, all surviving Israeli hostages were released, and some of the bodies of deceased hostages held in Gaza were returned. Thousands of Palestinian prisoners were released, bodies of Palestinians held by Israel were handed over, and the volume of humanitarian and food aid cleared to enter the Strip was increased after months of severe restrictions. While the ceasefire halted much of the direct killing and destruction, the humanitarian crisis nonetheless remains acute, and Gaza's reconstruction, if possible given the tenuousness of the agreement, is expected to take years.

To end the war and promote recovery, reconstruction, and calm in the region, all parties must respect the agreement and their obligations under international law, and refrain from further harm to civilians. Israel must allow food and aid to enter Gaza immediately, in sufficient quantities and at the pace required. It must allow the evacuation of thousands of sick and wounded people in need of medical treatment outside the Strip, including to the West Bank; open the crossings to allow movement of civilians, goods, and aid workers; enable infrastructure repair and reconstruction in the Strip, and withdraw, with the necessary international coordination, from the areas it currently controls. Israel also has an obligation to carry out a forthright and honest investigation into what occurred during the two years of fighting, acknowledge war crimes and breaches of law, and draw the necessary conclusions.

1.1 Deaths and injuries

At the two-year mark since the October 7 massacre and the outbreak of the war, and three days before the ceasefire agreement entered into effect, the [UN reported](#), based on Gaza Ministry of Health data, that 67,173 people had died in the Gaza Strip, including 20,179 minors and 10,427 women (46% of all fatalities). In addition, 170,203 people were injured, including 44,143 minors and 23,769 women.

The figures provided by the Gaza Ministry of Health are supported by names and ID numbers and regarded as credible by research institutions and international aid organizations. Moreover, experts estimate that the true death toll is significantly higher, as these figures do not include missing persons. [According to estimates from June 2025](#), around 10,000 bodies remain trapped beneath collapsed buildings, and since they have not been located or identified, they are not included in the official count. Given that Gaza had a population of over 2.2 million before the war, the figures indicate more than 10% of the population has been killed or injured as a direct result of the conflict, as [also noted by former IDF Chief of Staff](#) Herzi Halevi at an event in September 2025.

During the war, Israel dramatically changed its rules of engagement, leading to an unprecedented number of civilian deaths, including children, the elderly, and families. An [investigation by Local Call](#) and others revealed that, according to internal IDF intelligence estimates from May 2025, about 83% of the war's fatalities were civilians.

The ceasefire that began on October 10, 2025 significantly reduced the risk to civilians in Gaza from Israeli military actions (as opposed to other risks such as those posed by Hamas or criminal activity). Nevertheless, dozens of Palestinians were killed by the Israeli military in the early weeks of the agreement, whether after crossing the “yellow line” into areas under Israeli control (especially before this line was marked on the ground), or in Israeli strikes on Hamas-controlled areas in response to militant attacks and the killing of Israeli soldiers.

For ongoing updates on Gaza's civilian population, see [Gaza Now: facts and figures](#) on Gisha's website.

1.1.1 Use of Palestinians as human shields

Testimonies given to Breaking the Silence by soldiers, accounts collected by Haaretz (see links for further reading below), and statements given by Gaza residents to the ICRC and the AP news agency,⁸ reveal that Palestinians were used as human shields, captured, exploited, and deliberately put in mortal danger. Most reports describe Palestinians being sent ahead of Israeli soldiers into tunnel shafts or buildings suspected of being booby-trapped. In some cases, they were forced to perform other life-threatening tasks.⁹ According to the testimonies, many of

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these men, were detained despite being suspected of nothing. They included elderly men and teenagers, and were captured in various parts of the Gaza Strip, some while traveling through passages controlled by the military (drainage passages) and humanitarian corridors. The Gazans who were detained were handcuffed and blindfolded; some were forced to wear IDF uniforms, and some were beaten and humiliated. They were held for periods ranging from several hours to several weeks, sometimes passed between different military units throughout the Strip. Most were eventually released. Many units referred to them as “shawishes,” (slaves), and the military slang for the practice is “Mosquito Protocol.”

Because reporting is limited to personal testimonies, the number of Gazans killed or injured as a result of this practice is unknown. The sources cited here contain evidence of at least four deaths, but there is reasonable concern that the true number is much higher. In one case, a Palestinian was reportedly killed due to mistaken identity; in another, [a Palestinian was killed](#) in a tunnel he was sent into, apparently after fainting. In a third case, [a Palestinian was shot](#) by Hamas fighters after being sent into a building where they were present. In another particularly grave case, [an elderly man was used](#) for hours as a human shield to sweep houses. When he was finally released, he and his wife were forced to leave their home and then fatally shot by another battalion due to a lack of coordination between units.

The reports indicate that the practice, which came into use at the very beginning of the war, proliferated as it went on. Though international law and the military’s own directives strictly forbid using human shields and involving civilians in combat operations, these were not isolated incidents, but a common practice known to the senior command, and, according to soldier testimonies, even directed by senior commanders in the field. The fact that it is informally referred to as a “protocol” speaks to its prevalence.

The [military has previously stated](#) that the practice is prohibited, that the matter is being probed, and that the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division (MPCID) is investigating six cases. As of the writing of this report, the outcome of these investigations is unknown. Given the indicated scale and ubiquity of the practice, it appears that eradicating the use of human shields will require an in-depth, thorough investigation that goes far beyond individual incidents.

For further reading on the topic:

Testimonies by soldiers on the Breaking the Silence website: [The Use of Civilians Is Incredibly Direct](#), [The Word “Shawish” Was Used a Lot](#), [I Received Them Wholesale in Khan Younis, the Mosquitoes](#), [The Lie Drove Me Crazy](#)

Haaretz articles: [Haaretz Investigation: The IDF Uses Palestinian Civilians as Human Shields in Scanning Tunnels and Buildings in Gaza](#), [After Haaretz’s Exposure, the MPCID Investigates the IDF’s Use of Palestinians as Human Shields in Gaza](#)

Exposure from Ha-Makom Ha-chi Ham Be-GeHenom: [An 80-Year-Old Palestinian Was Used as](#)

[a Human Shield With an Explosive Belt Tied Around His Neck. Eight Hours Later, He Was Shot Dead](#)

1.2. Starvation and withholding of aid

1.2.1 Starvation and famine

The Gaza Strip was gripped by an unprecedented hunger crisis in the first year of the war, driven by Israeli policies that included destroying the local food and agriculture industry, displacing most of the population, months of severe restrictions on the movement and distribution of humanitarian aid, and a prolonged ban on the entry of goods for the private market.

After somewhat relaxing restrictions during the ceasefire that was in effect from January to March 2025, Israel closed all crossings into Gaza on March 2, 2025, blocking all aid until May 18, and ignoring repeated warnings from international organizations and medical professionals about the rapid deterioration of humanitarian conditions and the risk of famine.

Beginning on May 19, 2025, Israel permitted only very limited deliveries of food and relief supplies to select UN and international organizations in the Strip. Despite the [UN](#) reporting some improvement in access and distribution conditions in August, numerous logistical and access barriers prevented organizations from bringing in enough aid or distributing it efficiently to meet people's needs. Amid the hunger and chaos, most of the limited food supply was taken directly from trucks by desperate crowds or looted before it reached distribution.

In July 2025 alone, medical professionals in Gaza recorded [more than 13,000 new cases](#) of child malnutrition, with especially dire conditions among infants and children under five years old. In August 2025, the UN panel of experts formally [declared](#) a state of emergency and famine in the Deir al-Balah and Khan Yunis governorates, the highest and most severe level of hunger on the IPC scale.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, as of October 7, 2025, 461 malnutrition-related deaths had been recorded, including 157 [children](#).

With the ceasefire, the capacity of [UN](#) and other aid organizations to deliver food to those in need significantly improved, though amounts still fall far short of demand, as most border crossings remain shut and many shipments await Israeli approval. Even after the ceasefire, Israel has refused to open the commercial crossings in northern Gaza, which means that relief cannot sufficiently reach the areas where famine had been declared, in part due to the destruction of roads. On October 24, 2025, [the UN reported](#) marginal improvement and a drop in the proportion

of children suffering from severe malnutrition compared to the previous investigation, down from 14% to 10% of the 4,994 children tested.

Starving a civilian population is strictly prohibited under international law. Israel has an active duty to ensure regular, uninterrupted flow of food and humanitarian aid, including by opening border crossings, including the northern Gaza and Rafah crossing to Egypt, to allow aid in.

For ongoing updates on Gaza's civilian population, see [Gaza Now: facts and figures](#) on Gisha's website.

1.2.2 Attacks on food aid recipients

In addition to the issues stemming from the strict restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid, on May 27, 2025 a new and inexperienced agency, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), started operating in the Strip. Backed and approved by the Israeli government, the GHF set out to centralize food distribution across most or all of the Gaza Strip. Ignoring expert warnings and the existing delivery infrastructure, the Israeli government chose to institute a [new system](#) with just four distribution centers, three in the south and one in central Gaza, tasked with feeding about two million hungry people.

The distribution centers operated sporadically and offered only basic food packages. Conditions were chaotic; there was no tracking or oversight of who actually received aid. Not only was distribution by the GHF highly inefficient, it also put the lives of aid recipients at risk. According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, as of [September 2, 2025](#), 2,306 people were killed and over 16,929 injured while trying to collect food from GHF centers or walking on the roads leading to them. Many of the victims were shot by soldiers or GHF security guards (both foreign and local). Hundreds more were wounded since September until the [distribution centers were closed](#) soon after the ceasefire took effect.

Live fire for crowd control: Israeli soldiers and officers have testified that the military used artillery, tank fire, and machine guns to direct [people approaching the centers](#) and to enforce the rules governing when and where crowds could gather. Firing live rounds, including artillery and mortars (which are inaccurate weapons) on unarmed civilians who posed no threat, sometimes from a kilometer (approximately 0.62 miles) away, is another example of the overly permissive rules of engagement given to soldiers in Gaza, disregarding their basic duty to avoid putting civilians at risk.

The high number of casualties in and around the distribution sites points to a policy whose main goal was not to provide a quick, humanitarian solution for the hunger crisis, but to force the population south, where most distribution centers were located, and buy more time for military operations under mounting international pressure over images of severe hunger in Gaza.

For more on hunger in Gaza and how the foundation's distribution centers failed, see Gisha's [The claims Israel makes vs. reality](#).

1.3 Forcible transfer

1.3.1 Forcible transfer inside the Gaza Strip and control of the territory

At the height of the conflict, [about 86% of Gaza's territory](#) was designated a closed military zone or placed under evacuation orders. This, combined with the systematic destruction of buildings and infrastructure forced at least 1.9 million residents, nearly 90% of the Strip's population, out of their homes, and later out of temporary shelters as well. Many were forced to relocate [multiple times](#), sometimes ten or more. As the war dragged on and spaces where Israel permitted residents to stay decreased, many IDPs reported increasing difficulty finding shelter, due to severe overcrowding and a shortage of appropriate equipment, made worse by prolonged restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid, including tents. While Israel declared [humanitarian zones](#), where civilians were instructed to move for their own safety, these areas were also occasionally attacked and civilians were harmed.

After the ceasefire went into effect on October 10, 2025, the Israeli military pulled back to positions along what is known as [the "Yellow Line,"](#) a new dividing line within the Strip. According to the agreement, Israel retained direct military control over about 58% of Gaza's territory, along its borders with Israel and Egypt. The area under Israeli control is off limits to residents, but since the location of the demarcation line was unclear, dozens of Gazans were shot after inadvertently crossing it while attempting to return home after hostilities ended. On October 17, 2025, Israel's defense minister issued an [order](#) to physically mark the Yellow Line. According to an announcement by the IDF Arabic spokesperson, concrete slabs are being placed at 200-meter intervals. [Reports](#) indicated that in some places, the markers were placed well inside Gaza, effectively expanding the area under Israeli control. [Estimates](#) suggest work on marking the line is still ongoing, and it is unclear whether Israel will complete the project.

If Israel and Hamas continue to abide by the agreement, the next phases of the ceasefire should see the Israeli military withdrawing from the areas where it has retained control, allowing for reconstruction and the return of displaced residents. The 20-Point Plan agreed to by Israel and Hamas stipulates that, in the future, [Israel will withdraw](#) to a security perimeter, which has not been precisely defined, but does include the Philadelphi Corridor. This implies that even after a further withdrawal, a significant part of Gaza will remain under Israeli control.

1.3.2 Forcible transfer from Gaza City

On September 9, 2025, the Israeli military issued [an evacuation order for all of Gaza City](#) and two adjacent areas, covering a total of about 21% of the Strip and serving as permanent or

temporary home to roughly one million regular residents and IDPs who had sought refuge in the city. The order forced people into conditions of extreme overcrowding, with up to 28,000 people per square kilometer. Many residents, already exhausted from displacement and hunger, left their homes because of the order, as well as the bombardment and destruction of residential neighborhoods. The order was lifted about a month later, once the ceasefire agreement came into effect, but many returning residents found their homes and neighborhoods decimated.

1.3.3 Threat of forcible transfer from the Gaza Strip

In March 2025, government plans to carry out [a population transfer](#) from the Gaza Strip were made public. The Security Cabinet passed a resolution to “help” Palestinians who wished “to leave voluntarily” for third countries, with the government going so far as to establish a special planning body, fully disregarding Israel’s obligations under international law and the prohibition against the forcible transfer of the local population. Promoting the emigration of a population under foreign military rule while withholding sufficient humanitarian aid cannot be considered facilitation of voluntary departure. On September 17, 2025, the day the assault on Gaza City began, during which hundreds were killed or wounded and tens of thousands fled, the Minister of Finance, Bezalel Smotrich, said at a conference in Tel Aviv that “the Gaza Strip is becoming [a real estate bonanza](#),” adding, “We need to decide how to split the profits Gaza land will bring.”

However, the [20-Point Plan](#), which underpins the ceasefire agreement and is binding on the Israeli government, states explicitly that Gaza’s residents cannot not be expelled, and that Israel cannot settle or annex the Strip.

Instead of advancing unlawful plans to remove residents, policies must support a framework that allows residents to return and exercise their fundamental right of freedom of movement, both within Gaza and the right to leave and return to it, which has been denied to them for many years.

For more on this subject, see: [Israel’s “voluntary emigration” policy from the Gaza Strip effectively constitutes the forced transfer of the civilian population – a war crime and crime against humanity](#) on Gisha’s website.

1.4 Physical destruction

Over the two years of war, residential buildings, industrial and agricultural areas, livestock farms, public facilities, roads, and infrastructure have been destroyed. Cities, neighborhoods, and villages were systematically decimated, and today the Strip is buried under tens of millions of tons of debris. Satellite imagery shows that vast areas are no longer habitable, and experts estimate it will take years to rebuild Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of Gazans have lost their homes and livelihoods. They are forced to live in overcrowded, makeshift shelters and to rely on

external humanitarian aid, which even after the ceasefire does not reach everyone, nor in sufficient quantities, due to restrictions on entry and movement.

1.4.1 Destruction of structures and essential infrastructure

Buildings and roads: Based on analyses of satellite imagery as of September 2025, experts have estimated that 85% of all buildings in the Strip have been destroyed or damaged, a [seven-percent increase](#) since July 2025. In Gaza City, which came under intense attack in the final weeks of the war, satellite images showed destruction or damage to 83% of buildings that previously housed around 700,000 residents. An analysis of satellite imagery from July 2025 suggests that 77% of the road network in the Strip was destroyed or damaged during the war, hindering movement and preventing humanitarian aid from reaching all residents.

According to [estimates by aid organizations in October 2025](#), about 1.5 million Gazans are still in need of supplies for emergency shelters such as tents, blankets, and containers for water collection. The flow of equipment into the Strip is still approved only in limited quantities, and the amounts entering fall well short of the need.

Drinking water and sanitation infrastructure: Before the war, Gaza's water supply relied on desalination facilities, wells, and boreholes, with about 10% supplied by Israel. Over the course of the war, 89% of water and sanitation facilities were destroyed or damaged, and the water supply from Israel was cut off, resuming sporadically. A major shortage of clean water expanded across the Strip, reaching life-threatening levels. In [July](#) 2025, one of the hottest months of the year, 96% of families in Gaza suffered from water insecurity. Many are forced to drink water unfit for consumption or to walk long distances and wait in long, crowded lines to obtain limited quantities of water.

On March 9, 2025, Israel cut off electricity to the water desalination plant in southern Gaza, exacerbating the plight of residents, including thousands who had been forced to move from the north to the south. The desalination plant remained without power for four and a half months, until Israel [restored power](#) on July 26, 2025.

The water supply to residents improved somewhat following the October 10, 2025 ceasefire, with the use of tankers and, as of October 20, 2025, [1,870 distribution points](#) across Gaza operated by aid organizations, subject to access restrictions. Targeted repairs to water pipes have also begun in Gaza City. However, a [full-scale, intensive recovery](#) for the water supply system will be required before all residents can fully realize their basic right to clean water in sufficient quantities.

Electricity: Before the war, Gaza received most of its power from Israel. Since October 2023 and throughout the war, [Israel blocked](#) regular electricity supply and prevented the delivery of fuel needed to operate Gaza's power plant. Power supplied to the desalination plant was the only

exception. The extremely limited and irregular supply of fuel and extensive damage meant that generators were often unusable, further jeopardizing the operation of life-saving services.

[With the ceasefire](#), dozens of fuel tankers were allowed into the Strip. Since the fuel is needed to run essential services, the general population remains largely in darkness. For the first time in seven months, a small amount of cooking gas was also allowed to enter Gaza. UN representatives emphasize that a steady and sufficient flow of fuel is a primary and essential condition for the start of recovery efforts.

Destruction of local food production infrastructure: The most recent [assessment](#) of agricultural damage was conducted in September 2025 by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Satellite Center (UNOSAT) using satellite image analysis. It found that about 87% of agricultural land in Gaza was underwent significant damage as did 80% of greenhouses; 87% of water wells; and about 72% of fishing assets including fishing infrastructure, such as the Gaza port, boats, and fish ponds. The livestock sector was [devastated](#), with cattle, sheep, poultry, and bees, pivotal to Gaza's food production, almost entirely wiped out.

The visible damage was caused by deliberate actions such as bulldozing, airstrikes, shelling, and other military operations by Israel's armed forces. This destruction of food production infrastructure, together with blocking the entry of aid and food, has been a major contributor towards the profound humanitarian crisis in the Strip and led to famine, particularly in northern Gaza. The Israeli assault not only led to the collapse of available food sources in Gaza but also inflicted serious, long-term damage that will affect the population's capacity to produce food for years to come.

For further reading on this topic, see: [The War on Food Production: The Agricultural Sector](#) on Gisha's website.

For an environmental impact report on Gaza up to September 2025 and recommendations for rehabilitation, see the [UN Environment Program report](#).

1.4.2 Destruction as policy

The unprecedented destruction in the Gaza Strip is an integral part of the fighting. First, to reduce the risk to troops, heavy firepower was used before and during entry into neighborhoods and new areas. Moreover, the systematic destruction—deliberate rather than incidental—was driven by a regularized military and political approach. Though not officially recognized, it appears that one of the central doctrines applied by the Israeli military in Gaza is its Dahiya Doctrine, named for its use for the first time in the 2006 Lebanon War against Hezbollah in Beirut's Dahiya neighborhood. The aim is to inflict deliberate and disproportionate destruction on civilian buildings and infrastructure. While in Lebanon several hundred buildings were

destroyed, and several hundred people, including civilians, were killed within days in a single neighborhood (unacceptable in its own right), in Gaza the strikes and destruction continued for nearly two years; tens of thousands of buildings and hundreds of thousands of housing units were destroyed, and tens of thousands of people were killed, with very limited options for escape.

Moreover, from early in the fighting, government officials tasked the military with creating buffer zones in the Strip. This strategy draws on a longstanding Israeli defense doctrine, used to a degree prior to the October 7 Hamas attack, and whose effectiveness is subject to debate.

Beginning in the first month of the ground invasion, the military systematically flattened an area stretching 800 to 1,500 meters from the border fence inside Gaza, covering about 16% of its total area. The [Perimeter](#), as it is called by the military, included residential neighborhoods, schools, mosques, cemeteries, and roughly 35% of Gaza's farmland, all of which were destroyed by military units in a process that lasted about a year and ended in December 2024. The Netzarim Corridor likewise changed from a narrow passage in the center of the Strip to a flattened area nearly the size of Tel Aviv. Soldiers who participated in creating the new Perimeter described the utter devastation in testimonies to Breaking the Silence. One called it [Hiroshima](#).

The massive destruction in the Perimeter, which took place following evacuation orders and the forcible transfer of the area's residents, was backed by unequivocal statements from ministers and members of Knesset about the need to seize land not only for security reasons, but also in order to exact [punishment](#), prevent local residents from returning to their homes, and [to renew Jewish settlement](#) in Gaza. Given all this, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the destruction was not carried out solely for security reasons, but also to pave the way for forced transfer and [ethnic cleansing](#).

In April 2025, Defense Minister Israel Katz announced that the Philadelphi Corridor, Rafah, and surrounding neighborhoods in the south would be added to the Perimeter, expanding it to about 36% of the Strip's total area. By June 2025, large parts of [Rafah](#), a city of 275,000 before the war and where many IDPs fled from northern Gaza at the start of the war, had been flattened.

Throughout the summer, military forces, joined by civilian contractors, carried out demolitions in Khan Yunis, and in September 2025 Israel began destroying entire neighborhoods in Gaza City.

Now, with the ceasefire in effect, Israel controls more than half of the Strip. According to the 20-Point Plan underlying the ceasefire agreement, [Israel will eventually withdraw](#) to a security perimeter. While not clearly defined, it will include the Philadelphi Corridor. In other words, Israel will control a large part of the Strip even after the next phase of withdrawal.

For further reading on the perimeter and destruction in the Strip, including soldiers' testimonies, see publications and opinion columns by Breaking the Silence:

[The Perimeter Deception in the Strip Exposed: The Destruction Bought Us No Security](#) by Nadav Weiman, Executive Director of Breaking the Silence

[The Perimeter: Soldiers' Testimonies from the Buffer Zone in Gaza, 2023–2024](#) (Breaking the Silence)

1.4.3 Destruction of culture and heritage sites

Since the war broke out, cultural sites in the Gaza Strip have been subjected to systematic and deliberate destruction. These include religious, heritage and archaeological sites, mosques, churches, universities, historic buildings, archives, and museums. [International organizations](#), including UNESCO, the European Union, and the World Bank, estimated in February 2025 that over 53% of Gaza's cultural and heritage sites have been destroyed or damaged. The number has since increased, and a UNESCO report published on October 6, 2025, lists [114 affected sites](#), most of them in and around Gaza City. In September 2025, the warehouse holding [Gaza's largest archaeological collection](#) was bombed. After an evacuation notice from the Israeli military and thanks to international pressure that helped delay the attack by several days, the most important items were moved to a church in the hopes it would be spared; still, many artifacts were lost or broken.

Cultural institutions and heritage assets are central to the creation of a sense of belonging and personal, group, and national identity. They also serve as sources of income and drivers of development. The targeting of Gaza's cultural treasures and physical heritage serves efforts to [erase local history](#) and obfuscate ties between the local population and their land. This stands in clear contradiction to international law, which prohibits the deliberate and systematic destruction of archaeological sites, historic structures, and cultural or religious institutions, even in times of war.

Emek Shaveh warns that beyond the widespread destruction of protected cultural sites in Gaza, given the humanitarian crisis and past experience there is also concern over appropriation and transfer of antiquities to Israel, as well as looting by private actors. As the occupying power, Israel is obligated to safeguard assets in areas under its control and to prevent state appropriation or private theft, with the goal of their eventual restoration and return to their historical locations.

For further reading, see [Open letter against the destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza and the West Bank](#) by Emek Shaveh.

1.5 Healthcare

The collapse of Gaza's healthcare system played a key role in the unprecedented humanitarian crisis from the very beginning of the war. The health catastrophe escalated during the war's second year, as hospitals were bombed and medical teams and emergency services were targeted. Additionally, the extensive restrictions Israel imposed on the entry of humanitarian aid led to acute shortages of medicines, equipment, medical devices, and fuel.

1.5.1 Figures

[According to UN figures](#), as of October 5, 2025 there are no functional hospitals in northern Gaza. In other areas, only 39% (14 out of 36) of hospitals are functioning, all partially and with extremely high occupancy rates; for example, in August 2025, the occupancy rate at Shifaa Hospital was reported at 300%. Of the field hospitals, 63% (10 out of 16) are functioning, also only partially, and just 35% (62 out of 169) of clinics are operational, again only in a limited capacity. Meanwhile, only 30 emergency medical teams, international and local, were serving Gaza's entire population.

More than 15,600 critical patients, including 3,800 children, require evacuation abroad. Nonetheless, between early 2025 and September 29, only 2,405 sick and wounded had been evacuated.

Even with the end of hostilities, mortality rates and the sharp decline in [average life expectancy](#) are expected to persist. The major damage to healthcare infrastructure, coupled with mass hunger and the spread of disease, including infectious illnesses, and the [collapse of care systems](#), will likely continue claiming lives for years to come. High mortality rates from diseases that would normally be treatable, such as certain cancers, heart disease, kidney disease, and diabetes, are expected to continue. The psychological impact of the war is also expected to reverberate for generations, diminishing the capacity of individuals, families, and communities to function and undermining quality of life.

Even if it were to begin immediately, the restoration of Gaza's healthcare system will take years, during which time residents will have limited access to medical services.

At the time that the ceasefire went into effect, medical facilities in Gaza were suffering from extreme shortages of medications and equipment, including basic supplies such as needles and disinfectants. At a minimum, and in accordance with international law, Israel has a duty to enable the regular entry, in sufficient quantities, of necessary medical equipment and drug supplies to meet the basic needs of the population and to ensure access to healthcare.

1.5.2 Targeting of healthcare systems and crews

The destruction and collapse of Gaza's healthcare system are not just collateral damage or a byproduct of military activity. They are the result of consistent, multi-pronged actions: direct attacks on hospitals; military incursions into medical facilities; arrests and killings of healthcare staff; the prevention of the supply of fuel, medication, and medical equipment; and the disruption of evacuation and patient transfer systems. These measures initially impacted the most vulnerable: children and cancer patients who were left untreated, as well as pregnant women and newborns. However, ongoing harm has extended to the entire population. Infectious diseases have spread due to lack of clean water and poor sanitation, with no medical solutions available.

The [collapse of Gaza's healthcare system](#) and the shutdown of vital services such as water, sanitation, and shelter have created a vicious cycle of infectious disease and malnutrition, overwhelming the capacities of the remaining hospitals.

The damage inflicted on Gaza's healthcare system constitutes a grave violation of the right to health and, in many respects, the right to life as well, especially when considered in conjunction with other serious and sustained harm to living conditions in Gaza, such as the destruction of water, electricity, and housing infrastructure, and starvation due to blocked food supply. The living conditions imposed on Gaza's residents throughout the war raise concerns of [genocide](#).

There is a direct link between the destruction of the healthcare system and the regular, targeted attacks on medical staff. Since October 2023, more than 1,580 healthcare professionals have been killed, including many senior physicians and hospital directors. Members of Gaza's medical community have been systematically detained, abused, and villainized. During the attacks on Gaza, [over 300 medical staff](#) were detained without charges and subjected to degrading treatment and [torture](#). According to Physicians for Human Rights Israel, more than one hundred remain in custody. These violations have depleted Gaza's medical force, pushed the healthcare system to collapse, and significantly undermined prospects for future recovery.

For further reading, see:

PHRI (Physicians for Human Rights – Israel), [Destruction of Conditions of Life: A health analysis of the Gaza genocide](#)

PHRI, [Torture of Medical Staff from Gaza in Israel • Report and Testimonies](#)

1.5.3 The impact of displacement from Gaza City

In August 2025, Israel began taking steps toward a ground takeover of Gaza City, where most of the remaining partially-operational hospitals were located. The city's population, including hospital patients and staff, was ordered to evacuate. This demand would not only have been a dangerous move towards mass forced transfer in Gaza, it was also impractical and, if implemented, would have led to the deaths of the sick and wounded, as had occurred in other parts of the Strip.

In practice, several hospitals in the city were damaged and shut down, but the ceasefire ultimately obviated the need for a full evacuation. Nevertheless, the last three hospitals in Gaza City, Shifaa, al-Quds, and al-Ahli, were pushed to the brink of collapse, and forced to operate with shortages of medications, equipment, and fuel for incubators, ventilators, and ambulances.

1.5.4 Reproductive violence

Since October 2023, motherhood in Gaza has become life-threatening. Over the course of two years of war and even after the ceasefire, women and infants have been forced to survive amid

malnutrition, a lack of clean water, and the absence of basic hygiene, all of which increase the risks of preterm births, maternal and infant mortality, and infectious diseases.

The collapse of gynecological, maternity, and neonatal care units, as well as critical shortages of medicines and fuel and blocked medical evacuations within and out of the Strip have forced many women to deliver without medical assistance or sanitary conditions. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the birthrate in the first half of 2025 alone [dropped 41%](#) compared to the same period in 2022, and 30% of babies were born preterm, underweight, or required admission to neonatal intensive care. The units that remained open operated at just 30% capacity due to major shortages in equipment and medicines. [Doctors of the World](#) reported that as of August 2025, 85% of the pregnant women they examined were at risk of complications, and 35% of pregnant or breastfeeding women suffered from malnutrition.

Testimonies collected by PHRI reveal that women are giving birth amid ongoing displacement, in tents and crowded camps, often with little to no access to medical or family support and without basic supplies such as diapers for newborns. Even in hospitals, women sometimes give birth without sterile equipment or medication.

To read PHRI's report *Mothers under Fire*, November 2025 (publication pending), visit [PHRI's website](#).

1.5.5 Obstruction of medical evacuation from Gaza

For many patients and wounded individuals, evacuation for medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip is lifesaving. At the end of September 2025, the World Health Organization reported that [around 15,600](#) Gazans, many of them children, needed critical care unavailable in the Strip and were waiting for evacuation. But the actual number of people evacuated is extremely low. From the beginning of the war until the end of September 2025, only 7,841 of the sick and wounded were evacuated.

Before the war, the vast majority of Gazans needing medical treatment outside the Strip were referred to hospitals in the West Bank and Israel, but this option has been blocked by Israel since the war began. Israel also conditions evacuation on coordination with third countries, should they agree to receive the patients and their escorts. [With the ceasefire in effect](#), the World Health Organization hopes to step up evacuations to 50 patients per day or more, but stresses that given the bureaucratic, logistical, and economic obstacles, there is an urgent need to restore access to medical care in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, as well as to grant permits for travel to third countries.

1.6 Denial of freedom of movement

Freedom of movement is a fundamental right, which covers an individual's right to leave their home and return as they wish. For years, Israeli policy restricted the entry and exit of Gaza residents. This policy has become even more draconian since the beginning of the war, especially after Israel took control of the Rafah crossing in May 2024. Israel now controls all of Gaza's border crossings and rejects the vast majority of requests to leave the Strip for basic needs such as medical treatment, family reunification, or education.

Most applicants seeking exit permits, including Palestinian families from the West Bank, Palestinians with foreign or Israeli citizenship, and students, face refusals or prolonged bureaucratic delays that effectively deny them exit. Gisha's data indicates that the initial refusal is often unfounded, and travel is approved once legal action is taken, indicating that there was no reason to withhold it in the first place.

Currently, Israeli authorities grant permission to leave Gaza in rare cases, for patients and companions, individuals with foreign citizenship or residency status, and those with visas and entry permits to third countries. Nonetheless, it is estimated that thousands who do fit the narrow categories approved for travel are still trapped inside the Strip.

The [20-Point Plan](#) underpinning the ceasefire agreement states that no one will be forced to leave Gaza and anyone wishing to leave and return will be free to do so. The hope is that, in the future, Gazans will, in fact, be able to travel freely, without restrictions and without the threat of expulsion or exile hanging over them.

1.7 Lack of accountability, transparency and judicial oversight

1.7.1 Lack of accountability

[Yesh Din monitored](#) the performance of the military's law enforcement system with respect to three military operations in Gaza over the past decade: Protective Edge (July-August 2014), the response to the Great March of Return (March 2018 until late 2019), and Guardian of the Walls (May 2021). Its analysis leads to the conclusion that the system is not interested in properly investigating suspected war crimes or reviewing policy decisions. Very few investigations were opened against low-ranking soldiers, while none targeted senior commanders or decision-makers. Additionally, investigations conducted by the General Staff Mechanism for Fact-Finding Assessments (FFA Mechanism) are inordinately long, with some taking years. Hundreds of alleged violations of international law were brought to the attention of the military's law enforcement system during these three operations. Only three resulted in indictments.

There is, therefore, serious concern that most inquiries and investigations related to the current war will focus only on lower-ranking personnel, with most, if not all, ending without prosecution, while policymakers and senior military and civilian leaders will escape scrutiny for the policies they devised. In the absence of a meaningful response from the Israeli system, there is an urgent need for an external, independent investigation into suspected breaches of international law by Israel, both to stop current violations and to prevent future ones.

For the full Yesh Din report, see: [The General Staff Whitewashing Mechanism: The Israeli law enforcement system and breaches of international law and war crimes in Gaza](#)

1.7.2 Lack of transparency

Two years after the outbreak of the war, the Military Advocate General's Corps (MAG Corps) has not published up-to-date information on the number of reports it received regarding harm to civilians, breaches of military regulations, and violations of international law, or on the number of reviews and investigations initiated and their outcomes. Requests for this information submitted under the Freedom of Information Law have gone unanswered. This lack of transparency around the work of the military law enforcement system precludes public examination and oversight of its performance.

Based on the [limited data](#) supplied by the MAG Corps, most recently released in August 2024 and not updated for over a year at the time of writing, during the first nine months of the war more than 1,000 incidents were referred to the FFA Mechanism for review. These included suspected harm to humanitarian aid workers and resources; strikes on IDP shelters; damage to critical civilian infrastructure; events resulting in mass civilian casualties; and harm to medical facilities or personnel. During that time, 74 criminal investigations were launched: 44 relating to the deaths of detainees in military custody (as a policy, deaths in custody are automatically investigated), eight for suspected mistreatment of detainees, three for suspected unjustified destruction of civilian property, 13 for suspected looting and theft of weapons, and six for suspected unlawful use of force. Without current data from the military, it is impossible to know if, or how, the law enforcement system is fulfilling its obligation to investigate and prosecute those suspected of war crimes or violations of military law.

1.7.3 Reduced judicial intervention

Throughout 2025, numerous petitions were filed with the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) regarding critical humanitarian issues: halting attacks on hospitals, evacuating patients from the Strip, allowing the entry of humanitarian aid, and protections for detainees and detention conditions. The HCJ consistently avoided granting substantive reforms. In most cases, the proceedings were dismissed outright or dragged on for months, with the justices relying almost entirely on the State's position. These court cases were turned into protracted bureaucratic

ordeals of requests for extensions and technical deliberations, divorced from the broader situation in Gaza and the urgency of these life-and-death requests.

An analysis of these proceedings, including by PHRI (whose full report will be published on the organization's website at the end of 2025), has found that due to repeated extensions and the absence of effective, even temporary, remedies, including in cases where such action could have saved lives, the unfortunate conclusion is that these proceedings amounted to little more than the appearance of judicial review that provided legitimacy to government policy, military action, and procedures, even at the cost of killing civilians, including children.

For further reading on the lack of judicial scrutiny in legal proceedings during the war, see: [Israeli High Court Presents: A Hymn of Praise to Israeli Policy in Gaza Strip](#)

2. The West Bank

Over the past two years, human rights violations and disruptions to Palestinian life in the West Bank have escalated, resulting in loss of life, destruction, displacement, and growing economic hardships throughout the Palestinian population.

Amid the war in Gaza, Israel's 37th government has continued implementing legal and bureaucratic measures to tighten its hold over the Occupied Territories, promote de facto annexation, and extend its control into Areas B and A. The government is channeling significant funds towards the expansion of settlements and to further institutionalize discrimination between Israeli and Palestinian residents of the region. At the same time, the government and the military have allowed for the establishment of unauthorized outposts and enabled unchecked settler violence that makes life unbearable for entire communities, and leads, among other things, to the forced displacement of shepherding communities and to tens of thousands of residents losing access to water.

Meanwhile, increased military activity in the northern West Bank has caused massive destruction and forced tens of thousands from their homes in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nur Shams. An analysis of military operations in the West Bank reveals increasingly permissive rules of engagement that harm innocent civilians, including women and children, and indicates that military practices from Gaza have been imported to the West Bank.

Israel also continues to bar over 100,000 Palestinians from working in Israel, block tens of thousands of farmers from accessing their lands, and restricts movement throughout the West Bank with roadblocks. These measures have contributed to a major economic crisis that affects hundreds of thousands and destabilizes the economy of the Palestinian Authority.

In October 2025, under heavy U.S. pressure, Prime Minister Netanyahu ordered a freeze on legislation to annex the West Bank. However, in practice no change has been observed in policies advancing this goal, namely the transfer of powers, bureaucratic changes, resource allocation, rampant settler violence, and the continued enforcement of movement and other restrictions on Palestinian residents. All of these policies are designed to strengthen Israeli control over the West Bank, push out the Palestinian population, and hinder any future resolution that would end the occupation.

2.1 Annexation and structural changes to Israeli control

The violations of Palestinians' rights in the West Bank described in this section are linked to or stem directly from Israeli government policy designed to expand and further entrench its control over the area.

Since the establishment of Israel's 37th government, and more forcefully under the cover of the war, the West Bank has undergone sweeping structural changes. Through a slew of bureaucratic measures and the transfer of broad powers from the military (responsible for managing Palestinian civilian life via the Civil Administration) to civilian authorities directly controlled by the Israeli government, Israel has shifted away from a system of military occupation, which is meant to follow the international law of occupation, toward a regime of de facto annexation governed by the political interests of the Israeli government. Meanwhile, the apartheid regime that extends privileges and immunities to settlers and strips the protected residents of the Occupied Territories of their rights has grown more conspicuous. As of this writing, it is unclear whether the government's declarations regarding formal annexation have been shelved for now. However, it is important to stress that, in terms of legal structures and activities on the ground, Area C of the West Bank has already been annexed in practice, even without a formal decision to apply sovereignty.

In his capacity as Minister within the Ministry of Defense, Bezalel Smotrich has consolidated vast powers over the administration of civilian life in the West Bank. By appropriating these powers, Smotrich has become, in effect, the minister in charge of annexing the West Bank, leading structural, legal, and bureaucratic changes aimed at expanding control and applying Israeli sovereignty to the area. Smotrich established a new agency, the Settlement Administration, within the Ministry of Defense that is subordinate to him. This government agency oversees most aspects of civilian life in the West Bank, thus divesting the Civil Administration of its original responsibilities. Additionally, an Israeli civilian has been appointed as Deputy Head of the Civil Administration. The deputy no longer answers to the senior military officer heading the Civil Administration, but instead reports directly to Minister Smotrich. This subversion of the Civil Administration and the transfer of its powers to civilian officials is

viewed as an intermediate step toward dismantling it altogether. In September 2024, Yesh Din and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) petitioned the High Court of Justice (HCJ) to [cancel these appointments and the transfer of powers](#). In response, the government announced a partial rollback of the extensive authorities granted to the minister in July 2025. However, the dangerous process of imposing foreign civilian rule in the West Bank continues. The petition remains pending.

The government is also seeking to weaken the military legal advisor for the West Bank by transferring authority to non-military legal advisors within the Ministry of Defense. This measure, too, seeks to alter the legal framework of Israel's rule in the West Bank, shifting it from a temporary military occupation to permanent civilian control.

In July 2025, the Knesset overwhelmingly passed a declaration calling for the extension of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank. While declarative, the statement is highly significant and reflects strong parliamentary support (71 MKs in favor, 13 opposed).

In addition, the government is taking steps, detailed below, to expand and strengthen Jewish presence in the West Bank. These include the announcement of 22 new settlements (49 in total since the government's formation), the legalization of existing unauthorized outposts and the establishment of new communities; continuing legalization for 63 unauthorized outposts erected in violation of the law and connecting them to infrastructure to enable their formalization and expansion; advancement of legislation that eases settler acquisition of land in the Occupied Territories; removal of barriers and acceleration of approvals for building, expanding, and developing settlements; accelerated road development serving the settlements; major increases in funding for the settlement project; and a cabinet decision passed in May to renew Settlement of Land Title in the West Bank, all in clear violation of numerous provisions of international law.

These structural changes, along with other government actions, are acutely felt throughout the West Bank, infringing on the rights, daily life, future prospects, and security of Palestinian residents.

For more see:

[Annexation Legislation Database](#), Yesh Din website

[The Silent Overhaul: Changing the nature of Israeli control in the West Bank](#), joint report by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Breaking the Silence, Ofek, and Yesh Din

2.1.1 Establishment and retroactive approval of illegal outposts

Over the past two years, Israeli citizens have established dozens of new outposts in areas populated by Palestinians, without government authorization but with its support. Their aim is to seize land in the West Bank and expand Jewish control. [According to Peace Now](#), 32 new outposts were established in 2023, at least 61 more in 2024, and by September 2025, an

additional 68 outposts had been set up, with the number continuing to grow. [According to military data](#), the number of outposts has quadrupled since the start of the war, from 30 before October 2023 to about 120 by July 2025.

[A report by Peace Now and Kerem Navot](#) found that by the end of 2024 shepherding outposts controlled roughly 786,000 dunams (approximately 194,225 acres), 14% of the West Bank. A total of 35% of this area is privately-owned Palestinian land. Most outposts are established in Area C, but in 2024, settlers began [setting up outposts in Area B as well](#).

The establishment of outposts typically involves building new roads, some on privately-owned Palestinian land, and fencing off open areas to deny access to local Palestinians. Though illegal, these actions are often carried out with a military escort and met with no real intervention by law enforcement. In many cases, settlers in outposts take over large swaths of land by constructing unauthorized structures, grazing livestock over broad areas, appropriating water sources, and attacking local communities.

Most of the funding for outposts is provided without transparency, yet there is abundant evidence of financial support coming through various channels: government ministries, affiliated agencies, state-funded organizations, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish National Fund, and others.

Of the 22 new settlements approved by the Security Cabinet in May 2025, 12 are unauthorized outposts established in recent years that will now be retroactively approved. In April 2024, Minister Smotrich issued orders to have 68 unauthorized outposts connected to infrastructure and receive municipal services. They include both outposts on the path to becoming official settlements as they undergo regularization, and outposts with no legal pathway to regularization.

2.1.2 Settlement expansion: state land, building plans, and infrastructure

[According to Peace Now](#), in 2024 the Israeli government declared 24,258 dunams (approximately 6,000 acres) as state land. In total, since the current government was established, [about 25,959 dunams](#) (approximately 6,415 acres) have been declared as state land, roughly half of all state land declarations since the Oslo Accords. Theoretically, this land cannot be used for private needs, as state land is meant to serve the public at large. However, past experience demonstrates that nearly all state land is ultimately allocated to settlement development.

Additionally, in 2024, building permits were issued for [1,165 housing units in settlements](#). Meanwhile, according to Civil Administration Data provided to Bimkom, just three permits were granted to Palestinians out of the 1,111 building permit applications submitted by Palestinians living in Area C.

In August 2025, twenty years since planning began and following a four-year freeze, the Civil Administration's Supreme Planning Council approved two highly contentious building plans in the area known as E1, totaling more than 3,400 new housing units. These plans will split the northern and southern West Bank, and cut off the north from East Jerusalem. The Israel Land Authority, meanwhile, published tenders for 3,300 more units south of E1, linking the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim to the Mishor Adumim settlement industrial zone.

Israeli construction in E1 amounts to the displacement and forcible transfer of Palestinians from the area. It creates contiguous settlement corridors stretching from the heart of the West Bank to Jerusalem, which will significantly hinder any future two-state solution, a key motivation for approving the plans. In October 2025, impacted Palestinian communities, as well as Ir Amim, Bimkom, and Peace Now, filed court petitions to have the plans revoked.

As a complementary step to further strengthen the settlement enterprise, the Ministry of Transport is allocating [major funding](#) to large-scale road and transportation infrastructure projects throughout the West Bank, which serve as another tool for deepening Israeli control and attracting more Israelis to settlements. Many of the new roads are designated as [bypass roads](#), a euphemism for roads intended to serve only settlers' needs. These road systems further the inequality between settlers and Palestinian residents and increase the fragmentation of Palestinian space. Alongside state-mandated infrastructure development, settlers also build unauthorized roads, some on privately-owned Palestinian land.

2.1.3 Planning, building and house demolitions

Shortly before leaving his post, GOC Central Command, Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fox pointed out that, while the number of illegal structures built by settlers in the West Bank increases, [enforcement policies are discriminatory](#), with over-enforcement against Palestinian construction and under-enforcement against Jewish construction. Maj. Gen. Fox warned that such discriminatory enforcement creates a potential security risk.

A review of Civil Administration data, [as analyzed by Bimkom](#), reveals a massive growth in building plans for settlements, vis-à-vis an almost total lack of planning for the Palestinian population. Between 2021 and 2024, only one plan for an existing Palestinian village was approved, consisting of about 170 housing units, as well as a handful of localized plans for a very small number of units. In the same period, plans were approved for 10,945 settler housing units. Palestinians submitted roughly 5,070 building permit applications in those years, a significant increase over previous periods, but only 22 were approved, less than half a percent. By contrast, building permits were issued for 9,385 housing units in settlements.

This same policy, which encourages Jewish construction while prohibiting it for Palestinians, is reflected in demolitions of permit-less construction. In 2024, 946 demolition orders were issued

against Palestinian structures built without permits and 862 were carried out, a 91% enforcement rate. In comparison, while 280 demolition orders were issued for buildings in settlements and outposts, only 39 demolitions were carried out - a rate of just 14%.

These trends align with the Israeli government's open policy of encouraging Jewish settlement of the West Bank while pushing Palestinians into increasingly smaller areas.

For further analysis, see Bimkom – Planning and Human Rights, [Israel increases use of planning to deepen West Bank apartheid: 2021-2024 in numbershttps://www.perplexity.ai/search/next-part-for-trasnlation-5-ts-iyvY_jFIQYWes0Fi7BDCMw](https://www.perplexity.ai/search/next-part-for-trasnlation-5-ts-iyvY_jFIQYWes0Fi7BDCMw)

2.1.4 Assumption of demolition powers in Area B, the Accords Reserve

[The Israeli government](#) is seeking to expand its enforcement powers against unauthorized construction into Areas A and B, where it has no planning authority.

On July 18, 2024, the Military Commander in the West Bank issued a proclamation stripping the Palestinian Authority of planning and building powers in an area known as the Accords Reserve, despite the fact that it is located in Area B. The Accords Reserve stretches over roughly 167,000 dunams (approximately 41,267 acres), or about 3% of the West Bank. According to the Oslo Accords, planning and building powers in this area rest with the Palestinian Authority (PA), although the PA is obligated not to approve construction within it. On the same day, an Order regarding Restricted Construction was issued as well, declaring all construction in the reserve after October 23, 1998 (the date of the Wye River Agreement that established the reserve) as illegal. The order also sets procedures for addressing unauthorized construction and requirements for new building permits. Soon after, the Civil Administration began issuing demolition orders, and by December 2024, [actual demolitions had begun](#) inside the Accords Reserve.

In April 2025, an HCJ petition was filed against these orders (HCJ 33808-04-25). While the court did issue an interim order suspending new demolition orders and the execution of existing ones, it has yet to rule on the petition. In early August, the State submitted its position, seeking to revoke the interim order, but it has remained in effect pending a hearing. Meanwhile, despite the order, in early September 2025, a demolition order was issued for a school in Zuweidin, inside the reserve.

Alongside this policy, and particularly since the Gaza war began, [several outposts have been established in the area](#), and settler violence against Palestinian residents has increased.

2.1.5 Resumption of settlement of title and assumption of powers by Israel

The process of formally registering land ownership in the land registry, or Settlement of Land Title (SOLT), was suspended in the West Bank by order of the Israeli military governor in 1968. Since then, there has been no full formal registration; instead, partial substitutes such as internal

registration in the Civil Administration have been used. In May 2025, the [Security Cabinet decided](#) to renew SOLT procedures and transfer registration authority to the military commander. Settlement of title is an undertaking characteristic of a permanent, sovereign regime, not a temporary administration, which, under international law is required to act only as a trustee and in the interests of the local population. In other words, both the decision itself and its future implementation are sovereign acts and, as such, violate international law, including the prohibition on annexation and the principle of temporariness.

Experience, as well as public statements by Ministers Smotrich and Katz [regarding this decision](#), indicate that this is another significant step towards expanding and formalizing the settlement enterprise, applying Israeli sovereignty, and facilitating the takeover of lands that could not previously be declared state land. The implementation of this decision is expected to serve as another tool for displacing and dispossessing Palestinians with ties to the land and undermining their property rights. The process will deepen institutionalized discrimination in the West Bank by creating a mechanism that prioritizes registration and allocation of lands for settlement expansion over the interests of Palestinian residents. In September 2025, Yesh Din, Bimkom, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual [petitioned the High Court](#) to rescind the cabinet's decision.

2.1.6 Archeology as a tool for dispossession and annexation

Over the past two years, the regulation and management of archaeological sites have increasingly been used as tools to infringe on the rights of Palestinian communities and advance Israeli control and de facto annexation in Area C. The process has seeped into Area B as well. These practices contravene international law and the Oslo Accords.

In July 2024, the Security Cabinet decided to grant the Civil Administration certain powers over antiquity sites [in Area B](#) of the West Bank. Similarly, and in line with the broader policy of transferring powers from the Civil Administration to civilian bodies under direct government control, a [bill](#) is being promoted in the Knesset to transfer authority over archaeological sites in Area C from the Civil Administration to a government-supervised body. As the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) opposed this measure and refused to take on this responsibility, the possibility of establishing a dedicated body, the Archaeology Administration, for this purpose, is under consideration. Supporters of the initiative have called for this body to cover archaeological sites in Areas A and B. As noted, the cabinet decision and bill are both incompatible with international law.

Orders designating archaeological sites are a frequently-used tool for asserting control over sites, and, gradually, their surrounding areas and access routes. In the summer of 2025, the Civil Administration issued [60 such orders](#), most in the northern West Bank near Nablus. Emek

Shaveh has cautioned that these orders, issued for sites surrounding the city of Nablus, likely mark the first stage of future development that would sever the city from the rest of the vicinity. This tactic is part of a troubling trend seen in recent years that has included decisions to develop sites such as [Sebastia](#) and Hebron in ways that ultimately prevent nearby Palestinian communities from accessing their homes and land. Moreover, many of these sites present only Jewish heritage, disregarding thousands of years of history and the presence of other ethnic groups in the area.

Archeological site designations are often made in the traditional living spaces of shepherding communities, further preventing planning and development within them and sometimes serving as a tool for expulsion. The community of Zanuta in the South Hebron Hills, is one example. The Civil Administration refused to recognize the community at its current site on the grounds that it is an archaeological site. Due to the lack of recognition, in combination with settler violence, the community has been repeatedly displaced and its homes demolished. However, following a High Court petition, the authorities were ordered to allow the community to return and submit a plan for the village. The plan was rejected with no pertinent justification, even after residents offered to move all homes outside the archaeological site boundary. In September 2025, with assistance from Bimkom and Hakal – In Defense of Human Rights, the residents submitted another petition and an interim order blocking irreversible actions on the ground was issued.

These trends have not escaped the international community's notice and were sharply condemned in a [report by the independent UN Commission](#) focusing on harm to educational, religious, and cultural institutions in the Occupied Territories.

For further reading on this topic, see:

Emek Shaveh, [Position Paper: Proposed Amendments to the Antiquities Authority Law to Expand the Authority's Jurisdiction into the West Bank](#)

Emek Shaveh, [Cabinet Decision to Allow Israeli Civil Administration Jurisdiction at Heritage Sites in Area B of the West Bank](#)

Emek Shaveh, [Position Paper on the Plan for Rescue, Conservation, Development, and Prevention of Looting and Destruction of Antiquities at Heritage Sites in the Judea and Samaria Area and the Jordan Valley](#)

Emek Shaveh's response to the UN report: [Destruction, Appropriation, and Displacement](#)

2.2. Military activity in the West Bank

2.2.1 Palestinian deaths and injuries in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

[According to UN figures](#), from October 7, 2023, when the war broke out, to October 16, 2025, 1,001 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Among the victims were 210 children, 20 women, and seven people with disabilities. While the number of Palestinian casualties peaked in the months immediately following October 7, it remained significantly higher than in previous years through 2024 and 2025. Of those killed, 33 were killed during settler attacks, 19 by settlers, and 14 by soldiers or jointly by settlers and the military.

Many civilians, including women, the elderly, and children, were harmed in the large-scale military operation in the northern West Bank that took place in early 2025, and in subsequent military actions. The rise in casualties from military fire is directly linked to more permissive open-fire regulations and the adoption of combat practices from Gaza, which increase the risk to civilians. Another factor is the sharp and sustained increase in both the frequency and severity of settler attacks against individuals, villages, and communities, along with the lack of effective protection for Palestinian residents and insufficient deterrence toward offenders, whether soldiers or settlers.

An analysis of these trends and events, as detailed in this chapter, points to a profound disregard for Palestinian lives in the West Bank, just as in Gaza. This callousness has deepened since October 7 and is increasingly apparent.

2.2.2 Displacement and destruction during military operations

In January and February 2025, Israel launched a military operation dubbed Iron Wall in the northern West Bank, focusing on the Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams refugee camps, as well as other communities in the area, and later, in the summer of 2025, in the city of Nablus. While the official goal of the operation was the elimination of terrorist groups and infrastructure in the area, particularly in Jenin, it also resulted in the death and injury of women, elderly people, and children, the forced displacement of tens of thousands of residents from their homes, the deliberate, and systematic destruction of neighborhoods and hundreds of homes, and the extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and roads.

According to [UN data](#), 31,919 residents of the Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams refugee camps were displaced as a result of the military operation. The displaced population is experiencing humanitarian distress: the lack of shelter, access to property and essential goods, and reliable access to education and healthcare. With no means to work or maintain daily routines, many have become dependent on aid.

Some residents were forced to leave under direct orders from soldiers raiding their homes or in response to military notices stating explicitly that they had to evacuate and faced immediate risk if they did not comply. Others left because all essential services had been cut off in the camps and infrastructure, buildings, and roads had been decimated. In September 2025, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel filed a petition demanding [displaced camp residents be allowed to return to their homes](#).

After intensive fighting in the camps, the military began “reshaping” the area. This included widespread demolition of houses, not for specific security reasons but to facilitate future military operations and, for example, to allow easier access for tanks and military vehicles. Demolitions were carried out while denying residents’ due process and property rights. Hundreds of homes in refugee camps were destroyed with only 24 hours’ notice. Legal proceedings generally resulted in approval of the demolitions, citing security justifications that warranted no intervention.

[Bimkom carried out an investigation](#) featuring a thorough review of aerial photographs, map analysis and field documentation of the Tulkarm refugee camp before and after the destruction in its northern part in the first half of 2025. The organization found that:

1. The destruction was far more extensive than planned, affecting many more structures than initially designated. The damage inflicted was extreme, disproportionate, even in relation to the stated goal (e.g., opening passageways for heavy military vehicles in neighborhood centers), and had harsh consequences.
2. The devastation inflicted on infrastructure was so extensive that reconstruction efforts are uncertain. The area, once home to thousands of people, may not be habitable again for the foreseeable future.
3. Notices informing residents about planned home demolitions included careless, incomplete, and unprofessional visual depictions of the area slated for demolition, making it difficult to understand the extent of the expected destruction and misleading recipients. As noted, in practice the destruction exceeded what was officially declared.

For further reading, see:

Bimkom – Planning and Human Rights website: [Architecture of Destruction and Control](#), July 2025

Association for Civil Rights in Israel’s website: [Allow the Displaced to Return to Refugee Camps in the Northern West Bank](#)

2.2.3 Adoption of combat practices from Gaza in the West Bank

The extensive destruction in northern West Bank refugee camps mirrors the systematic devastation seen in Gaza, indicating that the a-Dahiya doctrine has been adopted in the West

Bank as well. Other military practices that became standard during operations in Gaza are now also observed in the West Bank, especially in the military operations targeting the northern refugee camps. These practices include airstrikes, which in the months preceding October 7 were resumed in the West Bank for the first time since the Second Intifada and have now become almost routine; frequent cases of mass harm to civilians, with casualties treated as “collateral damage;” the use of armored vehicles, including tanks, in densely populated areas; the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure claimed as necessary for troop movement and deterrence; the forced displacement of tens of thousands of residents of refugee camps; and even renewed use of Palestinians as human shields, a practice formally banned by the military but now prevalent in Gaza and increasingly reported in the West Bank.

Relaxed regulations regarding open-fire in the West Bank have significantly contributed to the rise in casualties, including women and children. For instance, shooting at Palestinians who are “[messing with the ground](#),” as soldiers were ordered to do, can turn a random, meaningless act into a death sentence.

The Israeli military’s rules of engagement are already broad and, in practice, provide shooters with blanket legal protection. Contrary to military protocols, which mandate an investigation into every fatality caused in non-combat circumstances, Palestinian deaths are rarely investigated.

2.2.4 Pillaging

Pillaging, a crime whereby members of the armed forces exploit their power and authority to take valuables or money without permission for their own personal use, occurs in the West Bank, in spite of the fact that it is a war crime that contravenes both military regulations and Israel’s obligations under international law. The General Staff order regulating the seizure of property in occupied territory forbids soldiers and police forces operating under military command from looting private property. The military formally treats theft as a serious offense, due to its impact on “moral integrity.” However, the pillaging of Palestinian property in the West Bank has been documented for years, and has recently become more prevalent and normalized.

Reports by Palestinians of Israeli soldiers or police officers stealing cash and valuables during home invasions or searches at checkpoints have surged since October 7, 2023. Yet as [Yesh Din’s research](#) shows, even in the rare cases in which Palestinians are willing to file complaints, the allegations are rarely investigated seriously, if at all.

For further reading, see Yesh Din’s report: [Uniformed Theft: Pillage of Palestinians’ Money and Property by Israeli Soldiers and Police Officers in the West Bank](#), August 2025.

2.2.5 Accountability and transparency

The military law enforcement system routinely avoids investigating and prosecuting soldiers who harm Palestinians and their property. [Yesh Din's data](#) indicate that in 70% of cases reported to the Military Advocate General's Corps (MAG Corps) no criminal investigation is opened at all, and of the few investigations that are launched, only 5% result in prosecution. In other words, soldiers are prosecuted in only 1.5% of complaints filed. Importantly, the number of complaints is already much lower than the actual number of incidents, given that many Palestinians are deterred from filing complaints against soldiers who harmed them. Even in the rare cases when soldiers are convicted of offenses against Palestinians, military courts mete out extremely lenient sentences.

Military investigations of Palestinian fatalities: Contrary to official policy, the military does not investigate every instance in which a Palestinian civilian is killed by soldiers. While the military was made aware of 219 cases of Palestinian fatalities caused by soldiers in the West Bank between 2018 and 2022, only 107 investigations were opened, and only one of these (0.9%) led to prosecution. The odds of a soldier facing prosecution for the death of a Palestinian in the West Bank is virtually zero, standing at just 0.4%. This near-total immunity eliminates any sort of deterrence against the unnecessary or unjustified use of lethal force and normalizes the killing of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers.

The MAG Corps does not publicly disclose how many reports and complaints it receives regarding incidents of suspected harm to Palestinians at the hands of soldiers, how many investigations it conducts or how many indictments it serves. Responses to applications under the Freedom of Information Act requesting this data are often delayed well beyond the statute of limitations and sometimes court petitions are required to obtain the information. This lack of transparency fosters a climate of impunity.

2.3 Settler violence and related displacement

2.3.1 Settler violence – figures and trends

From 2023 to 2025, incidents of violence committed by Israeli civilians, almost exclusively residents of Jewish settlements, against Palestinians and their property in the West Bank soared. The frequency, scope, and severity of settler attacks have been on the rise since early 2023, with another surge since the outbreak of the war. The establishment of many new shepherding outposts across the West Bank has also contributed significantly to violence against nearby Palestinian communities.

According to [UN data](#), there were 2,660 settler attacks against Palestinian residents resulting in bodily injury or property damage that occurred between January 2024 and September 2025. In

September alone, 142 such incidents were reported. In comparison, 379 such attacks were recorded throughout 2020, 532 in 2021, and 852 in 2022. [Security establishment figures](#), though lower than UN data, also point to a steep and consistent increase in settler violence.

In the past year, damage to Palestinian farmlands, already prevalent in previous years, has spread further. Dozens of instances have been recorded, including the slaughter or theft of livestock; the destruction or uprooting of thousands of olive trees; and the destruction, confiscation, or theft of water pumping equipment.

Settler attacks on Palestinian olive harvesters and vandalism of olive trees are common during the olive harvest. [In October 2025](#), a record 126 attacks were documented in 70 towns and villages; dozens of Palestinians were injured, and about 4,000 olive trees and saplings were damaged or destroyed. The UN also reported that settlers from new outposts blocked Palestinian access to olive groves in areas where farmers previously did not require military permits.

Settlers [target the water supply](#) to Palestinian communities and tens of thousands of homes. For instance, in August 2025, settlers damaged infrastructure supplying water to roughly 100,000 Palestinian residents in villages around Ramallah, leaving them without running water. The coordinated, massive sabotage of water pumps and distribution facilities, as well as of security cameras installed at pumping sites, is sometimes accompanied by [physical violence and harassment](#) against Palestinian crews attempting repairs.

Yesh Din's figures highlight two especially disturbing trends since October 2023:

1. Violent, organized incursions into Palestinian communities: Settler attacks inside Palestinian villages and towns, including mass settler riots, have increased. Since October 2023, at least 25 Palestinian villages in the West Bank have been attacked, some on more than one occasion, in coordinated assaults by large groups of settlers, some armed, who openly set out to harm residents and damage property.
2. The number of Palestinian deaths resulting from settler violence has increased: Between October 2023 and mid-October 2025, at least 33 Palestinians were killed during settler attacks. Some were killed directly by settlers; others were fatally shot by Israeli security forces during incidents that began with settler violence or organized settler activity. To the best of our knowledge, as of this writing no settlers responsible for Palestinian deaths have been indicted.

2.3.2 State-sanctioned settler violence

As settler violence in the West Bank intensifies in both scope and severity, security forces generally willfully fail to fulfill their duty to stop it. Where forces are present on the scene, soldiers and commanders often stand by and do not intervene. They sometimes protect offenders,

or even join them, including firing live ammunition at Palestinians. Attempts to call the police and other security forces are met with evasion or an outright refusal to arrive.

In the wake of the October 7 Hamas attack in southern Israel, settlers were recruited into Regional Defense units, which are tasked with protecting the Jewish population in the West Bank and have received thousands of military-issued firearms for this purpose. This, along with widespread arms distribution led by the Ministry of National Security under Minister Ben Gvir, has had a significant impact on the situation in the West Bank. In many incidents, assailants were filmed or photographed wearing full or partial military uniforms and carrying military-issued firearms or equipment. In such cases, the assailant may be an active-duty reservist soldier, an off-duty reservist or soldier, or neither but still carrying a firearm provided by the local settlement security squads.

For decades, soldiers serving in the West Bank have reported receiving no instructions regarding their authority and legal duty to arrest violent settlers and prevent them from harming Palestinians, Palestinian property, or land.

According to [Yesh Din's findings](#), settlers carry out violence with near-total impunity: police investigations into settler violence are systematically negligent, and the overwhelming majority of cases (about 94%) end without indictments. Non-enforcement by the police became policy when Itamar Ben Gvir, who denies the existence of settler violence, was appointed Minister of National Security. As a result of government and police policy, Palestinian victims' trust in Israel's law enforcement authorities plummeted: in 2024, 66% of Palestinian crime victims chose not to exercise their right to file complaints against Israelis who harmed them.

In summary, the military's deliberate failure to stop settler incursions into Palestinian lands and communities combined with minimal enforcement by the police, prosecution, and judicial system; the lack of effective investigation and accountability; and the public and political support for violent settlers by ministers and Members of Knesset, demonstrate that, in practice, settler violence is state-backed.

For further reading:

See the account of activist Jonathan Pollak in Haaretz: [Lynch Mobs, Arson, Slaughter of Herds: West Bank Faces Unprecedented Israeli Violence](#)

Yesh Din, [Law Enforcement on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank \(Settler Violence\) Twenty Years of Violence: Yesh Din monitoring data 2005-2024](#)

2.3.3 Forced displacement of Palestinian shepherding communities and ethnic cleansing

The West Bank is peppered with Palestinian shepherding communities that subsist on animal husbandry and agriculture. Beginning in July 2022 and intensifying since the outbreak of the war

on October 7, 2023, dozens of these communities have been displaced from their homes and lands or face imminent displacement due to settler violence and the absence of protection or assistance from the Israeli authorities.

According to [B'Tselem statistics](#), from October 7, 2023 through early October 2025, 44 entire communities have been forcibly displaced from their permanent center and lands. Some families have been forced out in 10 more communities. A total of 2,932 people have been expelled, including 1,326 children.

A joint report by Yesh Din and Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) reveals [a coordinated strategy](#) involving a combination of tactics: surrounding communities with unauthorized outposts, and inflicting systematic, incessant violence, including physical assaults, threats, stealing and harming livestock and property and blocking access to pastures, water sources, and essential resources. State authorities usually turn a blind eye to these actions, and sometimes abet them by issuing and executing demolition orders for “illegal construction” in communities adjacent to new outposts, or confiscating property. Several legal proceedings seeking protection for shepherding communities are pending before the courts, even as the harm and displacement continue.

The forcible transfer of Palestinians described here is a violation of international law and constitutes a war crime. The state is deeply involved in this process, as reflected in its deliberate failure to prevent the establishment of outposts or the violence perpetrated against shepherding communities. The state also protects settlers in outposts and provides them with services, while at the same time demolishing Palestinian homes and structures on the grounds of “illegal construction.” This involvement, along with the systematic and repeated nature of these actions in various locations, serves as a further indication of practices associated with ethnic cleansing in certain areas of the West Bank.

For further reading, see joint report by Yesh Din and PHRI: [Displaced Communities, Forgotten People: Israel’s Forcible Transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank](#)

2.4 Restrictions on freedom of movement

Freedom of movement is a fundamental right and an essential component of individual liberty in its most basic sense. Restrictions on movement directly impact other human rights as they impede access to healthcare, education, employment, agricultural land, and more. Palestinians’ right to travel freely within and out of the West Bank has been subject to varying degrees of limitations since the onset of the occupation. Since the October 7 Hamas attack and the ensuing war, restrictions on freedom of movement have intensified in multiple ways, causing widespread

and immediate harm to most of the population. The military operation in the northern West Bank made matters worse in the second year of the war.

2.4.1 Restrictions on movement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

The military imposed extensive movement restrictions on Palestinians throughout the West Bank as soon as the war broke out, including in communities in the Jordan Valley and the Seam Zone (10% of the West Bank land that is trapped between the Green Line and the Separation Barrier and that has been effectively annexed by Israel). This policy, which remains in force and has intensified, bars Palestinian travel on thoroughfares almost completely and forces travel through numerous checkpoints, involving long wait times due to congestion. Many Palestinian communities and villages were effectively encircled by gates and barriers, some permanent some temporary, while access roads to towns and villages were blocked.

A [UN assessment conducted in May 2025](#) found 849 obstructions across the West Bank, which permanently or intermittently deny, limit, and monitor the movement of 3.3 million Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the H2 area of Hebron. These obstructions include 24/7 staffed checkpoints, partially staffed checkpoints, gates, concrete blocks, and even improvised barriers such as dirt mounds and rocks. While hundreds of these barriers are fixed and impassable, it was found that 172 gates, supposedly intended to enable traffic along the roads, are usually locked and often do not allow passage.

As of May 2025, about 150 of the existing barriers were installed after the war began, 36 of them between December 2024 and February 2025. They are designed to segregate West Bank roads shared by Israelis and Palestinians. Additionally, activists with Combatants for Peace reported that more gates were installed in the Bethlehem area in July 2025, causing alarm among Palestinian residents, who fear a future of curfews and threats to their safety. These gates are also sometimes closed without prior warning.

These blockages create bottlenecks, forcing thousands of vehicles to use side roads and checkpoints and resulting in massive traffic jams, with hours-long waiting times that impact everyone, including emergency medical and fire services.

The closures and movement restrictions constitute an egregious violation of the right to freedom of movement, with [devastating consequences for daily life](#). It impedes Palestinians' access to employment, education, medical care, family and social life, and more. Obstructions limit access to agricultural land, causing grave economic harm to families and communities that subsist on farming, and in some cases even deny access to basic necessities such as drinking water.

In February 2025, ACRI, PHRI, Yesh Din, Bimkom, and HaMoked [petitioned the High Court of Justice](#) demanding that the military and the head of the Civil Administration regularly publish all orders restricting Palestinian movement in the territory, so that residents may know which

restrictions are in force, where, and when. The military objected on security grounds, and the case is pending.

2.4.2 Restricted access to agricultural land and the closure of the Seam Zone in the West Bank

Many farmers across the West Bank are not permitted to access or cultivate their land, whether permanently or periodically. Farmers who are required to coordinate access with the Israeli Civil Administration are often denied permission or given extremely limited access, undermining their livelihoods, property rights, and long-standing traditions such as the olive harvest, which holds major significance for local communities.

Since the outbreak of the war, Israel has [barred](#) some 20,000 Palestinian farmers who own land trapped in the Seam Zone, i.e., West Bank enclaves created by the construction of the Separation Barrier, from accessing and cultivating their fields. These individuals legally held permits to enter the Seam Zone before the war. In June 2024, Israel introduced a nominal plan to open just a few of the many agricultural gates installed in the barrier to allow entry for farmers whose crops in the Seam Zone require daily care. With only 919 valid agricultural permits as of January 2025, less than 5% of all farmers needing access to their land were covered. The vast majority grow olive trees, and their land makes up about 95% of the Seam Zone's agricultural area. Israel has denied these farmers access to tend to and harvest olives for two consecutive years. In January 2025, the state announced that the access ban would become permanent, except for during the harvest season. In May 2024, [affected farmers and HaMoked petitioned the High Court of Justice](#) over this issue. The case is pending.

Notably, more than 5,000 Palestinians who own businesses or work in the Seam Zone and have entry permits have also been denied access since the war began. However, thanks to a [similar petition](#), these permits have gradually been renewed since May 2024, subject to the submission of an application.

2.4.3 Expansion of the Seam Zone and access restrictions

Rather than complying with the 2004 International Court of Justice ruling calling to dismantle sections of the Separation Barrier built inside the West Bank and abolish the permit regime, the military continues to extend these restrictions to additional communities.

In early September 2025, the GOC Central Command signed a military order declaring approximately 20,000 dunams (about 4,942 acres, 20 square kilometers) of West Bank land near the settlement of Giv'at Ze'ev, an area trapped between the Separation Barrier and the Green Line, a closed military zone. Palestinians who are not residents cannot enter or be present in the area. The order applies to three Palestinian villages: Beit Iksha, a-Nabi Samwil, and al-Khalayleh. Residents of these communities previously moved in and out of the area based on lists provided

to soldiers at Separation Barrier checkpoints. Now, following this closure order, these residents are subject to a strict permit system requiring each individual to apply for a personal permit simply to remain in their own home. Over the past month, HaMoked received dozens of reports from Beit Iksa residents whose permit requests were denied on security grounds, threatening their ability to continue living in their homes.

2.4.4 Travel bans: Palestinians entering Israel from the West Bank, foreign nationals entering the West Bank

Immediately following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, Israel imposed a ban on the entry of 115,000 Palestinian workers from the West Bank who held permits to work in Israel. While the permits were never formally revoked, in practice, with the exception of 8,000 essential workers, [Palestinian workers are still barred from entering Israel](#). The economic repercussions for workers and their families, and for the West Bank economy overall, are dire. Many families are now unable to meet basic needs such as paying for food and school fees. Faced with these hardships, many workers exercised their right to withdraw their accrued pension funds from Israel, but doing so also meant forfeiting their work permits.

According to Gisha's data, 48,000 work permits allowing Palestinians to work in settlements in the West Bank were also suspended at the onset of the war. However, 32,000 were renewed in 2024, meaning there is currently no blanket impediment to employing Palestinians. Israel's [security establishment](#) considers the financial distress in the West Bank to be a growing national security threat and supports gradually allowing Palestinian workers back into Israel. Nonetheless, despite an increase in the number of workers entering without permits and Israel's ongoing need for their labor, government policy has not changed.

As reported by Combatants for Peace, the blanket ban also prevents Palestinian employees of civil society organizations from entering, undermining their ability to engage in activities and participate in meetings between Israelis and Palestinians, further deepening the sense of separation, fear, and hostility.

Israel also imposes severe restrictions on the entry of foreign nationals, individuals without Israeli or West Bank residency status, into the West Bank. Before the war, Israel introduced, as a pilot, [a new procedure that significantly limits entry and residency in the West Bank for foreign nationals](#), including foreign spouses and other family members. In October 2024, the state announced that the procedure would become permanent. Despite a petition filed by HaMoked on behalf of several Palestinian families, the [HCJ upheld the procedure](#) in September 2025. The government stated that staff work is underway to potentially revise the policy.

2.5 Punitive house demolitions

In addition to house demolitions ostensibly undertaken for operational needs or when construction has been done without a permit, the military also carries out punitive house demolitions in the West Bank. These demolitions are explicitly designed to harm the relatives of Palestinians suspected or convicted of security offenses to serve as a deterrent to potential attackers. This is essentially an official policy of harming innocents, whose effectiveness is questionable.

Home demolitions amount to collective punishment, which is prohibited under international law and contradicts the basic principle of Israeli law that no one should be penalized for the acts of others. Punitive demolitions are imposed in addition to criminal penalties for the perpetrator, and the primary victims are the residents of the demolished home rather than the accused individuals, who are usually imprisoned or deceased.

According to [HaMoked figures](#), at least 11 homes were fully or partially demolished in 2024, and at least seven more by May 2025.

For further reading, see HaMoked website, [House Demolitions](#)

2.6 Blocked humanitarian aid

At the end of 2024, the Israeli government [approved a proposal](#) to introduce a [new registration mechanism for international humanitarian organizations](#) working mostly in the Occupied Territories, including Gaza, and “whose primary activities are conducted with Palestinian residents for the purpose of providing assistance to their welfare.” Section 7 of the new procedure contains an open list of grounds for denying or revoking an organization’s humanitarian registration, enabling the disqualification of previously recognized organizations. The disqualification or revocation of employee visas effectively blocks humanitarian operations in the West Bank. Under the new procedure, registration or visas may be denied due to the political stance of the organization or its employees. Some potential causes for refusal include disseminating information deemed to “delegitimize” Israel’s position, denying “the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state,” calling “for a boycott of the State of Israel,” or expressing support for the prosecution of Israelis over war crimes. These steps form part of a broader set of sanctions launched in response to criticism directed at Israeli policies and actions in Gaza and the West Bank by numerous humanitarian organizations.

Additionally, on January 30, 2025, in the wake of the October 7 attacks, legislation barring UNRWA from operating, providing services, or engaging in any form of activity in Israel, whether directly or indirectly, took effect. The repercussions include the denial of border entry to

UNRWA personnel and the closure of the agency's Israeli bank accounts. These impediments will thwart, or at least restrict the agency's operations, including in the West Bank.

The aid infrastructure built by UNRWA was meant to be a temporary substitute for autonomous and effective governance on behalf of a population living under occupation and denied self-determination. However, the protracted occupation and the Palestinian Authority's inability to reasonably meet the needs of the densely populated and impoverished areas under its control have produced complete dependence on the agency's vast and longstanding humanitarian apparatus. Whatever justification may be given for imposing sanctions on the agency, the primary victims are the Palestinian public.

The blow to humanitarian aid compounds the ongoing damage to the Palestinian economy and to the Palestinian Authority's ability to offer its residents basic services. All of this directly contravenes the obligation of an occupying power to act for the benefit of the protected population and to uphold their human rights. It is also at odds with Israel's own security interests.

3. East Jerusalem

In 2023, the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem was [391,400](#). About [60% of East Jerusalem's residents](#) lived below the poverty line, compared to around 38% of the general population of Jerusalem, Israel's largest and poorest city. According to [Knesset data](#) from 2024, 90% of the city's Palestinian population hold permanent residency status, 9% are Israeli citizens, and over 40% are under the age of 18.

As detailed in this section, despite their status as permanent residents (and a minority as citizens), Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem have long suffered from systemic discrimination, which has only deepened during wartime. Basic municipal services such as education, water supply, infrastructure repairs, and waste collection are not provided consistently, if at all, and road closures disrupt the daily lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Plans to establish new settlements in and around East Jerusalem are moving forward, house demolitions have reached record levels, and the threat of dispossession and displacement of entire communities is increasing. Government expropriation measures have become more sophisticated, involving coordination between various Ministry of Justice bodies, including the Registrar of Charitable Trusts, the Guardian General, and the Land Registration Officer; as well as the Custodian of Absentees Property Department in the Ministry of Finance; the National Building and Planning Laws Enforcement Unit in the Ministry of National Security; and the Jerusalem Municipality. The police provide support for demolition operations and, under the

direction of the relevant minister, enable the erosion of the religious/worship status quo at the Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount compound.

For further reading, see: HaMoked's report, [East Jerusalem Lexicon](#), May 2025.

3.1 Dispossession and settlement expansion

3.1.1 Dispossession through land registration procedures

The process of formal land registration, or Settlement of Land Title (SOLT) in East Jerusalem poses a major threat to Palestinian residents and serves as a tool for Israelizing areas beyond the Green Line. This is accomplished by transferring ownership of real estate to the state and its various agencies, or to private individuals and companies involved in settlement activity in East Jerusalem, mainly through the Guardian General apparatus, which allows only Jews to claim land that was Jewish-owned prior to 1948.

[Tracking](#) SOLT proceedings by Bimkom and Ir Amim demonstrates that since the process was resumed in 2018 through August 2025, SOLT was initiated for 7,900 dunams (approximately 1,952 acres). This area represents about one-fifth of previously unregistered land (land whose status was either unsettled or undergoing settlement). Of these, SOLT has been completed in 46 blocs covering 2,200 dunams (approximately 544 acres).

A [Bimkom analysis](#) of finalized ownership registration figures shows that plans for settlements were being pursued in tandem with SOLT in much of the land that has been registered through this process and located in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods. In other words, the resumption of SOLT in East Jerusalem, presented as a means of improving living conditions for Palestinians and protecting their rights, actually serves as another tool for dispossessing Palestinians and driving them out of the city. Of the land registered so far, only one percent has been registered under Palestinian owners. Another 42% is located in Israeli neighborhoods or used for city-wide infrastructure and is irrelevant to Palestinian neighborhoods; a further 40% has been registered to the state (or state agencies), the Jewish National Fund, or the Jerusalem Municipality; and 5% has been registered to private or commercial Jewish owners, often with the intervention of the Guardian General's office, which sometimes even initiates the planning. In July 2025, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition by Ir Amim and Bimkom challenging the Guardian General's authority to initiate planning in East Jerusalem (HCJ 2623/24).

Cross-referencing SOLT maps with building plans currently being promoted in East Jerusalem reveals that most of the lands settled so far are [in areas targeted for new settlements, or where settlements already exist](#). Eight completed blocs are inside Palestinian neighborhoods and slated for new settlement construction with thousands of housing units for Jewish residents.

For further reading, see Bimkom's July 2025 report: [Land Registration = Land Confiscation: Analysis of land registration in East Jerusalem 2018–2024](#)

3.1.2 Dispossession and expulsion through settlement expansion

As of July 2025, 14 new settlements are planned in East Jerusalem: legal plans for four of these (Givat HaMatos, where construction has already begun; Givat HaShaked; Amat HaMayim; and East Har Homa) have already been approved, while ten more are in various stages of approval. Collectively, these settlements comprise approximately 10,000 housing units that have already been authorized, as well as plans for an additional 17,000 units. In addition, there are numerous projects to increase density in existing Jewish neighborhoods beyond the Green Line, typically through urban renewal projects.

At least five Palestinian communities are currently at risk of displacement: Batan al-Hawa and al-Bustan (Silwan), Sheikh Jarrah, Umm Tuba, and Nu'man. In 2024, seven families were evicted from Batan al-Hawa, and applications for leave to appeal made by many other families to the Supreme Court were dismissed. In 2025, six additional families from Batan al-Hawa, comprising a total of 31 members, face immediate eviction from their homes.

Sheikh Jarrah: For approximately five decades, settler organizations supported by the state have sought, using various means, to take over houses in Sheikh Jarrah. In 2025, under the banner of urban renewal, two residential projects slated to house about 2,000 Jewish families have been promoted in the neighborhood. There is genuine concern that these plans will lead to the evacuation of the Umm Haroun complex and the expulsion of dozens of Palestinian families from their homes. Another plan includes the establishment of an ultra-Orthodox yeshiva on a plot expropriated by the Jerusalem Municipality, purportedly to serve local residents. At the same time, as already seen in Silwan, the state is taking possession of public spaces in the neighborhood and allocating major funding to develop Israeli religious and national projects in them.

These government projects threaten to transform Sheikh Jarrah from a neighborhood organically connected to the surrounding Palestinian urban fabric of the Old City into an Israeli settlement that severs the core of Palestinian Jerusalem from its northern sectors, leaving behind a handful of small, embattled Palestinian enclaves.

For a comprehensive analysis, see Ir Amim's July 2025 report: [A Stranglehold on Sheikh Jarrah—New Tools for Israeli Takeover and Palestinian Displacement](#)

3.2 Planning, construction, and demolition

3.2.1 Discrimination in planning and housing

[In 2024](#), plans for over 11,000 housing units were approved citywide. Only 1,000 of the units are in Palestinian neighborhoods, meaning less than 10% of all approved units will serve 40% of the city's population.

The discrimination against residents of Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem is evident [at every stage of the building bureaucracy](#). As in previous years, in 2024, numerous master plans for building more than 50,000 housing units in Israeli neighborhoods on both sides of the Green Line in Jerusalem were brought for discussion, but not necessarily approved. These included 18,988 units beyond the Green Line. By contrast, under 2,050 units in Palestinian neighborhoods were brought for discussion. In other words, only 4% of master plan units discussed in 2024 are in Palestinian neighborhoods, and these were not necessarily approved.

Most building plans for Palestinians that succeed in gaining approval are initiated privately by landowners. However, a [joint report by Bimkom and Ir Amim](#) highlights a sharp decline in the ability of Palestinian landowners to advance such plans in recent years, particularly in areas where land is of undetermined status and unregistered. These areas make up around 70% of Palestinian areas in the city. A review of the number of plans in these areas that successfully passed the preliminary stage shows a precipitous drop from an average of about 100 per year to zero in 2023, and seven in 2024. This dramatic downturn in planning for Palestinians in East Jerusalem is due to changes in proof-of-ownership procedures for planning and construction, which are Combining these processes, and especially with the involvement of the Custodian of Absentee Property in planning, has blocked many Palestinian landowners from obtaining the initial approval needed to advance building plans.

For further detail, see the joint Bimkom - Ir Amim report: [Planning in East Jerusalem Completely Halted by New Protocol](#), November 2024

3.2.2 House demolitions

As the number of building permits issued has declined, house demolitions in the city have significantly increased. Selective enforcement and demolition of residential buildings are part of Israel's discriminatory housing and planning policy that leaves thousands of Palestinians no choice but to build homes without permits as the state fails to respond to the housing needs of the growing population.

The year 2024 saw a [record number of demolitions](#), with 255 structures demolished, including 181 housing units. In Silwan alone, 68 units were destroyed, resulting in the displacement of an entire community. In the al-Bustan neighborhood, which is part of Silwan, the Jerusalem

Municipality demolished 23 housing units, amounting to about 25% of the residences in the community. The city's plan to turn al-Bustan into the King's Garden Park signals a major step toward Israelizing the neighborhood, with the anticipated expulsion of another 100 Palestinian families and the creation of a contiguous Israeli bloc that cuts through the city from east to west.

For further reading, see Ir Amim's report: [2024 in Review: Israeli Policy in East Jerusalem—Aggressive Dispossession and Expulsion Mechanisms Under Cover of War](#), January 2025.

3.3 Infrastructure and services

Despite being required to pay municipal taxes like all city residents, Palestinians in East Jerusalem face discrimination in the provision of municipal services and infrastructure.

3.3.1 Education

The total number of students enrolled in Arab schools in East Jerusalem is 107,290. [According to a recent report by Ir Amim](#), which draws on data from the Jerusalem Municipality, East Jerusalem's education system suffers from a shortage of approximately 1,461 classrooms, spaces needed to accommodate tens of thousands of students. Only 20 new classrooms were added ahead of the 2025-2026 school year. Both the Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality have clarified that any new schools, if built, would be city-owned and required to teach the Israeli curriculum. The Knesset's Education Committee is also advancing legislation to bar teachers who studied at Palestinian higher education institutions from teaching in East Jerusalem, which is expected to exacerbate the teacher shortage and the plight of East Jerusalem's students.

As a result of legislation banning UNRWA activities in Israel, six UNRWA-run schools in East Jerusalem, which served 1,100 students, were closed in 2025. Due to the classroom shortage, only a small number of the students were able to be absorbed into other schools. Hundreds of others, many from the Shu'fat Refugee Camp, were forced to switch to remote learning. Most of the affected students were not placed at the beginning of the current school year either, in violation of the state's obligation to provide an education for all students.

These trends demonstrate a disregard for the best interests of the children, which should be central to any decision affecting them. It is a violation of their right to education and equality, and also widens disparities among children and youth from different neighborhoods in East Jerusalem itself. Predictably and regrettably, each year about 3,000 students, 3% of the total student population in East Jerusalem, drop out of school. The dropout rate is higher than that of the overall student population in Israel, both Jewish and Arab.

For further reading:

Ir Amim, [East Jerusalem Education Report, School Year 2024–2025](#), August 2025

Association for Civil Rights in Israel, [Hundreds of East Jerusalem Children Have Been Left Without Schools](#)

3.3.2 Water

Despite the state's undisputed obligation to supply water to all its citizens and residents, since June 2024, [water service for residents of Kafr Aqab](#) has been drastically reduced. This large neighborhood, which lies within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries, is home to tens of thousands of Palestinians who are permanent residents or citizens of Israel. At the height of summer, residents were left with only four to 12 hours of running water per week, infringing on their rights to water, health, dignity, and equality. This lack of an adequate water supply was the result of a bureaucratic impasse that residents were neither responsible for, nor one they could control, caused by the fact that the water supplied to Kafr Aqab residents is purchased from the Israeli provider Mekorot but delivered by the Ramallah water company, which is not a licensed supplier in Israel. This unusual bureaucratic conundrum has been met with indifference from the Israeli authorities, who have shifted the blame onto the Palestinian Authority, shirking their legal duty to supply water to all Israeli residents.

Following a High Court petition filed by residents, ACRI, and Ir Amim, the state indicated that the authorities had concluded that there was cause to install drinking water distribution stations in Kafr Aqab, subject to security approvals. On September 30, 2025, the court issued an order nisi requiring the state to explain why Kafr Aqab residents should not receive a regular, uninterrupted water supply of adequate quality and pressure for all personal, domestic, and public needs.

3.3.3 Infrastructure and municipal services

Residents of East Jerusalem neighborhoods, particularly those beyond the Separation Barrier, continue to experience significant service deficits. Public and municipal services in East Jerusalem are less accessible and lower quality than those provided in West Jerusalem, and local infrastructure remains poor.

[Roads and sidewalks are left unpaved](#), often in violation of judicial decisions. As a result, residents are forced to contend with mud in the winter and dust and pollution in the summer. Routes used exclusively or primarily by the Palestinian population are consistently plagued by safety hazards.

Poor drainage and overflowing sewage are recurring issues during the winter, while cleaning and sanitation services are lacking. For example, in January 2025, waste collection was suspended in the Dahiyat al-Salaam neighborhood. In May 2025, waste collection in Kafr Aqab [was disrupted](#),

causing hazards and attracting pests. The Jerusalem Municipality and security forces obstructed waste collection trucks, and required security clearance for travel through checkpoints. The issue was resolved, and waste collection in Kafr Aqab resumed after ACRI intervened with the municipality on the residents' behalf.

East Jerusalem continues to suffer from serious environmental hazards, including [unregulated waste sites](#) that emit smoke or cause fires. The municipality shifts blame to those who break the law and dump waste at these sites (often waste removal and construction contractors operating illegally) instead of ensuring effective enforcement and remediation of the sites, even after repeated appeals by human rights and environmental organizations.

For more on this subject, including additional efforts to protect the rights of East Jerusalem residents, see: ACRI, [East Jerusalem](#)

3.4 Old City Basin

Archaeology has long been used as a tool for violating Palestinian rights and appropriating spaces, sites, and holdings in East Jerusalem. The practice is expanding, with notable examples including the continued archaeological excavations in various locations in the Silwan neighborhood (such as the Kedem Complex and the Pool of Siloam), which disrupt residents' daily lives; the ongoing promotion of the Old City cable car project, responsibility for which has been transferred to the Ministry of Transport; and the continued development of tourism sites in the Valley of Hinnom, in areas previously used by neighboring Palestinian communities. These actions reinforce long-standing processes that, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, suppress Jerusalem's multicultural heritage, and cast it primarily as a city of Jewish significance. It is an erosion of the city's diversity, as well as the everyday lives of East Jerusalem residents.

3.4.1 The Flag March

As in previous years, Jewish appropriation reached a violent nadir on Jerusalem Day in May 2025, with the annual [Flag March](#) funded by the Jerusalem Municipality. Tens of thousands of Jewish youths marched through the streets of Jerusalem's Old City, including the Muslim Quarter, [chanting racist slogans](#), attacking Palestinian passersby and business owners, and damaging property, while most Muslim residents remained indoors. The march ended with thousands of Jews ascending Temple Mount and praying at the site, in violation of the status quo. Since taking office as Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben Gvir has [ascended the Temple Mount on several occasions](#), sometimes with other ministers and Members of Knesset, grandstanding about changes in police policy, even as Israel's Prime Minister insists that there has been no change to the status quo.

In contrast, the access of Muslims to the Temple Mount has been eroded since the war broke out. Various restrictions have been imposed intermittently, with worshippers occasionally denied entry without explanation, encroaching on both freedom of worship and the status quo.

3.5 Movement and access restrictions

Approximately one-third of East Jerusalem's Palestinian residents currently live on the other side of the Separation Barrier and permanent crossing points. Immediately following October 7, 2023, all peripheral checkpoints surrounding East Jerusalem were shut down, abruptly cutting off Palestinian residents living beyond the barrier from their urban hub. The placement of additional temporary checkpoints and roadblocks between neighborhoods within East Jerusalem further restricted freedom of movement for Palestinian residents, resulting in their forced isolation.

This state of affairs persisted throughout 2025. For example, on June 14, 2025, the day after Israel's offensive in Iran began, thousands living in the [At-Tur neighborhood](#), including permanent residents and citizens of Israel, found themselves surrounded by concrete barriers installed at the neighborhood's main access roads. Anyone seeking to enter or exit by car was forced to travel to Jerusalem on a single narrow, winding, and congested road. No official notification was provided regarding the blockage or its expected duration. Residents who inquired were told that the northern entrance was closed due to stone-throwing by children, and no explanation was offered for the closure of the southern entrance.

Kafr Aqab, a Jerusalem neighborhood home to tens of thousands of permanent residents and citizens of Israel, lies beyond the Separation Barrier. Until the outbreak of hostilities, residents could access Jerusalem via the Qalandiya and Hizma checkpoints; since then, [another checkpoint, Al-Jib](#), has been installed. Travel through these checkpoints is limited and subject to extremely restrictive conditions, a major imposition on the daily lives of tens of thousands of residents. Affected residents, along with ACRI, HaMoked, and Ir Amim, filed a petition against these restrictions in November 2023. The petition is still pending, while checkpoint processes have shown little improvement, even during relatively calm periods.

Restrictions also impede travel for medical reasons and the ability of emergency medical services to access East Jerusalem neighborhoods. Expedited passage is available only to individuals with special permits. These were previously given to individuals with serious medical conditions requiring treatment in Jerusalem, but no new permits have been issued since January 2025.

In August 2025, ACRI and HaMoked submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice on behalf of [seven seriously ill patients from Kafr Aqab](#), seeking permission for expedited passage via the Al-Jib checkpoint. The petition argued that the policy, in practice, was arbitrary, unreasonable, and an infringement on the patients' rights to life, health, and dignity. Following the petition,

several permits were reinstated for critically ill patients. However, systemic flaws remain, and the overall policy lacks consistency.

For more on this subject, including additional efforts to protect the rights of East Jerusalem residents, see: ACRI, [East Jerusalem](#)

3.6 Deportation of Families of Terrorists Law

In November 2024, the Knesset passed the [Deportation of Families of Terrorists Law, 5785-2024](#), which empowers the Minister of Interior to deport, for several years, Israeli citizens or residents who are first-degree relatives of terrorists if they “knew or should have known in advance about the terrorist’s plans to commit an act of terrorism and failed to do everything possible to prevent its commission, completion, or consequences...” or if they “expressed support or sympathy for an act of terrorism or made public statements of praise, sympathy, or encouragement for an act of terrorism or a terrorist organization.”

The law, which is unique to Israel, and infringes upon the universal right to residency and citizenship, and the array of rights associated with such statuses. Although it sets no clear standards for implementation, the Minister of Interior began enforcing it retroactively, eschewing accepted administrative norms. In response, in March 2025 [HaMoked contacted](#) the Attorney General and the Knesset Legal Advisor to demand that they order the suspension of the law’s implementation due to its illegality.

4. Detention and incarceration

As soon as the war broke out, thousands of Gaza residents were taken into custody and held in Israel under the Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law. Whether in military prisons or Israel Prison Service (IPS) facilities, these detainees were subjected to brutal conditions, and harsh abuse and neglect, including medical neglect, on an unprecedented scale. Many of them were not involved in the attack on Israel and were ultimately released as non-dangerous.

At the same time, an Incarceration Emergency was declared, allowing (even as of today, two years later) IPS facilities to increase occupancy in already overcrowded conditions, and have detainees and inmates sleep on the floor. In keeping with policies steered by the Minister of National Security, other detention conditions, including food and medical services, were also deliberately and drastically downgraded, to the point where many suffered from starvation, developed health issues, or died. Violence and abuse were also prevalent.

According to PHRI figures, at least 94 Palestinians have died in Israeli custody since the war began as a result of severe abuse, lack of medical treatment, and inhuman living conditions, a number that underscores the gravity of the situation. Nonetheless, as far as what is currently known, not a single charge has been filed against any soldier or prison guard in connection with a detainee's death. Many other detainees were released from custody with permanent physical injuries, including limb amputations.

Reports, court cases, and international criticism have failed to effect a real change, apart from the isolated mitigation of detention conditions at the Sde Teiman military facility, where the most severe cases of abuse were exposed by soldiers, physicians, and detainees.

4.1. Detention mechanisms

4.1.1 Detainees held under the Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law

Since the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war, thousands of Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip have been detained under the Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law, 5762-2002. Although initially arrested as terror suspects, [according to information provided by the state](#) during a July 2024 court proceeding, approximately 50% of the 4,000 detainees taken from Gaza and held in Israel in the early months of the war were returned to the Gaza Strip by military order, with no judicial proceedings in their cases.

According to the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) figures, as of July 2025, a total of 2,854 individuals were held in custody in Israel under the Unlawful Combatants law, 450 of them in military facilities (Sde Teiman, Ofer, and Naftali). Following the implementation of the first stage of the ceasefire agreement in October 2025, which included the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, the number of individuals held under this law dropped to around 1,000 in IPS facilities and several hundred in military facilities.

Notably, military prison facilities lack any external oversight with regard to detention conditions, treatment of detainees, and detainees' health. Additionally, whereas the IPS is obligated to disclose statistics about individuals in custody, none are published for military facilities.

The law was originally designed to regulate the detention of individuals who are not Israeli citizens suspected of being combatants affiliated with terrorist organizations and is typically applied to individuals apprehended outside of Israeli territory. The law denies detainees classified as unlawful combatants certain rights conferred by international law on civilians and prisoners of war. Since October 7, 2023, the law has been amended by temporary order. In its current form, it allows holding a detainee for 30 days (20 days for minors) without a formal order by a military authority, up to 45 days (30 days for minors) before being brought before a judge, and up to 75 days before being allowed legal counsel. Once such an order is issued, it remains in force

indefinitely, provided a judge renews it every six months. As a result, detainees are held for months without review of the factual or legal basis for their detention, without legal counsel, and without the ability to notify family members of their detention. In the context of post–October 7 detention, this has amounted to many months in conditions that put the health and lives of detainees at risk. In February 2024, PCATI, HaMoked, PHRI, Gisha, and Adalah [petitioned the HCJ](#) to revoke the temporary order, arguing that it constitutes an extreme and disproportionate infringement on the rights to liberty, due process, and legal representation. Though considerable time has elapsed, the petition remains pending.

Contrary to past practices, families are not informed of the detention or where the detainee is being held, and ICRC representatives are not permitted to visit detention facilities. While the law mandates oversight of holding conditions, there is no information as to whether such oversight is in fact being carried out, by whom, what conclusions have been drawn, or whether any recommendations have been implemented.

For further reading, see PCATI, [Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law \(Amendment 4 and Temporary Provision – Iron Swords\)](#)

4.1.2 Administrative detention

As of September 2025, according to IPS data alone, Israel was holding [3,577 people in administrative detention](#). The vast majority of administrative detainees are residents of the West Bank. They are [held without charge or trial](#), based on “reasonable grounds to believe that they will harm the security of the Area or public safety,” typically on the basis of classified information that is not accessible either to the detainee or their legal counsel. Administrative detention can last months or even years, with extensions approved by a military judge advocate every six months. Analysis of IPS data, as updated by HaMoked, shows that the monthly average number of administrative detainees since late 2023, and in the past two years, is more than three times higher than the monthly figures reported in previous years.

For current information on the number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees held by the IPS, see HaMoked, [“Security” inmates held in prisons inside Israel](#)

4.2 Death in military or IPS custody

Based on information collected from official sources through Freedom of Information requests, human rights organizations, and media outlets, and verified by Physicians for Human Rights Israel through cross-referencing directly-managed cases, collected testimonies, and participation in post-mortem examinations, at least 94 Palestinian security prisoners and detainees died in IPS and military facilities or while being transferred by the military to these locations between October 7, 2023, and August 2025. This figure is unprecedented, and has since risen.

However, the fates of hundreds of additional Palestinians taken from Gaza and held by the military currently remain unknown, raising concerns that the true number may be even higher. Notably, the identities of some who were documented as having died in military custody are unknown.

Information about deaths in custody is not made public, nor shared with families. In some cases, post-mortem examinations are withheld or conducted without a family-appointed physician present.

Cases that were able to be investigated revealed deaths that resulted from a range and sometimes a combination of causes: inhuman conditions of incarceration, including severe food deprivation; pre-existing medical conditions inadequately addressed during detention; untreated injuries; or violence inflicted while in custody.

As far as is known, as of October 2025 no soldier or prison guard has been prosecuted in connection with deaths in custody.

For further reading, see: PHRI, [Death Sentence for Palestinians Behind Bars | A New Report and Testimonies](#), November 2025.

4.3 Detention conditions

Detention conditions in both military and IPS facilities are extremely harsh, and, as noted, have led to deaths. In addition to Gaza residents detained as “unlawful combatants” since the start of the war, other security detainees and prisoners, adults and minors alike, including persons taken into custody before October 2023, have been subjected to conditions that have been deliberately and significantly worsened since the outbreak of hostilities. As of October 2025, following the prisoner releases as part of the ceasefire agreement, a total of [9,204 prisoners and detainees](#) are held in IPS facilities under all security categories, with hundreds more classified as “unlawful combatants” in military detention facilities.

The [deliberate degradation of conditions by the IPS](#) constitutes a violation of legal standards and was implemented without proper authority. Following a series of official inspection visits to IPS facilities, [the Public Defender’s Office](#), a statutory government agency under the Ministry of Justice, issued a warning regarding the severe deterioration in incarceration conditions overall, and for security detainees specifically, categorically describing them “inhumane,” based on the factors detailed below.

For further reading:

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, HaMoked – Center for the Defense of the Individual, Parents Against

Child Detention (PACD), Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), [Torture as State of Policy: Abuse of Palestinian Detainees in Israel and Absence of Accountability Since October 7, 2023](#), alternative report submitted to the UN Committee Against Torture in October 2023, ahead of the 83rd Session (November 2025).

Public Defender's Office, [Annual Activity Report, 2024](#)

Physicians for Human Rights Israel, [Systematic Violation of Human Rights: The Incarceration Conditions of Palestinians in Israel Since October 7](#)

4.3.1 Starvation

[Prisoners and detainees are provided with insufficient amounts of food](#). The caloric value of the official menu at the Ofer military detention facility is extremely low, about 1,000 calories per day, with only 40 grams of protein. These quantities fall far below the nutritional requirements for the average person, and sustained intake over weeks or months results in persistent hunger, drastic weight loss, and a serious, sometimes irreversible, deterioration in health.

Nutrition for security detainees and prisoners in IPS facilities has also significantly worsened since the war began. A new, reduced food program was adopted under an order from the Minister of National Security. However, according to testimonies collected by HaMoked from dozens of detainees, even this little amount of food is frequently served in insufficient portions, is often spoiled or undercooked, and in some cases a single portion is divided among eight to 10 detainees, including minors. Detainees reported severe hardship due to daily hunger, as well as significant weight loss. [There have been documented cases](#) in which food deprivation led to serious health declines and even death.

In September 2025, the HCJ [accepted a petition](#) filed by ACRI and Gisha, ruling that the IPS is legally required to provide security prisoners and detainees with basic living conditions, including food of sufficient quantity and composition to preserve their health. The majority opinion found cause for concern that the current supply of food fails to meet the legal standard, and accordingly, the judgment clarified the state's obligations and set out a series of measures the IPS must adopt.

Following the judgment, the petitioning organizations requested the IPS report on measures taken to implement the ruling. In a response dated October 15, 2025, legal counsel for the IPS stated that the judgment would be implemented "in accordance with instructions from government level officials" and claimed that sufficient food had been provided to prisoners even before the judgment. The response further stated that a committee of officers would be established to address the issue. The organizations continue to monitor developments, both on the ground and in legal proceedings.

For further reading, see:

Association for Civil Rights in Israel, [End the Policy of Starving Security Prisoners](#)

4.3.2 Withholding medical care

4.3.2.1 Sde Teiman

[Testimonies by physicians](#) and released detainees indicate that there have been numerous cases of significant harm and deaths at the Sde Teiman military detention facility. As detailed in last year's [State of the Occupation](#) report, and in an [ethical opinion released by PHRI](#), in the early months of the war, thousands of Gazan detainees were held at Sde Teiman in particularly harsh and degrading conditions. Violence, inhumane conditions, and lack of adequate medical care resulted, among other effects, in dozens of cases of irreversible physical harm, including amputations from untreated injuries or from prolonged and excessively tight cuffing leading to necrosis. Medical examinations were conducted anonymously; documentation of suspected violence or torture was not required; medical procedures were frequently delayed, conducted without adequate equipment or necessary medications, and sometimes even without anesthesia. Detainees were treated while shackled at the hands and feet, blindfolded, and in diapers.

In a [petition](#) filed by ACRI, PHRI, HaMoked, PCATI, and Gisha, the petitioners demanded the closure of Sde Teiman due to inhuman treatment and the grave violation of detainees' rights under Israeli and international law. In September 2024, the HCJ ruled that the state must operate Sde Teiman in accordance with the Unlawful Combatants Law and its regulations, so long as they remain legally in force, and that any future changes must comply with international law. Subsequently, conditions improved somewhat, in part due to a significant reduction in the facility's population. However, harsh incarceration conditions were documented in [other military detention facilities](#) as well, including the lack of adequate medical care, contravening the HCJ ruling in the Sde Teiman case.

4.3.2.2 Deterioration in medical care in IPS facilities

Deliberate withholding of medical care has also been documented in IPS facilities since the outbreak of the war and the October 2023 declaration of an incarceration emergency. Evidence points to untreated injuries and chronic illnesses, cases of malnutrition and significant weight loss, delays or failures in referring detainees for laboratory tests or specialist consultations. This medical neglect has directly contributed to the sharp increase in deaths among detainees, as described above.

A stark example of this neglect has been the [scabies epidemic](#) in numerous IPS prisons as well as in military facilities, which has spread due to extreme overcrowding and inadequate hygiene conditions. Detainee testimonies reveal that no pharmacological treatment was provided, despite its availability and the extreme distress caused by the condition.

In July 2024, five human rights organizations, PHRI, HaMoked, ACRI, Adalah, and PCATI, [filed a petition concerning the lack of treatment](#). Accepting the state's assurance that the matter is being addressed, the HCJ dismissed the petition, despite direct evidence to the contrary from detention facilities.

For further reading: The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, HaMoked – Center for the Defense of the Individual, Parents Against Child Detention (PACD), Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), [Torture as State of Policy: Abuse of Palestinian Detainees in Israel and Absence of Accountability Since October 7, 2023](#), alternative report submitted to the UN Committee Against Torture in October 2023, ahead of the 83rd Session (November 2025).

4.3.3 Overcrowding

Since the onset of the war, overcrowding in Israeli prisons has markedly intensified. In addition to detainees from Gaza, thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank have been detained, most of them for entering Israel illegally. With prison capacity stretched, an “incarceration emergency” was officially declared, and a temporary order was passed permitting the IPS to increase occupancy to a standard of less than 3 square meters per person, sometimes with no bed. In November 2024, [94% of security prisoners and detainees](#) were reportedly held in conditions that fail to meet HCJ rulings on minimum living standards. The severe overcrowding has contributed, among other things, to the outbreak of the scabies epidemic.

In October 2023, ACRI, PHRI, and PCATI filed a High Court petition seeking to [revoke the emergency order](#) permitting prison administrators to have detainees sleep on the floor and maintain unlimited overcrowding during the incarceration emergency. The petition cited previous judgments affirming that violating prisoners' dignity harms not only the prisoners but also undermines the character of society as a whole, and that detention in inhumane conditions constitutes cruel punishment, prohibited under the Convention Against Torture. The petition was dismissed without a response from the state, and the petitioners were ordered to pay costs. The court noted, among other things, that the temporary order was in place for a relatively short duration and the emergency was expected to stabilize. However, two years later, most recently [on September 15, 2025](#), the state continues to extend the order allowing major overcrowding for detainees.

As a further step to address this issue, [an older petition on this issue](#), which remains pending before the HCJ, was updated by human rights organizations to demand a solution to the acute crisis. The hearing has been repeatedly postponed at the state's request, while the overcrowding persists.

For further reading:

Public Defender's Office, [Annual Activity Report, 2024](#)

ACRI, [Detaining Prisoners in Overcrowded Conditions Without Beds During a State of Emergency in Detention](#)

4.4 Abuse of detainees

Since the outbreak of the war, thousands of Gazans have been held as unlawful combatants in military detention facilities at the Ofer, Sde Teiman, Naftali and Anatot military camps (the latter closed in May 2025). Human rights organizations and media outlets have documented extremely harsh detention conditions, especially during the early months of the conflict: constant four-limb shackling, including during sleep and meals; blindfolding; denial of contact with the outside world (with lawyers only recently permitted visits after cumbersome coordination procedures); prolonged, enforced kneeling with no ability to move; prohibition on verbal contact between detainees; sub-minimal hygiene and sanitation conditions, including no provision of clean clothing and almost no access to showers; harsh corporal punishment for what staff defined as disciplinary offences; and a pervasive atmosphere of intimidation among detainees. Testimonies from [released detainees](#), as well as from [soldiers](#), officers, and medical professionals, indicate consistent and systematic patterns of harm, including severe physical violence, sexual abuse, degradation, and humiliation.

To date, [only one reservist soldier is known to have been tried and punished](#) for the abuse of Gazan detainees he transported in a truck to a detention facility. [Indictments were filed against five other reservist soldiers](#), two of whom are officers, for serious physical harm to a Gazan detainee at Sde Teiman. Although the detainee, who was hospitalized after the assault, suffered rectal injuries cited in the indictment, the charges did not include sexual assault. In November 2025, [the MAG Corps said](#) that the injured detainee was released to Gaza in the ceasefire agreement, without giving testimony about the alleged abuse. This may adversely impact the legal proceedings against the accused.

Like this detainee, thousands of Palestinians detained in Gaza since the war broke out have been released without charges after being deemed non-dangerous, as reported by [Ha-Makom](#) in June 2025. Many were held for months under the harsh conditions described above. Among the detainees released were women, people with disabilities, and elderly individuals. Some reported not being interrogated at all during the first days and weeks of their detention, or that interrogations lasted only minutes and consisted of basic questions.

For further reading:

Soldiers' testimonies given to Breaking the Silence, [I was in Sde Teiman, I know how an "Abu](#)

[Ghraib" happens.](#)

Detainee testimonies given to PHRI, [Gaza's Medical Workers Testimonials, Unlawfully Detained, Tortured and Starved](#), February 2025

Haaretz, [We Served on Israel's Sde Teiman Base. Here's What We Did to Gazans Detained There](#), August 2024

Detainee testimonies and B'Tselem report, [Welcome to Hell](#), August 2024

4.5 Forced disappearance and denial of visits

Until October 2023, Israel permitted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit Palestinian detainees and regularly provided it with information, in accordance with its obligations under the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. But with the onset of the war, Israel withheld ICRC access to prisoners and information, in a measure contrary to international law. [In response to a petition](#) submitted by ACRI, PHRI, HaMoked, and Gisha in February 2024, the state announced its intention to establish an external oversight mechanism to replace the ICRC (again, in violation of international legal standards). However, as far as is known, no such mechanism has been established.

Israel has also placed a blanket ban on family visits for security detainees from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and has stopped sharing information about Palestinians prisoners and detainees held in Israel since before the outbreak of hostilities.

The emergency hotline, the only available channel for attempting to locate detainees, stopped responding to inquiries about detainees from Gaza. Numerous HCJ petitions filed with the assistance of HaMoked in an attempt to locate detainees were dismissed on procedural grounds. Not until April 2024, six months into the war, was an email address provided for inquiries; in practice, however, it proved ineffective for locating many of the detainees. In many cases, the military fails to confirm a person's detention, even when they were taken in front of family members. At times months pass before any information is provided, if it is provided at all. This conduct, indicative of poor record-keeping, raises [serious concerns](#) that the actual number of Gazans who have died in custody is higher than current documentation suggests.

As an example, [Mounir and Yassin Alfaqawi](#) were arrested in front of their family, but for months the military insisted they were not in custody. It was only following a [petition](#) that it was discovered that they had [died in custody](#), apparently after being used as human shields.

For further reading:

HaMoked, [Unaccounted For: Disappearance of Gaza Palestinians After They Were in the Custody of Israeli Security Forces](#), November 2024

HaMoked, [HaMoked to the Military Advocate General: Hundreds of Gaza residents have](#)

[disappeared after being in military custody; Israel must establish an orderly and systematic registration mechanism for all Gazans held within the Gaza Strip](#), October 2025.

4.6 Release of detainees to a war zone

During two years of warfare and the decimation of living conditions in the Gaza Strip, Israel persisted in its [policy of releasing detainees to Gaza](#) whose registered address is within the Strip. Detainees who were arrested as undocumented residents in the West Bank or Israel, even after spending extended periods outside Gaza, were released directly into the Strip, despite the clear risks to their safety. This policy constitutes a violation of international law and the principle of non-refoulement, which requires the provision of temporary protection from deportation or removal to a place where a person's life or liberty would be threatened. It should be noted that as a result of longstanding Israeli policy, Palestinians residing in the Occupied Territories generally cannot change their official address from Gaza to the West Bank, and are therefore treated by Israel as undocumented residents, even if they relocated to the West Bank years ago.

4.7 Lack of accountability, transparency, and oversight

As this section demonstrates, both military and IPS detention facilities operate without transparency and in disregard of Israeli law and regulations as well as international legal norms. The prolonged violation of the most basic rights afforded to detainees and prisoners, resulting in irreversible physical and psychological harm and even death, reflects the absence of internal oversight, minimal attention to external scrutiny, and, on an individual level, a lack of any genuine fear of sanctions. When it comes to IPS facilities, this is an explicit policy dictated by the minister.

Even before the war, [official data presented to the Knesset](#) indicated that approximately 90% of complaints submitted to the National Prison Guards Investigation Unit end with no action taken against the guard involved. This supports the concern that IPS guards operate [without effective oversight](#) of their conduct, even more so in times of war. Within the context of the military, only two investigations are known to have resulted in prosecution for the abuse of detainees; to date, not a single soldier or prison guard is known to have stood trial for the death of a detainee.

The HCJ rarely intervenes in the conduct of the military or IPS. Additionally, while the Public Defender's Office, a government agency that conducts official visits to IPS facilities, has sharply criticized IPS conduct and security prisoners' and detention conditions, only a handful of its reports have been published, with the rest censored on the grounds that their publication could hurt Israeli hostages in Gaza. [Freedom of Information petitions](#) filed by ACRI have failed to yield their publication as required under the Freedom of Information Act.

5. Shrinking space for civil resistance to the occupation

Freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of protest are fundamental rights enshrined in Israeli and international law and necessary conditions for the existence of a functioning democracy. The state may not deny or restrict these rights without justification, even during wartime or emergency periods. In fact, these rights become more vital during such times, serving as tools for public criticism of government policy and the use of military force.

Sweeping restrictions on criticism of the authorities or on political protest, including the use of administrative, police, and military measures to suppress them, are incompatible with the principles of proportionality and legality set out in Israeli constitutional law and in the international conventions to which Israel is a party. Violating freedom of expression and protest in the name of maintaining public order weakens democracy, narrows civil space, and enables the continued violation of human rights in the West Bank, Gaza, and within Israel itself.

5.1 Promotion of legislation targeting civil society organizations

The Associations Bill (Amendment – Donation from Foreign State Entity)” seeks to impose an 80% tax on most donations received by Israeli nonprofit organizations from foreign governments or official state institutions, and to divest the courts of their authority to hear petitions submitted by organizations whose primary funding comes from such entities. The proposed law is a major violation of fundamental rights, including freedom of association, freedom of speech, and the right to access the courts. It also undermines the judiciary by reducing judicial oversight of government actions (which are the subject of petitions filed by the targeted associations). In practice, the bill aims to silence organizations that are critical of the government by eliminating their financial resources and blocking their ability to challenge government decisions. Such a law will curtail the ability of Israeli human rights organizations opposing the occupation to operate, to the point of threatening their survival.

In February 2025, the bill passed a preliminary reading, and in July 2025, the press reported on a possible new version that would reduce the tax to 23% and includes an exemption for organizations that declare they do not engage in political activities, are not executive members of a political party or political entity, and do not intend to criticize government policy.¹ In other words, a tax exemption in exchange for loyalty to the regime. The bill is being promoted in the Knesset despite public criticism and opposition from human rights organizations.

The Platform – Israeli NGOs for Human Rights; The Association for Civil Rights in Israel; Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights; Breaking the Silence; Combatants for Peace; Emek Shaveh; Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement; HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual; Ir Amim; MachsomWatch; Physicians for Human Rights Israel; The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel; Torah of Justice; Yesh Din

For further reading, including the position paper from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), see: [Bill to Tax Donations from ‘Foreign State Entity’ is Unconstitutional, Anti-democratic, and Discriminatory](#)

For information in English see: [A Hollow Democracy](#)

5.2 Violation of freedom of expression and protest against the war and the occupation

Restrictions on activists, human rights defenders, and on freedom of expression and protest further entrench the occupation and enable human rights violations in the Occupied Territories. Since the outbreak of the war, and through its second year, attempts to restrict space for protests against the occupation, government policy, and the continued war in the Gaza Strip have intensified.

5.2.1 Demonstrations and protests

Dozens of anti-war protests were denied permits by the police and local authorities or faced illegal delays and restrictions. Following numerous petitions, the High Court of Justice clarified that freedom of protest continues to apply in times of war. Nonetheless, in practice police resistance has clearly had a chilling effect on protest.

Demonstrations against the war, in which Israel was accused of war crimes or otherwise criticized, were frequently subjected to restrictions. The Israel Police confiscated and destroyed protest signs and installations it deemed to be inappropriate, while denying in [legal proceedings](#) the existence of a policy to that effect. Additionally, some demonstrations were violently dispersed on the grounds of alleged illegality or concern over riots.

With no state protections for freedom of expression and protest, enforcement is increasingly undertaken by unauthorized officials such as municipal employees, as well as private actors such as business owners and security guards, who withhold services or access from protestors wearing anti-war or anti-government shirts or carrying protest signs.

In the West Bank, authorities sometimes declare areas as [closed military zones](#) to block Israeli-Palestinian demonstrations and to prevent Israeli or foreign activists from showing support for Palestinian farmers and joining the olive harvest.

Israeli and [international](#) activists, along with their Palestinian peers, routinely face harassment from settlers and soldiers during protests or while engaging in farm work. In September 2024, soldiers shot and killed Turkish-American peace activist [Ayşenur Özge Eygi](#) after a demonstration in the village of Beita.

5.2.2 Clampdown on free speech

In November 2024, ACRI contacted the State Attorney to protest the [unlawful, abusive use](#) of enforcement powers against speech. In the letter, ACRI described a pattern of sweeping approvals for investigations and arrests that disproportionately violate freedom of expression. The threshold for criminalizing speech has been lowered, and enforcement is carried out even over a single post. Additionally, arrests have been approved without a thorough examination of the allegations, resulting in numerous wrongful detentions. The overwhelming majority of those detained are Arab citizens and residents of Israel, raising serious concerns regarding selective enforcement and violations of equality. While statements in Arabic are criminalized, similar, egregious statements in Hebrew are not, and the Israel Police routinely turn a blind eye to incitement to violence against Palestinians.

Moreover, it is unacceptable for the police to use prohibitions against violating the public order as a means of investigating speech offenses thereby effectively circumventing their obligation to seek approval from the Attorney General's Office before initiating a criminal investigation for speech. In April 2025 ACRI petitioned the High Court of Justice regarding this issue.

5.2.3. Speech suppression in academic institutions

Universities and colleges across the country have adopted [policies that suppress speech](#) to varying degrees. Students have faced disciplinary proceedings, and some have even been expelled from classes or student housing over social media posts. Faculty have been instructed to refrain from expressing political opinions during public academic activities and limit themselves to positions based on the "broad public consensus." Lecturers have been dismissed or suspended for expressing criticism.

5.2.5 Police treatment of the press

[Systematic harassment](#) of members of the press, particularly foreign and Arabic-speaking reporters, has manifested as violence, arrests, and criminalization without cause, creating a chilling effect on critical journalism and reporting. This trend intensified in June 2025, during the war with Iran and the missile strikes in Israel. For instance, police officers raided the hotel rooms of foreign journalists in Haifa, detained them for hours, seized and confiscated their equipment, and forbade them from broadcasting from the city. The measures were taken even though the journalists in question had not violated the censorship order banning broadcasts of interceptions or the documentation of impact sites. In Bat Yam, the police approved the broadcast location, a site where an Iranian missile landed, and still Border Police officers violently assaulted a reporter and cameraman from an Egyptian television network, stopped the broadcast, and confiscated their equipment.

Early in 2025, the Israel Police also tried to prevent [press coverage of the release of Palestinian prisoners](#). Officers did not allow coverage of the release at the Russian Compound detention facility and took photos of the ID cards of female journalists reporting on the release of a prisoner. The police summoned four Palestinian journalists from East Jerusalem for questioning and warned reporters against covering the event.

5.2.5 Efforts to undermine media independence

In April 2024, under the cover of war, the Knesset passed the Law for Preventing a Foreign Broadcasting Organization from Harming State Security (Temporary Order - Iron Swords), 2024. Commonly known as the [Al Jazeera Law](#), it authorizes the Minister of Communications, with the approval of the Prime Minister, the cabinet, or the Ministerial Committee on National Security, to impose sanctions on foreign media outlets broadcasting from Israel, including blocking broadcasts via Israeli providers, restricting access to the channel's website, closing the channel's offices in Israel, and seizing devices used by the channel to transmit content, including mobile phones. Not only does the law violate freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the public's right to know, it also preempts the court's power to overturn government decisions made under it, thus trampling on the principles of the rule of law and judicial independence. As such, the law contributes to efforts made by the 37th government to weaken Israeli democracy, including by undermining the judiciary. Though passed as a temporary order, the law has since been extended. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel has petitioned the High Court to repeal the law. Legal proceedings are ongoing.

Several [bills and policies](#) designed to restrict freedom of the press and further entrench government control over public broadcasting and Israel's media landscape were also presented to the Knesset in 2025. These include placing the public broadcasting corporation under close political oversight, changing the system of appointments so that they fall under ministerial control, opening the possibility of privatizing public broadcasting, and lifting restrictions on broadcasts from private stations. These bills seek to create a reality in which the government controls both the content being broadcast and the public's access to information, threatening democracy and undermining the right to resist the occupation by civil and legal means, by limiting the information available to the public.

It is worth noting regrettably that even without these draconian restrictions, most Israeli media outlets over the past two years have chosen to provide limited, biased coverage of the war in Gaza, deliberately downplaying the extent to which civilians were harmed, and failing to present the Israeli public with the full reality of the war.

For reports and updates on the struggle to defend freedom of expression and protest, see the Association for Civil Rights in Israel's website – [Freedom of Expression](#).