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### Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

## Written statement\* submitted by The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is  
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



# **Israeli aggressions during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2022 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in Occupied Palestinian Territory**

## **Overview**

Since the start of 2022, the Israeli military has escalated aggressions on the occupied West Bank and the blockaded Gaza Strip.

Back in late April, Israel took profit from the advent of the holy Muslim month of Ramadan to pull the wool over the international community's eyes by claiming that the struggle in Palestinian territories is of a religious nature. The truth is that the struggle is not a matter of religious belief. The Palestinian struggle is largely stirred by Israel's apartheid and racist practices that deny the Palestinians' their most basic and inalienable rights, most notably their right to build an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders and to return to their homeland from which they have been displaced.

This report tackles Israel's human rights abuses and violations of the internationally-recognized rights of the Palestinian people during the second and third quarters of 2022, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## **2nd Quarter of 2022**

### **Victims**

From April to June 2022, 47 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli military in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jenin, Jericho, the Jordan Valley, Nablus, Qalqilya, Tulkarem, and Gaza. The youngest victim was 13-year-old K.F.H., who breathed his last in Bethlehem; The oldest was Nabil Ahmed Salim Ghanem, 52.<sup>1</sup>

### **Detainees**

In April, 1,228 Palestinians were arrested, the highest number recorded in 2022. The list includes 165 children and 11 women. At the same time, 140 administrative detention orders were issued.

In May, 76 children and 19 women were among 690 Palestinians rounded up by the Israeli military, mostly in Jerusalem, AlKhalil, and Jenin. In June, some 464 Palestinians were arrested, including 70 children and 18 women. Jerusalem topped the list with 159 detainees, followed by Gaza with 15 detainees. 153 administrative detention orders were issued.

## **3rd Quarter 2022**

### **Victims**

In July and August 2022, 60 Palestinians were pronounced dead in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the youngest among them being five-year-old A.A.R.K., from Gaza. 68-year-old Saadiya Salem Faraj, from AlKhalil, also breathed her last in an Israeli prison.<sup>2</sup>

### **Prisoners**

In July 2022, the Israeli occupation authorities arrested 340 Palestinians, including 28 children and five women. 155 of those were arrested in Jerusalem. In the first week of August, 150 Palestinians were detained, mostly from AlKhalil and Jenin. Ex-prisoners who spent years behind Israeli prison bars and/or who had gone on hunger strikes were also on the list.

## Renewed Aggressions on the Gaza Strip

In August, the Israeli military hit the blockaded Gaza Strip with a round of deadly air strikes. The three-day hostilities claimed the lives of 49 Palestinians, among them 19 children and four women. Another 360 Palestinians were left wounded. A total of 22 residential apartments were completely destroyed while another 77 buildings were severely damaged and became uninhabitable. Dozens of families have become without roofs over their heads. The Israeli airstrikes caused severe damage to infrastructure and to the economic and service sectors.<sup>3</sup>

## Settlement Expansion

Since the start of the year, Israel's illegal settlement activity has increased across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

On January 17, Israel's local committee for planning and construction of the Jerusalem Municipality approved plans for building 3,557 new settlement units in occupied Jerusalem as part of five plans, one of them is between Har Homa and Givat Hamatos and the other plans are on the edge of French Hill towards Mount Scopus.<sup>4</sup>

Such plans are a threat to the stability of Jerusalem and the chances for peace. The most harmful plan in terms of the possibility to reach two states is the plan known as the 'lower aqueduct plan'. This plan is located south of Kibbutz Ramat Rachel near Givat Hamatos and Har Homa, and it includes building a new settlement with 1,465 settlement units.<sup>5</sup>

In early August, the National Bureau for Defending the Land confirmed that the Israeli occupation authority plans to build a new settlement on 259 dunums of land annexed from Deir Istiya town in Salfit province. The new Jewish settlement is composed of 381 housing units in addition to public buildings, open areas and roads.

There is another Israeli plan to displace Palestinian families from their homes in Farisiya village as part of a large-scale scheme aimed at promoting and supporting settlement construction in the northern Jordan Valley.<sup>6</sup>

## Forced Displacement and Ethnic Cleansing

Since the Palestinian Nakba of 1948, when Israel drove 850,000 Palestinians from their homes, the occupation authorities continue to commit ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians, a political and military strategy that seeks the forced expulsion of civilian communities from their land and homes.

In May, after a 20-year legal battle, Israel's top court gave the armed forces the green light to use Masafer Yatta area, which includes 12 Palestinian villages in the southern Hebron Hills, as a firing zone and to evict its roughly 4,000 Palestinian inhabitants who lived in the area for generations — some in caves dug into the hillsides that provide respite from the harsh climate — with many earning their livelihoods through herding. The ruling paves the way for what activists and diplomats say would be the biggest eviction in decades and has highlighted the pressures Palestinians in the West Bank have faced since Israel's occupation began in 1967.

Palestinian communities in Beit Dajan, a village in the central Jordan Valley, have also been permanent targets of Israel's ethnic cleansing policy. Once a town with 7,000 inhabitants, there are now barely 1,000 residents due to Israel's policies of home demolitions and land grabbing. Surrounded by Israeli military bases, closed military areas, illegal settlements and bypass roads linking these settlements, 83% of the village's land (about 10,000 dunums) has been seized by Israel, while the residents live now on less than 3,000 dunums of land.

The occupation uses water as a weapon to succeed in its goals of ethnically cleansing. Israeli forces, along with representatives of Israeli water company Mekorot have destroyed Beit Dejan's and other communities water pipes, in an area where residents sustain themselves through agriculture. Without water, Israel is not only stripping them of their livelihood, but

the very life source needed to survive. Next door, the illegal colony of Hamra – which was built on the village’s land – enjoys an abundance of stolen water.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

For over five decades, the Palestinians have been grappling with Israel’s apartheid and ethnic cleansing policies perpetrated under different covers.

The Nakba, or Catastrophe, which led to the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian territories in 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel on its ruins, is a continuous, unfinished project. The ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from East Jerusalem and the endless torment of Palestinian Bedouins in the Jordan Valley and, now in Masafer Yatta, are all testaments to this reality.

A wholesome annexation of West Bank regions would mean that Israel would become responsible for the welfare of entire Palestinian communities. As a settler-colonial state, Israel seeks the annexation of the land and the expulsion of the native population.

The latest Israeli attack on Gaza is unjustified. The Gaza Strip does not pose any strategic threat to Israel's security; It is a very small coastal enclave that can be — and is — controlled and choked very easily. This has been happening for seventeen years, with Israel imposing a strict land, air and sea blockade. It is no surprise, though, to see Israel pounding Gaza yet again in an endeavour to destroy infrastructure and kill civilians. This has become the norm. Innocent civilians are regarded as expendable in order to kill one or two key people.

The Israeli authorities have given themselves the power to declare anyone who resists the brutal occupation to be a "terrorist" who can be chased down and killed extrajudicially. International laws and conventions agree that the Palestinian anti-occupation struggle is legitimate but nothing is done to make Israel accountable; Israel is allowed to act with impunity. It is high time the international community reacted to such practices committed by the alleged "only democracy in the Middle East".

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1 Shihab Agency <http://shehabnews.com/uploads/documents/2022/08/fKUnk.pdf>

2 Shihab Agency <http://shehabnews.com/uploads/documents/2022/08/fKUnk.pdf>

3 Al-Quds Newspaper, “Human and material losses suffered by the residents of the Gaza Strip due to the recent wave of tension,” (August 14, 2022), <https://www.alquds.com/ar/posts/126fde67-1451-4f4b-bd0e-1f877c93c9f1>

4 Madiha Al-Araj, “The Occupation Authorities Begin their New Year with New Judaizing Settlement Plans in Occupied Jerusalem,” The National Liberation Organization, The National Office for the Defense of the Land, Nablus, (January 8, 2022), <https://cutt.us/qxBf9>

5 Madiha Al-Araj, PLO website, <https://cutt.us/du1xF>

6 Madiha al-Araj, PLO , <https://cutt.us/kbuAU>

7 Madiha al-Araj, PLO website, <https://cutt.us/ikTu1>