

Overview of the Situation in the West Bank including Occupied Jerusalem



Fact Sheet

September 2024

Overview

While the globe's focus remains on the genocidal war against the Palestinian people in Gaza, a parallel catastrophe has been unfolding in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since October 7, 2023, the region has been immersed in an endless cycle of bloodshed and injustice imposed on Palestinians by the Israeli occupation. The increased military incursions and the lethal use of force have resulted in 676 deaths including 152 children and numerous injuries, alongside massive infrastructure damage and regular arrest campaigns that have led to 9,900 Palestinians currently in detention. The number of demolitions has reached unprecedented levels, with 1,433 structures demolished, displacing thousands and further impoverishing afflicted areas. Settlers' terror, fueled by government-sanctioned expansion of illegal settlements, has increased both in frequency and brutality, attacking Palestinian homes, crops, and livelihoods. Meanwhile, severe limitations on freedom of movement have aggravated the crisis by isolating communities and preventing access to critical services. Together, these factors portray a bleak picture of increasing violence and institutional oppression, emphasizing a situation that requires immediate global attention.

About JLAC

The Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC) is a Palestinian non-governmental organization mandated with providing pro-bono legal aid and consultation in the defense of human rights, both in East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank. JLAC has coupled its legal aid with public interest cases, legal reform, community awareness, and advocacy.

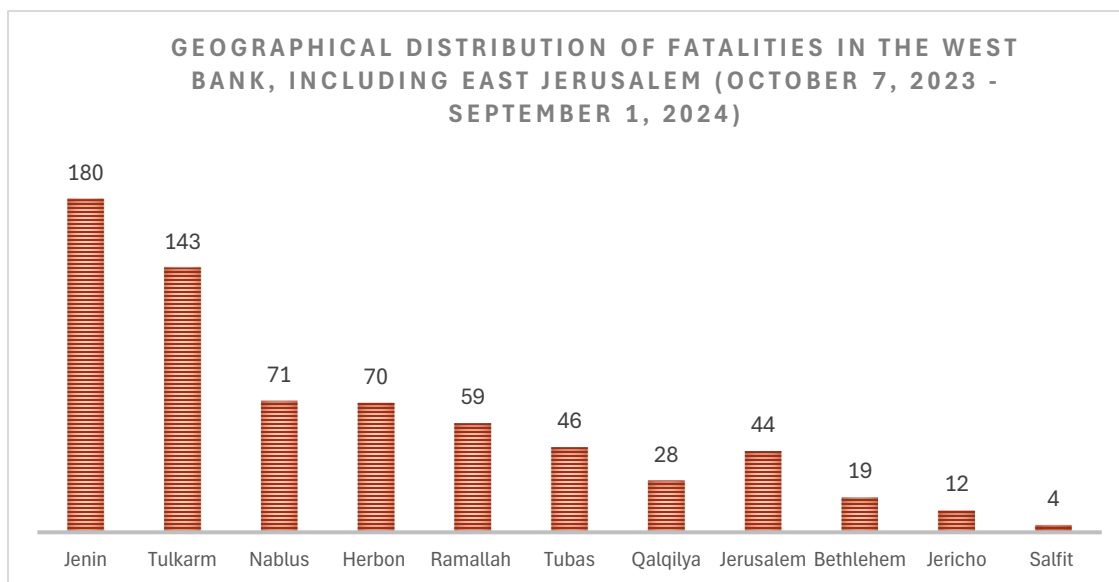


Jenin City, August 2024

Fatalities and Injuries

Since October 7th, violence inflicted upon Palestinians by the Israeli occupation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has escalated drastically. **A total of 676 Palestinians have been killed, including 152 children, with 22 of these deaths directly caused by Israeli settlers, without any indictment.** In addition to the deaths, **over 5,600 Palestinians have been injured**, many of them seriously. Furthermore, Israel has withheld the bodies of 156 of the deceased, aggravating the suffering of the victims' families and denying them the dignity of proper burial. The majority of these casualties involved the use of lethal force by Israeli soldiers, mostly in situations where the victims posed no imminent threat. This wave of violence is not only unprecedented in its scale but also in its brutality.

To put this into perspective, **the same period in the previous year saw 236 Palestinians killed**—a figure already alarming in its own right. However, **the current toll is nearly three times higher**, underscoring the extraordinary severity of the situation. This dramatic increase in fatalities and injuries highlights the intensifying cruelty of the occupation, where life has become increasingly precarious for Palestinians. Palestinians are living under constant threat, not just from military operations but also from settlers emboldened by the lack of accountability for their actions.

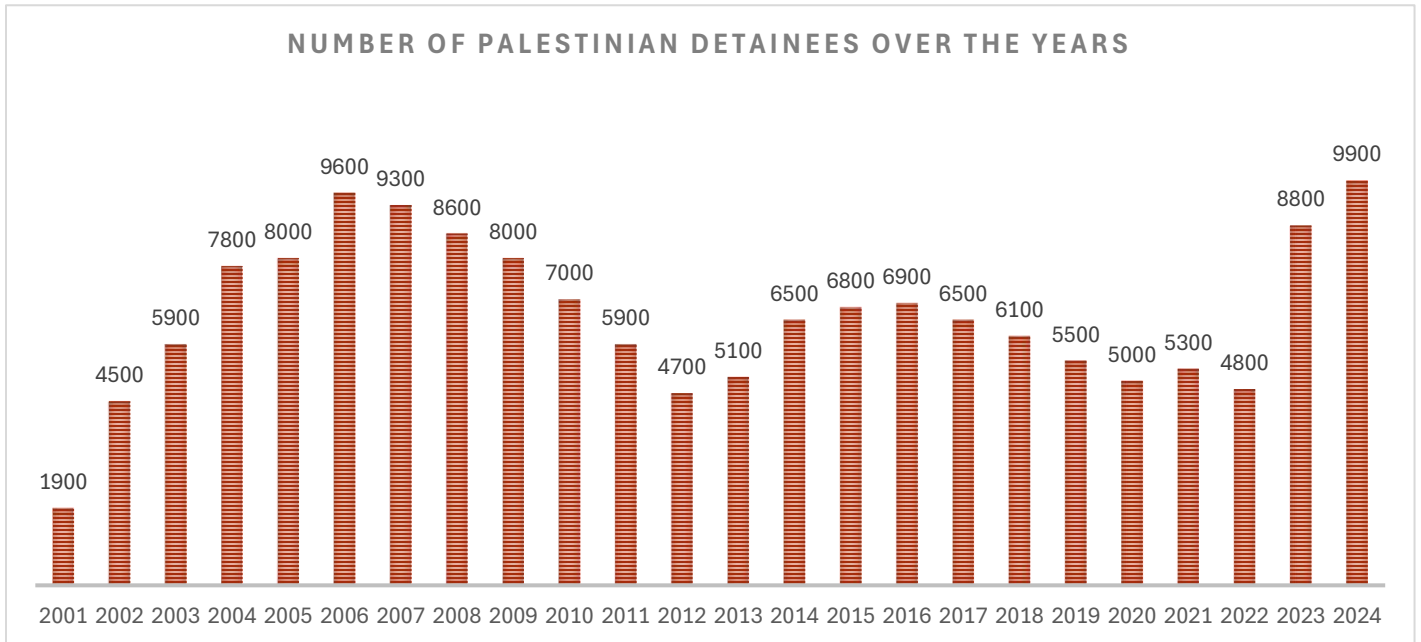


Arrests

In the aftermath of October 7th, the Israeli occupation has conducted mass arrests across the West Bank, significantly increasing the number of Palestinian detainees. **The total number of Palestinians currently detained has reached 9,900, the highest in 24 years, which includes more than 290 children under the age of 18 and 50 journalists.** Additionally, around **2,000 of those detainees are suffering from health issues**, aggravating concerns about their well-being. **Among the Palestinian detainees, 3,361 have been placed under administrative detention without formal charges or trials, marking the highest number of administrative detainees in Israel's history.**

Since October 7th, the conditions in Israeli prisons have deteriorated significantly. Reports indicate a surge in the use of torture and degrading treatment against Palestinian detainees. Detainees have been subjected to severe beatings, humiliation, and denial of basic rights, including access to legal representation and contact with their families. The "state of emergency" imposed in prisons has led to overcrowding, highly reduced access to medical care, hygiene material and cruel collective punishment, such as cutting off water and electricity for extended periods.

The figure below illustrates the unprecedented increase in detainee numbers since 2001.



Military Incursions

Since October 7th, the frequency and scale of Israeli military incursions into Palestinian cities and refugee camps in the West Bank has increased substantially. These operations have become almost a daily occurrence, with the primary aim being the massive arrest campaigns. The intensified raids reflect a significant escalation from previous years, targeting a range of locations with unprecedented frequency and intensity.

Among the most heavily affected areas are the Palestinian refugee camps, which have seen particularly large-scale military incursions. Camps like Jenin, Nur Shams in Tulkarem, and Al-Faraa near Tubas have experienced extensive raids. These incursions often involve a combination of heavy ground forces, drone strikes, and, in some cases, airstrikes. The intensity of these operations has been notable for its scale and impact on Palestinians.

Currently, a massive, large-scale assault is ongoing across the West Bank, described as the most significant since the military actions of 2002. Israeli forces have launched a major offensive

ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

Israeli assaults on West Bank refugee camps

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz has called for the "temporary evacuation" of Palestinians from areas in the northern West Bank as the army carries out its biggest attack in years.



Source: Al Jazeera, UNRWA | August 28, 2024

@AJLabs ALJAZEERA

Israeli assault on Palestinian refugee camps in the northern West Bank, August 2024. Source: Al Jazeera

involving hundreds of soldiers targeting key areas including Jenin, Tulkarem, and the Far'a refugee camp near Tubas. Israeli forces have also raided several areas in Hebron city. **As of the latest reports, at least 24 Palestinians have been killed, with 10 of the deceased bodies taken by Israeli forces in 24 hours. Many others have been injured, and at least 110 Palestinian have been arrested.**

The situation in Jenin is particularly dire. **The Jenin municipality has reported that nearly 70% of the city's roads have been completely bulldozed.** This extensive damage is unprecedented in scale and has no military necessity, it is retaliation and collective punishment. Due to the massive destruction of infrastructure, particularly in Jenin, medical staff and ambulances are unable to reach many areas. Residents are trapped in their homes, unable to access basic necessities such as food and water. **The municipality has also reported that water supplies have been cut off across the entire Jenin camp and 80% of the city, with around 20 kilometers of water and sewage networks, as well as communication and electricity cables, being destroyed. This has resulted in widespread power outages and a critical shortage of water in many parts of Jenin.**

Demolitions

The policy of demolishing Palestinian structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has been in place since the aftermath of the 1967 war. This practice, however, has intensified significantly in recent years. Since October 7, 2023, there has been a notable escalation in demolitions across the West Bank, coinciding with increased military incursions into Palestinian cities and refugee camps. These actions have resulted in extensive damage to property and infrastructure, compounding the already challenging living conditions for many Palestinians.



From October 7, 2023, to August 28, 2024, Israeli forces have demolished 1,433 structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. These demolitions have led to the displacement of 3,261 individuals. The scale of these demolitions highlights a disturbing trend: they are not limited to Area C, but also occur in Areas A and B, often under the pretext of security concerns.

In detail, **from the beginning of 2024 up to August 28, a total of 1,010 structures have been demolished.** Of these, **64% were in Area C, 21% in Areas A and B, and 14% in East Jerusalem.** The increased frequency of these demolitions reflects a broader pattern of systematic damage to Palestinian property and infrastructure.

Settlers' Terror and Settlement Expansion

Since October 7th, there has been a significant increase in settlers' terror against Palestinians in the West Bank. This terror includes physical assaults, the destruction of property, and the burning of crops. **From October 7th to the end of July, more than 1,403 settler attacks have been registered.** Many of these attacks occur with little to no intervention from Israeli forces, who are often accused of either failing to act or complicity in these acts of aggression.

With representatives of the settler movement now holding prominent positions within the Israeli government, many settlers have intensified their attacks on Palestinians, anticipating government inaction or tacit approval. This has resulted in repeated attacks on Palestinian towns, villages, and communities, leading to forced displacements.

The rise in settlers' terror is closely linked to a substantial expansion of Israeli settlements. Since October

7th, the Israeli government has accelerated the approval and legalization of outposts, in attempts to further expand its colonialist settlement expansions.

We recognize that some European and other countries have imposed symbolic sanctions on a few individual settlers. However, these measures are cosmetic and insufficient, as they overlook the institutionalized violence of the occupation. This terror is sponsored and protected by ministers and parties within the ruling coalition.

The expansion of settlements and the legalization of more outposts further entrench Israeli control over the West Bank, restricting Palestinian access to their own lands. Despite numerous UN rulings since 1979 declaring Israeli settlements on occupied territory illegal, Israel continues to expand these settlements. This ongoing expansion is seen as a strategy to alter the demographic landscape of the region and undermine the prospects for a viable Palestinian state.

Freedom of Movement

The freedom of movement for Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has long been severely restricted due to various measures imposed by the Israeli occupation since it began. Palestinians have faced numerous obstacles that impact their daily lives, including limited access to healthcare, education, food supply and employment.

Since the onset of the genocidal war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, these restrictions have intensified dramatically. **Over 140 new barriers were erected in the first few months following October 7**



alone, further isolating Palestinian cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Existing checkpoints have been closed, new ones established, and additional gates and barriers constructed. The broader strategy behind these measures is to fragment Palestinian territory and undermine any prospects for a viable Palestinian state. By increasing isolation and disrupting connections between Palestinian communities, these actions seek to dismantle the unity and cohesion necessary for a cohesive state.

The already severe movement limitations have been worsened by the installation of these additional obstacles. These closures have **disrupted the education of over 780,000 students** and severely restricted access to basic services. Movement restrictions have a major impact on day-to-day living, limiting access to essential services such as employment and healthcare. The closure of checkpoints and restrictions on access to Israel and East Jerusalem have impeded workers, traders, and humanitarian personnel, including those from international NGOs. This has led to a significant economic decline and made it more difficult to access quality healthcare and education.

The situation had been further intensified by political statements and policies that highlight the prioritization of Israeli security and movement over that of Palestinians. For instance, in August 2023, before the events of October 7th, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's Minister of National Security, publicly stated that "my right, the right of my wife and my children to move around Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] is more important than freedom of movement for the Arabs." This blunt statement only exposes the deep-rooted racist nature of the movement restrictions that Palestinians faced as a part of a systematic Israeli policy.

These tactics are more than just administrative inconveniences; they are brutal tools of oppression that deprive Palestinians of their fundamental rights and dignity. The constant implementation of movement restrictions and the expansion of barriers exemplify the occupation's brutalities.

Olive Harvest Season 2024

Next month marks the beginning of the olive harvest season in the West Bank, an event that holds deep economic, social, and cultural significance for Palestinians. However, there is significant concern about this year's harvest due to the challenges experienced last year.

The 2023 olive harvest was particularly difficult for Palestinian farmers, coinciding with the escalation of hostilities in Gaza and the West Bank following the October 7 attack on Israel. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the period from September to November 2023 saw an increase in movement restrictions and violence by Israeli forces and settlers. These challenges prevented many Palestinian farmers from accessing their olive groves,



leaving over **96,000 dunums of olive-cultivated land unharvested**.

The unharvested areas included lands behind the annexation wall, near settlements, and in other areas where access was restricted by Israeli authorities. The impact was severe, **with Palestinian farmers losing over 1,200 metric tons of olive oil, leading to a financial loss estimated at \$10 million**. The situation was exacerbated by **settler violence, with reports of attacks on farmers, theft of olives, and destruction of trees**.

As the new harvest season approaches, and due to the current situation in the West Bank highlighted above, there is widespread worry among Palestinian farmers that they may face similar or even worse challenges, potentially leading to further economic and cultural losses.

Call for Action

The escalating crisis in the West Bank and East Jerusalem demands immediate and decisive action from the international community. We call on global leaders, humanitarian organizations, and civil society to hold the Israeli government accountable for its actions and support investigations into violations of international law. It is crucial to advocate for an immediate cessation of military incursions, lethal force, and demolitions to prevent further loss of life and destruction. Additionally, there is a pressing need to pressure Israel into compliance with the **International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion issued on July 19, 2024**, which addresses the legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. **The time to act is now. Urgent and collective pressure is crucial in demanding accountability, enforcing international legal standards. Otherwise, the West Bank is at the brink of explosion, fueled by all this oppression and state violence.**

Contact Us: Ramallah Office Address: Millennium Building, 3rd fl. Kamal Nasser Street Ramallah Tel.: +970 2 298 7981