



FACTSHEET

THE IRON FIST: THE ULTRA PUNITIVE MEASURES IN EAST JERUSALEM

Following the unprecedented escalation that occurred on October 7th, 2023, the Israeli government declared war on the Gaza Strip and announced the status of emergency in all regions. This status resulted in new measures by the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem, such as pushing hundreds of Israeli military forces to enforce a siege over the Old City of Jerusalem, and other Palestinian neighborhoods in the city. This fact sheet will examine the **intensifying coercive environment** that Palestinian Jerusalemites are facing during the ongoing aggression. It is important to highlight that this paper covers the aftermath of the escalation following **one month of its beginning**.¹

¹ It is expected that all the statistics mentioned in the factsheet to increase in the near future.

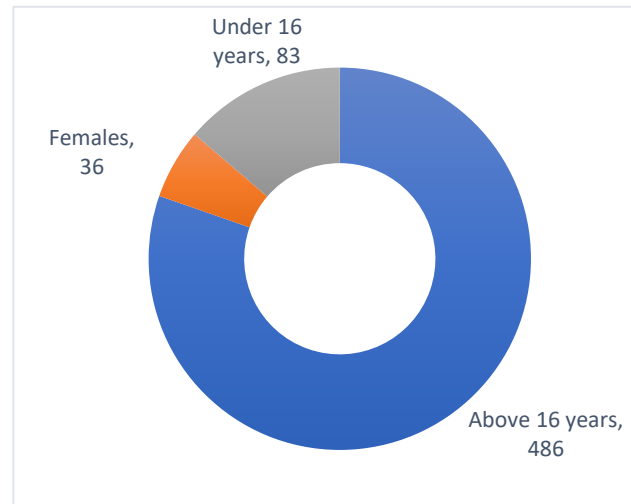
Raising violence, arrests and killings

Since the beginning of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military in East Jerusalem killed 23 Palestinian Jerusalemites². In addition, over 605 Palestinians were arrested for different reasons, mainly over social media posts accusing them of incitement. It is worth to mention that between October 7th – November 14th out of the 605 arrested were 83 children under 16 years old, and 36 females. This crackdown on Palestinian Jerusalemites comes under the “**iron fist policies**”, which is a series of Israeli “security” measures that aim to shut away any form of defiance against the Israeli violence, creating a state of systematic stress, fear, and panic among Palestinians.

One of the most unprecedented measures that combines violence and arrest is the forceful investigation of mobile phones. Many Palestinian Jerusalemites are forced to unlock their phones for the Israeli police personnel and soldiers, which goes against Israeli law, since exploring a personal mobile needs a court order. Palestinians who refuse to unlock their mobiles are either forced to place their phone before their faces, which activates the face unlock feature leading to unlock the device, or they get beaten up for refusing.

² OCHA. Including Jerusalem areas behind the wall (such as Bethany, Abu Dis and Qalandia)

In case the mobile is opened, and the soldiers spot any kind of pro-Palestine content, which is very common now since everyone is focusing on following the latest news updates through social media applications, the young men would be arrested for “incitement” or “support of terrorism” and taken to the police station. In some **cases**, young Palestinians were beaten up, and their mobile phones were thrown in trash since the soldiers noticed some media content they did not like on the phones.



The Closure of the Old City

Unsurprisingly, the main gates leading to the Old City of Jerusalem are heavily surveilled around the clock. Every young Palestinian is asked to lift their tops over their bellies, and

then walk with their hands in the air. Israeli soldiers push young men into the walls and start physically searching every inch of their bodies, forcing them to frisk as wide as possible after kicking the sides of their feet.

This procedure is practiced since it is common to be seen around the Old City even before the ongoing escalation, but now young men are only allowed to access their houses in the Old City with humiliating body search.

Nevertheless, between October 7th and mid of November Palestinians are only allowed to enter the Old City when their address is registered turning the Old City into a ghost town, affecting over 2,000 businesses, and paralyzing their economic fluidity. Moreover, there is a closure of Al-Aqsa Mosque, only Palestinians over 70 years old are allowed to access it, and some locals who are registered residents of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Punitive Measures

The ongoing situation sparked demolition notifications against many Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and punitive measures are carried against the families of Palestinians who conducted attacks against Israelis.⁴ houses

were demolished since October 7th as a collective punishment, while 3 houses were demolished before that date)³ Now, a new pattern has emerged, whereby the neighbors of the “attackers” are waking up to notifications from the municipality of Jerusalem hung on their doors informing them that the building was built without a permit; this being a first step in the procedure to demolish a house in Jerusalem, taking the collective punishment to a new level.

A recent case in Beit Hanina (*which JCHR had adopted*) is a building that was built in 1997, without having the proper permits from the municipality. This building has nine apartments, and in one of them lives a family, where one of its members carried an attack against the Israeli police in Jerusalem. Israeli military and private security firms raided the building accompanied with municipality inspectors, and delivered individual notification letters to each apartment stating that the building was built without a permit, and will be demolished. In addition, the municipality issued a similar notification letter for another building in Beit Hanina, since the owner of this building gave the ground floor’s apartment for a rent to the brother of the

³ It is worth mentioning that Israeli authorities had demolished 49 structures for lacking a permit, making it a total of 53 structures since October 7th, while 210

structures were demolished since the beginning of the year in East Jerusalem.

person who carried the above-mentioned attack.

Another interesting case was a demolition order for a building in Jabal Al-Mukaber that a Palestinian content creator's family lives in. After noticing the notification order hanged on their door, one of the brothers went to the municipality to check the reasons for such an unexpected order, and to inform them that the building was built in 2005, and that they had not received any complaints from the municipality. The officer in the municipality informed him that he was not the one who was supposed to come and inquire; it should be his brother who **is active on a well-known media outlet**, implying that the content he was posting was the reason behind the demolition order.

Last but not least, and as a concluding example of the punitive measures in East Jerusalem, on October 31st 2023, the Israeli security forces conducted a raid on a house in Mount of Olives to arrest one of its residents. During the operation, the Israeli authorities imposed a 500 NIS fine on the building owner, because of a jasmine shrub. They justified it that jasmine tree was not shredded from the outside, and it is considered as a physical obstruction on the pavement.

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Conclusion

The current situation in East Jerusalem is marked by a series of ultra-punitive measures implemented by the Israeli authorities in response to the escalation that unfolded on October 7th, 2023. The aftermath of the aggression on the Gaza Strip has seen a significant intensification of coercive tactics in East Jerusalem in violation of international law and the status of East Jerusalem as an occupied city, leading to a distressing environment for Palestinian Jerusalemites. The current reality demands international attention and a commitment by the international actors to hold Israeli government accountable on the basis of International Humanitarian Law to halt these actions and measures in East Jerusalem.



The jasmine shrub in Mount of Olives.