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Suuntaus project

**PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK**

20/08/2015  
Finnish Immigration Service  
Country Information Service  
Public theme report



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This theme report forms part of the ERF-funded 'Suuntaus' project by the Country Information Service of the Finnish Immigration Service, the purpose of which is to identify major country information topics and better anticipate future information needs. The method used is a systematic review of interview protocols using a purpose-designed form template. The countries examined are Nigeria, Iran, Iraq and Russia; stateless persons are also examined. The theme of the present report is one of the most frequently quoted reasons for seeking asylum according to the asylum interview protocols analysed. The data in this report are derived from public sources.

## 2. DIVISION OF THE WEST BANK INTO AREAS GOVERNED BY ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

A majority of the 2.4-2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank live in Area A or Area B. Area A comprises cities, covering roughly 18% of the West Bank, and it is governed by Palestinian officials in both civilian and security matters. In comparison, Area B comprises villages and rural land, covering about 22% of the West Bank. In Area B, Palestinian officials govern in civilian matters but have no authority over security matters. Israel has authority over more than 62% of the West Bank area in both security and civilian matters, including the granting of building permits. This area is called Area C. About 300,000 settlers live in Area C and an equal number of Palestinians. Palestinians living in Area C need land use permits granted by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) to use land for, for example, building, roads or agriculture. Between 2000 and 2007, the IDF rejected 94% of the permit applications submitted by Palestinians. Only 0.5% of Area C is land built on by Palestinians. In fact, the majority of the area is government land on which Palestinians have no right of ownership. According to Human Rights Watch, although the official policy of Israel is only to build settlements on government land, about 21% of the settlements (built land) are on land owned by private Palestinian citizens.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1. Palestinian government

Fatah led the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) until 2006 when Hamas won a majority in the Legislative Council elections. When the military wings of Fatah and Hamas clashed, and Hamas ultimately took control of the Gaza Strip, President Abbas dismantled the cabinet. Since then, the PNA-controlled areas have been in the possession of two different factions: Fatah controls the West Bank and Hamas controls the Gaza Strip. In the 2012 election, however, Fatah only managed to take about 40 % of the seats. In 2014, Fatah and Hamas announced that they were seeking reconciliation in order to end the animosities that have been going on for seven years between them.<sup>2</sup> However, the joint cabinet formed in June 2014 dissolved in June 2015, as the cabinet was unable to function in the Gaza Strip.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian government is deeply in debt. An upswing in the economy is a must, but its downwards trend continued in 2014. The unemployment rate in the West Bank was about 20% in 2014.<sup>4</sup> In 2015, the Palestinian economy took a further hit as Israel did not pay the tax revenues to which Palestine is entitled as a sanction for the Palestinian government joining the International Criminal Court.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch 4/2015, p. 18-20

<sup>2</sup> BBC 10.12.2014

<sup>3</sup> The Times of Israel 17.6.2015; BBC 2.6.2014

<sup>4</sup> Al-Monitor 21.5.2014; World Bank 22.9.2014

<sup>5</sup> Casey 10.3.2015



According to a representative of the Palestinian Ministry of Economy and Finance, hospitals are beginning to run out of drugs, and the authorities have trouble paying the salaries of their 180,000 employees in full.<sup>6</sup> Government employees went on a strike already in 2012 due to unpaid salaries.<sup>7</sup>

The government has even had to take loans from local banks in order to be able to make its payments. Donations from the international community cover roughly 30% of the expenses.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. POPULATION

About 2.4 million people live in the West Bank. Muslims make up 80 to 85%, Jews 12 to 14% and Christians 1 to 2.5% of the population. The West Bank population is very young: roughly half are under 25 years of age.<sup>9</sup> In 2013, about 40% of the population was under 14 years of age. Only 3.2% of the population was over 65 years of age.<sup>10</sup>

Almost all are literate, with the share of literate men slightly larger than that of literate women (98.4%/94.5%).<sup>11</sup> According to Palestinian law, basic education is mandatory and free of charge for a duration of ten years.<sup>12</sup> According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the pupils may have to walk long distances of up to five kilometres to get to school. On their way to school, children may be subjected to harassment and violence by settlers and security officials. Not all youths continue their studies, as they find it useless with regard to their future. Girls usually stop going to school because their families no longer dare to send them to school outside the community.<sup>13</sup> Some children work in agriculture, for instance, in addition to going to school due to the poor financial situation of their families.<sup>14</sup>

The unemployment rate of the working-age population is about one-quarter. Women's unemployment is higher than that of men. The poverty rate in the West Bank among Palestinians was 18%. In 2010 about 13% of all Palestinians suffered extreme poverty.<sup>15</sup>

### 4. REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE WEST BANK

According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), there are 762,288 registered Palestinian refugees in the West Bank.<sup>16</sup> There are 19 refugee camps in the West Bank. They are either under Palestinian or Israeli control, or under joint control. Tulkarm, Nour Shams, Jenin, Fara, Ein el-Sultan, Dheisheh, Camp No.1, Beit Jibrin, Balata, Aida, Amari and Aqbat Jabr are under the control of Palestinian authorities. Kalandia and Shufat are under the control of Israeli authorities. The Askar, Jalazone, Arroub, Fawwar and Deir Ammar camps are under joint control.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> LATimes 23.2.2015; Casey 10.3.2015

<sup>7</sup> The Palestine Chronicle 21.12.2012

<sup>8</sup> Casey 10.3.2015

<sup>9</sup> HRW 4/2015, p. 6

<sup>10</sup> Jerusalem Post 11.7.2013; CIA 2015

<sup>11</sup> CIA 2015

<sup>12</sup> HRW 4/2015, p. 6

<sup>13</sup> OCHAOPT 3/2012, p. 9 - 10

<sup>14</sup> HRW 13.4.2015

<sup>15</sup> IMF 12.9.2014, p. 23; Jerusalem Post 11.7.2013

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Where We Work

<sup>17</sup> UNRWA Camp Profiles; Jewish Virtual Library



Most of the camps are suffering from poor sewage and water networks, unemployment, overcrowding and occasional Israeli military incursions.<sup>18</sup>

## 5. DOCUMENTS

All Palestinians need a permit from the IDF for residence in or entry to the West Bank. This is based on an IDF regulation from 1967, according to which the West Bank is a restricted area, with people who live there or enter the area requiring permission from the IDF.<sup>19</sup>

The travelling of Palestinians is monitored at checkpoints maintained by Israel. Palestinians need an identity card in order to be able to travel and even to go to school, work or visit their relatives in the West Bank. Israeli border guards demand to see a passport or identity card of any Palestinian who wishes to cross the West Bank border.<sup>20</sup> Persons over 16 years of age need permission to travel between Palestinian cities in the West Bank. Permission is also required if a person works in the Israeli settlements and industrial areas in the West Bank area.<sup>21</sup>

Palestinians are issued blue, green or orange identity cards. The colour of the card comes from its plastic cover. Palestinians living in the West Bank are issued with a West Bank identity card that has either an orange cover, when it is issued by the Israeli authorities, or a green cover, when it is issued by the Palestinian authorities. The holders of these identity cards must acquire a permit in order to enter the Jerusalem or Israel areas and pass through several checkpoints. In order to receive a permit, the person must pass a security check and obtain a card with a magnetic strip. Since September 2000, it has been very difficult to obtain these permits.<sup>22</sup>

In March 2015 Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) eased the entry criteria for West Bank Palestinians. Men over 55 years of age and women over 50 do not need a permit anymore to enter Israel from the West Bank. Starting October 2014 all men under 60 needed permit. Also the age limit concerning young laborers was changed. Previously, only married laborers over the age of 24 and with children were given entry permits by Israel. Now Palestinian laborers can apply to enter Israel as long as they are married and over the age of 22.<sup>23</sup>

### 5.1. Blue identity card

When Israel took Jerusalem in 1967, all Palestinians living within the Municipality of Jerusalem were issued a blue identity card. They have a special residence permit for the Jerusalem area and are allowed free movement within the areas of Jerusalem and the West Bank. However, they are often stopped at checkpoints and by the police in Jerusalem. Persons with this kind of identity card are allowed to work in Israel, pay their taxes to Israel and are covered by Israeli health care. If, however, such persons live outside Jerusalem for a period of over seven years for some reason, they may lose their identity card and residence permit. This poses a problem for those holders of a blue identity card whose place of residence is on the side of the West Bank due to the barrier. In addition to the possibility of losing their residence permit, they may

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<sup>18</sup> UNRWA Camp Profiles

<sup>19</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 29

<sup>20</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 3

<sup>21</sup> OCHA

<sup>22</sup> OCHA

<sup>23</sup> Miller 15.3.2015



also lose access to educational and health care services.<sup>24</sup> A Palestinian with a Jerusalem identity card lost it after being granted a Swedish citizenship. In 1995, the Israeli Ministry of Interior announced that Palestinians granted a citizenship of some other country will lose their permanent residence permit in Jerusalem, or the so-called blue identity card.<sup>25</sup>

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis who are Jewish according to their identity cards also live in the West Bank as settlers. The identity card has a blue cover. They are allowed free movement within the West Bank, but they are not allowed entry into Palestinian cities. The West Bank barrier does not restrict their movement.<sup>26</sup>

## 5.2. Green identity card

Other Palestinians living in the West Bank area are issued green identity cards. Although East Jerusalem forms part of the West Bank, the Israeli authorities consider green identity cards only as “West Bank” identity cards. Persons with a “West Bank” (green) identity card encounter difficulties in their everyday life in East Jerusalem. They may not legally use the hospitals in Jerusalem; instead, they have to go to the other side of the barrier to receive treatment.<sup>27</sup>

## 5.3. Problems caused by the West Bank barrier

Transport and travel between the West Bank and Jerusalem are controlled through various means. A barrier has been under construction on the border between Jerusalem and the West Bank since 2002. According to Israel, the barrier increases safety. As the construction of the barrier proceeds, some holders of a blue identity card are left living in the West Bank, while some holders of a green card are left on the Jerusalem side of the barrier.

These holders of a green card run into problems should they visit the West Bank for work or health care, as permission is required to cross the barrier.<sup>28</sup> About 1,600 Palestinians with a green card live on the Jerusalem side of the barrier. They cannot get health care and other such services in Jerusalem with a green card; they must cross the barrier to the West Bank. Some have to register their identity card and address at the checkpoint through which they are crossing to the West Bank. Others must acquire a special permit in order to be allowed to live in their homes and visit the West Bank, but some have not been granted this permit. Because they possess an identity card with an address that does not match their post-barrier place of residency, Israeli authorities consider them illegals, and they can be arrested or deported to the West Bank at any time. If they find some means to get to the West Bank, they will not necessarily be able to return to their homes (on the Jerusalem side of the barrier).<sup>29</sup>

Holders of a blue card whose home is on the West Bank side of the barrier may, in turn, lose their Jerusalem residence permit after a certain period of time, if they are considered to have lived on the ‘wrong’ side of the municipal border for too long. They also have trouble crossing the barrier in order to access school, work or health care to which they are entitled on the Jerusalem side of the barrier.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> OCHA

<sup>25</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 84

<sup>26</sup> OCHA

<sup>27</sup> UNRWA 2013

<sup>28</sup> OCHA

<sup>29</sup> UNRWA 2013

<sup>30</sup> OCHA



#### 5.4. Holders of an Israeli identity card

Palestinians with an Israeli identity card are allowed free movement in Jerusalem and a majority of the West Bank area. However, their access to Palestinian cities is forbidden. The barrier restricts their movement.<sup>31</sup>

## 6. MOVEMENT IN THE WEST BANK

### 6.1. Checkpoints and barriers

Israeli authorities have several checkpoints in the West Bank. These checkpoints may be permanent or temporary. In April 2015, there were 96 permanent checkpoints in the West Bank. Of these, 39 are immediately prior to entry to Israel, although a majority of them are several kilometres away, on the east side of the Green Line<sup>32</sup>. Some checkpoints are partially or fully controlled by private security companies. Armed guards from private security companies, acting under the supervision of the border crossing administration of the Ministry of Defense, work at several checkpoints. Palestinian vehicles cannot pass some checkpoints without a special permit. Commonly, only public transportation and commercial vehicles are allowed to pass the checkpoints. At the checkpoints, Palestinians are subject to humiliation by the army. Prolonged inspections and searches lead to the Palestinians using the roads that still remain open to them. Some roads are almost solely used by settlers. In March 2015, over 60 km of road was categorised for use by settlers only. Palestinians may not even cross some of these roads in a vehicle. In some cases, Palestinians must cross the road on foot and step into another vehicle on the other side of the road. In the City of Hebron, Palestinians are forbidden to drive on streets in the city centre, and in some parts of the city, Palestinians are not allowed even on foot. The only road on which Palestinians are legally allowed to travel is the highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Soldiers are given verbal orders to deny passage to Palestinians.<sup>33</sup>

Israel also closes roads using various means, including concrete blocks, gates and ditches. The number of obstacles varies according to the political and security situation. In 2014, an average of 358 obstacles per month was counted. The obstacles also block passage to emergency vehicles. In April 2015, OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) counted 361 temporary checkpoints in the West Bank, when there were 456 in December 2014, 256 in December 2013, and 65 in the period between September 2008 and March 2009.<sup>34</sup>

### 6.2. The West Bank barrier

In April 2015, there were 32 checkpoints along the barrier. In 2013, there were also 81 agricultural gates in addition to the checkpoints through which Palestinian farmers were able to cross the barrier in order to cultivate their land – their homes and farmland being on different sides of the barrier. In practice, only nine gates were open daily. In order to pass the checkpoints and gates of the barrier, Palestinians need a special permit or a prior coordination from the Civil Administration. In recent years, Israel has decreased the number of permits. All persons passing the checkpoints must present an identity card and a permit, and they are inspected in accordance with the rules of the checkpoint in question. Different checkpoints may have different

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<sup>31</sup> OCHA

<sup>32</sup> Green Line refers to the demarcation lines set out in the 1949 armistice agreement.

<sup>33</sup> B'Tselem 20.5.2015

<sup>34</sup> B'Tselem 20.5.2015



rules concerning these inspections. For instance, at a certain checkpoint, residents of East Jerusalem may get through after a thorough inspection, while other Palestinians will be turned back. During harvest time, Palestinian vehicles transporting agricultural products are allowed into Israel twice per week. At another checkpoint, not even Palestinian holders of an East Jerusalem residence permit can get through, but the residents of the nearby al-Qunbar neighbourhood can, although other Palestinians cannot.<sup>35</sup>

The barrier may prevent Palestinians access to their farmland. Individual villages have also been isolated from other villages due to the barrier.<sup>36</sup> The barrier has divided communities and closed roads in villages and towns, and between them. The residents of villages in the vicinity of the barrier or in its way have strongly protested against the construction of the barrier. They try to prevent the barrier construction and chain themselves to olive trees so that they would not be destroyed.<sup>37</sup>

The Palestinian Minister of Defence proposed that Palestinians should be separated from Jewish settlers on buses. Palestinians would not have been allowed to travel on the same bus as settlers when returning from Israel to the West Bank. Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected the proposal demanded by the West Bank settlers in order to improve their own safety.<sup>38</sup>

## 7. FORCED RESETTLEMENTS

Over 5,261 Palestinians have been forced to move within the country between 2009 and August 2014 due to banishments and the destruction of their houses. Over 80% of those who were forced to resettle in 2014 are from Area C.<sup>39</sup> In 2015, between January and June, 251 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished in the West Bank and 41 in East Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup>

Israel has established hundreds of settlements in the West Bank area. The IDF has declared these land areas restricted military zones in which Palestinians have no business to enter except with a special permit.<sup>41</sup> Israel continues to increase the number of settlers in the West Bank.<sup>42</sup> Palestinians are often forced to move out of the way of the settlers, although only 1% of the Israel-controlled part of the West Bank has been given to the use of Palestinians. In turn, 70% of the land area is in use by settlers.<sup>43</sup> All settlements in the West Bank are illegal in the view of international law.<sup>44</sup> Palestinians are not allowed to practise agriculture or build houses in this area without the permission of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and houses without a permit are destroyed by the IDF.<sup>45</sup> According to the UN, the rights of Palestinians are violated daily in the West Bank, as more and more land is given for use by illegal settlements.<sup>46</sup>

Between September 2000 and June 2012, over 70,000 Palestinians who lived in East Jerusalem had to move elsewhere due to Israel's policies. At least 93,000 Palestinians live under the

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<sup>35</sup> B'Tselem 20.5.2015

<sup>36</sup> Addameer 12/2013, p. 24

<sup>37</sup> Beinun & Hajjar 2/2014, p. 13

<sup>38</sup> Al-Jazeera 20.5.2015

<sup>39</sup> IDMC 27.10.2014

<sup>40</sup> OCHA 30.7.2015

<sup>41</sup> B'Tselem 23.1.2014

<sup>42</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 4

<sup>43</sup> HRW 2.3.2015

<sup>44</sup> UNRWA/Bimkom 2013, p. 16

<sup>45</sup> HRW 2.3.2015

<sup>46</sup> UN 19.6.2015





threat of forced resettlement, as their houses have been built without a permit.<sup>47</sup> Bimkom (Planners for Planning Rights), an organisation monitoring Israeli building rights, and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) have objected to Israel's building plan (Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan) for the East Jerusalem area. According to them, the realisation of the plan would worsen the living conditions of the Palestinians.<sup>48</sup>

In the southern parts of the West Bank, 6,692 Palestinians have had to leave their homes, and 75% of Palestinian-owned companies have been closed due to violence by the settlers and the restrictions of the IDF. The residents of Masaref Yaffa are in danger of having to leave their homes, as the area is a planned firing zone of the IDF.<sup>49</sup>

Also the Bedouins are forced to resettle. In 1997, Israeli authorities destroyed the dwellings of 65 families of the Salamaat Jahalin tribe in the Abu Suwan area. Abu Suwan is located in the area of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. The families were forcibly moved to the Raghabneh hills, where 12 forcibly moved families already lived. Later, in 1998, the area was renamed as the village of al-Jahalin.<sup>50</sup> The village is also known as al-Jabal. The Palestinian town of Eizariya is located in the vicinity of the village.

Over 100 Bedouin families forcibly moved by Israeli authorities live in the village of al-Jahalin. A majority of the families were resettled to make way for the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. There are currently about 1,500 residents, or about 220 families. The village is located in the Raghabneh hills in Area C and is very poor. Area C is under the control of Israeli authorities. The houses are connected to sewer and electricity networks, but some of the houses are still unfinished. The streets are not fully paved. The village has a committee building and a mosque, but the public premises have not been maintained.<sup>51</sup>

The living arrangements may cause difficulties for the women in the village, as the proximity of the adjacent buildings disturbs privacy. The women's lives have become more problematic. The working women living in the area have a high unemployment rate, and the barrier further restricts the movement of the women, as it does for all other residents in the area.<sup>52</sup>

Parents are worried about the integration of their children into an urban environment, as they fear their children will drift into drugs and crime in the poor society. Children often drop out of school, as they feel that an education will not be useful in the future. Many school dropouts work as waste sorters in the Jerusalem Municipal Landfill, located at the edge of the Jabal community. Over 700 tons of waste is brought to the landfill daily. The landfill causes health problems for the society. The community has to burn its own waste on the streets, as it has no means of transporting the waste to the landfill, which is located 500 metres away. Only registered vehicles may transport waste there.<sup>53</sup>

In October 2014, about 7,000 Bedouins were at risk of forced resettlement according to the plan by the Israeli authorities. There are 23 Bedouin villages in the area. Israel has planned to increase the number of settlers in Area E1.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> IDMC 27.10.2014

<sup>48</sup> Bimkom 21.4.2013

<sup>49</sup> IDMC 27.10.2014

<sup>50</sup> UNRWA/Bimkom 2013, p. 14

<sup>51</sup> UNRWA/Bimkom 2013, p. 16, 21

<sup>52</sup> UNRWA/Bimkom 2013, p. 32-34

<sup>53</sup> UNRWA/Bimkom 2013, p. 35

<sup>54</sup> IDMC 27.10.2014; NRC 11.9.2014



## 8. GAZA PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK

According to an estimate by the IDF, there are about 35,000 illegal Gaza Palestinians in the West Bank. Even those Palestinians who were born in the West Bank are considered illegal immigrants if their parents are Gaza Palestinians with no special residence permit for the West Bank. Between 2004 and 2010, Israeli authorities returned 94 Palestinians to Gaza, but according to the statistics, none in the other direction.<sup>55</sup>

After the Second Intifada, or uprising, in 2000, Israel prevented Palestinians registered in Gaza from travelling, visiting or moving to the West Bank area. Gaza Palestinians already living in the West Bank get into trouble due to this, as according to Israel, they are not permitted to live in the West Bank without a special permit. They are categorised as criminal trespassers.<sup>56</sup> Lately, Israeli authorities have allowed these persons to register as persons who have moved to the West Bank.<sup>57</sup> In 2012, only Palestinians with families who were able to show that they had lived in the West Bank for the last eight years, passed a security check and were able to show a 'humanitarian' reason for living in the West Bank could apply for a temporary residence permit for the West Bank.<sup>58</sup>

According to Israeli authorities, only the following Palestinians can move their address from Gaza to the West Bank:

- a. A Gaza resident who suffers from a chronic illness and requires assistance from a relative living in the Judea or Samaria region and who has no other family member in Gaza who can help.
- b. A minor child under 16 years of age who is a resident of Gaza and whose parent registered in Gaza has died, and the other parent is a resident of the Judea or Samaria region, and no other relative in Gaza is able to take care of the child.
- c. An elderly person over 65 years of age who is a resident of Gaza and needs care from a relative living in the Judea or Samaria region.<sup>59</sup>

The official address of a woman registered in the West Bank with a husband from Gaza was changed in 2009 to Gaza by the Israeli authorities. As a result, she was now considered by the Israeli authorities to live in the West Bank without permission. She did not dare to leave the West Bank, fearing that she would not be let back in. In 2011, she was registered back in West Bank together with her son, but the son's status was unexpectedly revoked by the authorities during the same year, and he was registered as a Gaza resident. The Israeli authorities have prevented her husband from travelling to the West Bank as they consider him to be a Gaza resident.<sup>60</sup>

In 2007, the IDF began granting 3 to 6 month 'residence permits' to residents registered in Gaza that they can use to pass the West Bank checkpoints. Despite this, many Palestinians limit their movements. Persons who are granted a permit may also exit the West Bank and return via the Allenby Bridge crossing point on the border to Jordan, if they are given permission by the IDF.

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<sup>55</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 28

<sup>56</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 4

<sup>57</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 10

<sup>58</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 34

<sup>59</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 35

<sup>60</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 8



This permission is known as 'prior coordination'.<sup>61</sup> Authorities may refuse to give permission, and sometimes the decision comes only a couple of hours before the trip. Many have said that they have lost their air fare due to this, in addition to missing a work-related meeting. Permission granted by Jordanian authorities one month prior to the trip, a 'certificate of no objection', is also required to cross the border. Palestinians need the same permits in order to get back to the West Bank.<sup>62</sup>

In some cases, Israeli authorities have refused to grant an entry permit to Palestinians who used to live in the West Bank and are attempting to move back. The authorities fear that these Palestinians would try to take back their private property confiscated by the IDF in 1967.<sup>63</sup>

If a child born in the West Bank has one parent who is a Gaza Palestinian -- or not registered in the West Bank -- the Israeli authorities register some of the children born in such marriages on one parent's identity card and some in the other parent's register. Some children in the same family are thus officially considered Gaza Palestinians and some residents of the West Bank.<sup>64</sup>

## 9. ISRAELI AUTHORITIES' INFLUENCE ON THE CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS

The violence by Israeli security troops against Palestinians has continued for a long time. A majority of the violence comprises third-degree assaults, such as strikes, kicks, verbal insults, delays at checkpoints and humiliating behaviour, and takes place every day. Palestinians do not often complain to the authorities of any violence or injustice to them, as they do not trust the authorities to do anything about the matter. The restrictions on movement also make it more difficult to lodge a complaint. The Israeli law allows the use of force in self-defence, when someone resists arrest and when dispersing a demonstration.<sup>65</sup> Israeli security troops use excessive force when suppressing demonstrations or reacting to youths throwing stones.<sup>66</sup> Palestinians have demonstrated against the Israeli practices. They have contested destruction orders, land seizures, cancellations of residence permits and family reunification refusals.<sup>67</sup> Israeli security troops killed eleven Palestinians between January and June 2015.<sup>68</sup> According to Addameer, a human rights organization, Palestinian security troops often come and take a person arrested and released by the Israeli security troops from his or her home for interrogation.<sup>69</sup>

### 9.1. Dispersing demonstrations

Palestinians often hold demonstrations in the West Bank against Israel and its occupation. Demonstrations are held as often as weekly by activists, and some begin spontaneously.<sup>70</sup> Palestinians also demonstrate against the West Bank barrier. The demonstrations began in 2002 when the construction of the West Bank barrier began.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 36

<sup>62</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 37-38

<sup>63</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 48

<sup>64</sup> HRW 2/2012, p. 38 - 39

<sup>65</sup> B'Tselem 9.9.2012

<sup>66</sup> Al-Haq 5.5.2015, Amnesty 27.2.2014

<sup>67</sup> Khalil 12/2012

<sup>68</sup> Al-Arabiya 14.6.2015

<sup>69</sup> Addameer 9/2014

<sup>70</sup> Amnesty 2/2014, p. 8

<sup>71</sup> Addameer 12/2013, p. 14



According to an Amnesty report, Israeli security troops use excessive violence when suppressing demonstrations. Soldiers fire at the demonstrators using regular and rubber bullets, which killed over 40 demonstrators between 2011 and 2013. Hundreds have been injured.<sup>72</sup> Israeli security troops also fire teargas and sound bombs at demonstrators. In densely populated areas, teargas easily spreads amongst bystanders. Teargas is also knowingly fired at residential areas. In addition to teargas, 'skunk' may be sprayed into Palestinian homes, where it leaves a bad odour for days.<sup>73</sup>

In January 2015, Israeli security troops fired rubber bullets at a group of peacefully demonstrating Palestinians. According to Youssef Tmeizi, the coordinator of the Palestinian National Initiative Party, the demonstration was part of a series objecting to the felling of olive trees. There were also international activists amongst the demonstrators.<sup>74</sup>

In June 2015, a Palestinian man died when Israeli security troops ran him over with a Jeep. According to an IDF representative, the man had thrown a fire bomb at the car, and the car had fallen on top of him. Earlier in June, army troops had shot and killed a Palestinian man during a demonstration.<sup>75</sup>

## 9.2. Home invasions and arrests

Security troops invade the homes of Palestinians when searching for persons they want to arrest. During the invasion, family members may be subjected to violence.<sup>76</sup> Underage children are also arrested during house searches and demonstrations. The underage children are usually accused of throwing stones at Israeli security troops. They are interrogated without the presence of their parents or an attorney. They may have to sign a confession written in Hebrew that they cannot understand, as they speak Arabic.<sup>77</sup>

In May 2015, the IDF carried out house searches in the vicinity of the city of Jenin in the town of Jaba'. The home invasions caused riots, when youths threw stones at army vehicles. The soldiers responded by firing teargas and bullets, resulting in the injury of ten youths.<sup>78</sup>

The Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) arrested 15 Palestinians in the beginning of June (2 June 2015) in the West Bank. Among those arrested was a leading figure of the Islamic Jihad from Jenin. In addition to Khalid Abu Zainah, his 17-year-old son was arrested.<sup>79</sup>

In May 2015, a 17-year-old Palestinian was killed by shooting at a checkpoint in East Jerusalem. According to the soldiers, he had attempted to stab a soldier with whom he had had a verbal confrontation earlier that day. On the following day, Israeli troops forced their way into the home of the deceased and confiscated his computer and other personal items. The Israeli troops did not immediately release the body for burial and issued conditions for the funeral. No more than 70 persons should attend the funeral; furthermore, the family had to pay 20,000 shekels as a guarantee of complying with the conditions. However, hundreds of people attended the funeral and clashed with Israeli security troops.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Amnesty 2/2014, p. 12

<sup>73</sup> Amnesty 2/2014, p. 44

<sup>74</sup> Ma'an News Agency 23.1.2015

<sup>75</sup> Al-Arabiya 14.6.2015

<sup>76</sup> Amnesty 2/2014, p. 16

<sup>77</sup> HRW World Report 2014, Addameer 12/2013, p. 54-55

<sup>78</sup> IMEMC 26.5.2015

<sup>79</sup> Al-Resalah 3.6.2015

<sup>80</sup> Al-Haq 5.5.2015



In June 2015, Israeli troops carried out 51 house searches in one week in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. During the searches, 33 Palestinian men, 10 children and 3 women were arrested.<sup>81</sup> Israeli troops carry out approximately 300 search and arrest operations in the West Bank in a month.<sup>82</sup>

The IDF also arrests politicians. Khalida Jarrar, a member of the Palestinian parliament, was arrested in the spring of 2015 by the Israeli security troops at her home. Jarrar is a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine party. Israel considers the party an illegal terrorist organisation. Jarrar was issued a travel ban already in 1998. She has also been under house arrest, as Israel has considered her to be a security threat.<sup>83</sup>

### 9.3. Interrogation/detention centres

Only four Israeli interrogation centres are located in the West Bank. All of the approximately 17 prisons and four detention centres where Palestinians are held are located on Israeli soil.<sup>84</sup> According to the human rights organisation Addameer, the persons arrested are not usually told the reason for their arrest. The arrested persons may have to wait a long time before they are taken to an interrogation centre. Neither the next of kin of the arrested persons nor the arrested persons themselves are told where they will be taken. The arrested persons may be subjected to violence and insults on the way to the detention centre.<sup>85</sup>

The arrested persons are treated in a degrading manner at the interrogation/detention centres. They are denied sleep, they are assaulted both physically and verbally, and their family members may be threatened, as may the arrested persons themselves. They may have to maintain a painful posture during a long interrogation. They are also kept in isolation. Palestinians may be detained for a period of eight days before they are arraigned, while Israelis may only be detained for 24 hours. Palestinians may be detained without an arraignment for up to 90 days by a judge's order. At the request of the Chief Area Legal Advisor, the detention period can be extended by 90 days; the request is granted by the military court of appeals. Palestinians may be detained for interrogation for up to 180 days. Palestinians may be detained for 90 days without allowing them to meet an attorney.<sup>86</sup> If someone is arrested due to throwing stones, they may be accused by the court of attempted manslaughter.<sup>87</sup>

Individual human rights organisation activists and other notable persons, such as mayors, teachers and members of popular committees, who arrange weekly demonstrations have been persecuted and arrested.<sup>88</sup>

Night-time searches by Israeli security troops cause a feeling of insecurity amongst the Palestinians. Women are married off very young due to night-time house searches carried out by the IDF. This transfers the responsibility for the woman to her husband.<sup>89</sup> The fear by women of being assaulted prevents them from moving freely outside their homes, limiting their chances for education and work, and for other social life.

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<sup>81</sup> PCHR 18.6.2015

<sup>82</sup> OCHA 30.7.2015

<sup>83</sup> HRW 9.4.2015; The Electronic Intifada 15.4.2015

<sup>84</sup> Addameer / Prisons and Detention Centers

<sup>85</sup> Addameer / Torture and Ill-Treatment

<sup>86</sup> Addameer / Torture and Ill-Treatment

<sup>87</sup> Addameer 12/2013, p. 31

<sup>88</sup> Addameer 12/2013, p. 26

<sup>89</sup> Kvinna til Kvinna 10/2012, p. 6



#### 9.4. Lodging complaints concerning the actions of security authorities

Palestinians may lodge an investigation request concerning the actions of soldiers. The Military Police Criminal Investigation Division (MPCID) has taken the killings of 24 Palestinians under investigation. Only in one single case has an Israeli soldier been convicted of killing a Palestinian. In some cases it appears as if the Palestinians were killed knowingly.<sup>90</sup> According to HRW, a majority of the killings of Palestinians in 2013 were unlawful.<sup>91</sup>

Human rights organisations lodge complaints of violence to which Palestinians have been subjected by the security troops, but a majority of the complaints do not result in a conviction, and some of the complaints are not even taken under consideration.<sup>92</sup>

Palestinians who have disputed the home destructions or ejections may face scare tactics by the settlers. The cases are processed slowly by the courts, and decisions may take years.<sup>93</sup>

#### 9.5. Collective punishments against Palestinians by the State of Israel

In February 2015, the Israeli electrical company cut off power to the towns of Nablus and Jenin and their neighbouring villages because, according to the company, the Palestinian authorities had not paid their debt of several million dollars. According to the Palestinian authorities, the power cut-off was a political move and a collective punishment for the Palestinian Authority joining the Hague International Court of Justice.<sup>94</sup>

Israel controls the water supply to the West Bank. Israeli authorities reserve about 86% of the water supply shared with Palestine. Only about 14% is left available for use by Palestinians. Palestinians get less than 60 litres of water per day per person, while an Israeli can use about 280 litres per day. If the water reserves were shared equally, the share of the Palestinians would be about 38%.<sup>95</sup>

### **10. THE PALESTINIAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES' INFLUENCE ON THE CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS**

The Palestinian security authorities arrest Palestinians arbitrarily. Those arrested have included reporters photographing demonstrations as well as demonstrators. Demonstrations are suppressed violently. The actions of the security forces are not investigated, and no charges have been raised against them. The Palestinian authorities prevent the publication of a newspaper supporting Hamas in the West Bank.<sup>96</sup> Workers of human rights organisations are also a target of persecution by the Palestinian authorities.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Amnesty 2/2014, p. 10

<sup>91</sup> HRW World Report 2014

<sup>92</sup> B'Tselem 9.9.2012

<sup>93</sup> Khalil 12/2012

<sup>94</sup> LATimes 23.2.2015

<sup>95</sup> PLO/NAD

<sup>96</sup> HRW World Report 2014

<sup>97</sup> Addameer 9/2014



The Palestinians are disappointed at how the Palestinian authorities do not intervene in the way the Israeli security troops treat Palestinians. It is said that Palestinian authorities just look on and do nothing. The co-operation between Palestinian authorities and Israel in security matters has also been brought to question by the Palestinian population.<sup>98</sup>

Palestinian authorities have transferred the responsibility for civil matters such as marriage and divorce to religious courts. In practice, women seeking a divorce face discrimination. The courts require a male relative to give permission to a marriage. In the case of a divorce, the husband's agreement is required.<sup>99</sup>

### 10.1. Student arrests

Over the last six months, Palestinian authorities have arrested four Palestinian students in different universities, probably due to their political views. The arrested students have been part of student groups linked to Hamas, represented Hamas or criticised Palestinian authorities in social media. According to Adnan al-Dimiri, the spokesman for the Palestinian security services, the arrests had no political cause, and the Palestinian Authority does not arrest anybody because of their political relations. The students were arrested due to incitement of sectarian violence or other criminal charges. According to the HRW, however, there is no proof that the students ever participated in violent activity. At least one of the students had been asked about his/her political stance and whether he/she had participated in a demonstration supporting Hamas.<sup>100</sup>

The Palestinian Authority has also targeted students with connections to the Islamic bloc. The students may end up facing 15 days of interrogation and spending varying lengths of time in prison. Students are often arrested during tests, which makes it difficult for them to proceed with their studies. The students are usually accused of insulting the authorities or the President, but the interrogations have to do with their political activities at the university. It is also very common for the Israeli authorities to arrest a student just released by the Palestinian authorities.<sup>101</sup>

### 10.2. Arrests and harassment of journalists

Palestinian human rights organisations have been repeatedly worried about the harassment of journalists by the Palestinian authorities. Journalists have been arrested and prevented from travelling abroad and publishing information, and attempts have been made to coerce them to divulge information on their sources. Palestinian authorities have also ordered Internet service providers to block certain websites.<sup>102</sup>

According to Addameer, at least 27 journalists have been assaulted, 11 interrogated, 7 forbidden from participating in various events and 2 arrested between January and September 2014.<sup>103</sup>

Violence against Palestinian female journalists has increased significantly. It has tripled over the last five years. A total of 103 violations were reported, 66 of which were by the IDF and the rest

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<sup>98</sup> Jazeera 10.7.2014

<sup>99</sup> HRW World Report 2014

<sup>100</sup> HRW 7.5.2015

<sup>101</sup> Addameer 9/2014

<sup>102</sup> Amnesty 23.9.2013, p. 7

<sup>103</sup> Addameer 9/2014



by Palestinian authorities. The journalists constantly work under self-censorship, as Palestinian authorities pressure them.<sup>104</sup>

## 11. VIOLENCE AGAINST PALESTINIANS BY SETTLERS

There are at least 223 settlements in the West Bank, where a total of over 550,000 Israeli settlers live. Since the beginning of 2015, a total of 152 attacks against Palestinians by the settlers have been reported. The Palestinians have had their property destroyed, they have been fired at, attempts have been made to kidnap them and they have been run over by cars.

Violence is prevalent in Hebron, in particular, causing Palestinians to move away from the city. Hebron is divided into two areas, one of which – Area H-1 – is under Palestinian control and the other – Area H-2 – under Israeli control. At least 35,000 Palestinians live in Area H-2, but so do about 600 settlers, protected by about 2,000 soldiers. The settlers constantly act violently towards the Palestinian population. In May 2015, a Palestinian's home was being destroyed by rocks and bricks thrown at windows and doors, but the soldiers did not arrest the perpetrators although they escorted them away from the site. Due to constant rock throwing, the person living in the house has protected the windows with metal screens. In May 2015, soldiers prevented settlers from attacking a Palestinian woman and her children while they were on their way to a shop, but on their way home, settlers prevented the woman from getting home and kicked her. The woman and her children were able to escape into the house of their neighbours, but when they later attempted to get home, soldiers told them that it was forbidden. One hour later, the family got back home, escorted by the Israeli police.<sup>105</sup>

Settlers carry out so-called price tag attacks against Palestinians, their property and mosques. These attacks are retaliation against the evacuation of unlawful settlements in the West Bank by the Israeli authorities, among other things. The attacks are often prearranged in social media, and they are reported on flyers distributed at synagogues in addition to social media. Many religious leaders and politicians have given their support to these attacks, although some have condemned them.<sup>106</sup>

In July 2015 home of a Palestinian family was burned in the village of Duma. A small child died and other members of the family were severely injured in the fire. The arson is suspected to be so called 'price tag' attack.<sup>107</sup>

Some settlers have so much land in their possession that they lease it to Palestinians. Many clashes occur near the settlements. Palestinians are arrested for throwing stones. Almost all Palestinians who attack settlers are found guilty in the army courts. When settlers attack the property of Palestinians, Israel judges these persons according to the country's criminal law. However, a majority of the cases are not prosecuted. Settlers have continued the destruction of Palestinian property. Since the beginning of 2010, about 54,000 olive trees have been destroyed.<sup>108</sup> On one day in February 2014, as many as 1,200 olive and almond tree saplings owned by over one hundred Palestinian villagers were destroyed in the al-Rafid area located north of Ramallah.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ma'an News Agency 26.5.2015

<sup>105</sup> Al-Haq 26.5.2015

<sup>106</sup> Al-Haq 2013, p. 13-18; Shuttleworth & Zonszein 31.7.2015

<sup>107</sup> Shuttleworth & Zonszein 31.7.2015

<sup>108</sup> HRW 2.3.2015

<sup>109</sup> PCHR 2014, p. 14





Settlers may retaliate to the stone throwing by Palestinians by destroying Palestinian property.<sup>110</sup> Settlers have torched Palestinian homes and mosques. They also write slogans on the walls of houses, urging Palestinians to leave the area.<sup>111</sup>

Hundreds of car accidents in which a settler has run over a Palestinian have taken place in the West Bank. Although some of the accidents have been lethal, Israeli authorities have mostly left them uninvestigated.<sup>112</sup>

Settlers also target Palestinian schools and pupils. Palestinian families do not always dare send their girls to school for fear of violence, particularly in Area C. Between 2009 and 2013, a total of 22 cases in which settlers had harassed school children or thrown objects at them or destroyed school buildings were reported.<sup>113</sup> Settlers may establish their own checkpoints where they keep school children waiting for long periods of time or do not let them pass at all. School children have been pushed and stopped on the streets.<sup>114</sup>

The duty of the Israeli security authorities is to protect the Palestinians from violence by the settlers. This is not, however, always the case. Settlers throw stones at Palestinians, destroy their property and even build unlawful dwellings on their land. The security troops sometimes curb the Palestinians more than prevent the violence by the settlers. The security troops do not always prevent the settlers from carrying out acts of violence or destroying Palestinian property.<sup>115</sup> In one case, for example, the police called to the site did not arrest the two settlers who were destroying Palestinian property after young Palestinians had thrown stones at their car.<sup>116</sup>

Palestinians may lodge a complaint about settler violence to the police, but this is done only rarely, as it takes time, is expensive and people do not believe it will result in anything. Furthermore, reporting an offence is difficult, as in order to get to an Israeli police station, the Palestinian has to get into a settlement area, which usually requires a permit. On the other hand, if Palestinians attack settlers or destroy their property, Israeli troops will carry out extensive arrests, searches and interrogations.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> B'Tselem 4.12.2014

<sup>111</sup> PCHR 2014, p. 14

<sup>112</sup> IMEMC 27.5.2015

<sup>113</sup> OHCHR 10/2013, p. 4, Kvinna til Kvinna 10/2012, p. 6

<sup>114</sup> OCHAOPT 3/2012, p. 8

<sup>115</sup> B'Tselem 3.6.2012, OHCHR 10/2013, p. 5

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