

Protection of Civilians Report | 16-29 May 2023

02 Jun 2023

Latest Developments (after the reporting period)

- On 30 May, an Israeli settler was shot and killed in a Palestinian drive-by shooting near the settlement of Hermesh between Jenin and Tulkarm governorates in the northern West Bank. Israeli forces launched a manhunt and set up checkpoints, obstructing access and movement of Palestinians in and out of the area. Following the incident, Israeli settlers attacked Palestinians and their property in the surrounding villages and at road junctions.

Highlights from the reporting period

- **Israeli forces killed four Palestinians and injured 67 others during two search-and-arrest operations in Nablus and Jenin.** On 22 May, Israeli forces raided Balata Refugee Camp (Nablus) and killed three Palestinians. According to eyewitnesses and online video footage, Israeli forces shot one of the men in the back as he attempted to flee the area. Subsequently, an exchange of fire occurred between Israeli forces and Palestinians, resulting in the killing of another two Palestinian men who, according to the Israeli military, had participated in the exchange of fire. During the operation, Israeli forces demolished one residential structure and partially destroyed two other units using explosives, displacing six Palestinian households (further details below). The Israeli army stated that the detonation was carried out to destroy explosives found in the site. 63 Palestinians were injured, including four with live ammunition. Medical sources reported that Israeli forces restricted the movement of ambulances in the area, obstructing the immediate provision of medical assistance to the injured. According to Israeli forces, one Israeli soldier was injured. On 29 May, Israeli forces conducted a raid in Jenin Refugee Camp and exchanged fire with Palestinians. Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man who, according to the Israeli military, had participated in the exchange of fire and previously engaged in attacks against Israelis. During the same operation, six Palestinians were injured, and six others were arrested. According to local media, Israeli forces impeded the work of paramedics and caused damage to one ambulance. **Between 1 January and 29 May 2023, Israeli forces killed 112 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, more than twice the number of deaths (53) in the same period in 2022.**
- **An Israeli settler shot and killed a Palestinian man who entered an Israeli settlement in Hebron, reportedly holding a knife.** The incident took place on 26 May, in the settlement of Teneh Omarim (Hebron). Eyewitnesses cited by the Israeli media said they feared that he was there to carry out a stabbing attack. His body has been withheld by the Israeli authorities. **Since the beginning of 2023 until 29 May, Israeli settlers killed five Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, three of whom were perpetrators/alleged perpetrators of attacks against Israelis.**
- **A total of 409 Palestinians, including at least 41 children, were injured by Israeli forces across the West Bank; 40 of them were shot with live ammunition.** 214 of the injuries occurred during Israeli forces operations. More than half of

the injuries (83) occurred during a pre-dawn operation in Aqbat Jaber Refugee Camp (Jericho), during which Israeli forces also arrested fourteen Palestinians, caused extensive damage to Palestinian homes, and blocked paramedics and ambulances from reaching the injured. In four separate incidents, Israeli forces injured 122 Palestinians while accompanying Israeli settlers trespassing into Palestinian communities. Of those, the majority were reported in two main incidents: after settlers entered to Joseph's Tomb in Nablus city and in proximity of a spring in the Palestinian community of Qaryut (Nablus) in which confrontations were reported. Sixty-nine additional Palestinians were injured near Beit Dajan, Beita and Burqa (Nablus), and Kafr Qaddum (Qalqilya) while demonstrating against access restrictions and settlement expansion. The remaining four Palestinian injuries, all shot and injured with live ammunition, occurred during ad-hoc stone throwing confrontations with Israeli forces positioned at the entrance of Qalqilya city, Ayda Refugee Camp, and Husan village (both in Bethlehem). Overall, 340 Palestinians were treated for teargas inhalation, 40 were shot with live ammunition, 16 were injured with rubber bullets, seven sustained shrapnel injuries, three were physically assaulted and three were injured when hit by sound grenades or teargas canisters.

- **On May 18, thousands of Israelis marched through East Jerusalem during the annual Jerusalem Day "Flag March", which commemorates the Israeli capture of East Jerusalem in 1967.** Israeli authorities deployed thousands of police officers and erected metal barriers outside the Damascus Gate, blocking Palestinian access in and out of the Old City of Jerusalem. Confrontations erupted between Palestinians and Israeli forces during which several Palestinians, including children and women, were physically assaulted and at least ten others were arrested. Large groups of Israelis later entered the Old City of Jerusalem, shouting insults and provocative slogans against Palestinians, and threw objects at journalists, injuring at least two. Earlier the same day, Israeli authorities restricted Palestinian access to Al-Aqsa Mosque, allowing only those over the age of 50 entry to perform dawn prayers. In the morning, approximately 2,600 Israelis were afforded access to the compound with the support of Israeli police. Confrontations resulted between Palestinians and Israeli police.
- **Israeli settlers injured 17 Palestinians, including three with live ammunition, and people known or believed to be settlers damaged Palestinian property in another 19 instances across the West Bank.** Between 19 and 20 May, in three separate incidents, confrontations between Israeli settlers and Palestinians were reported after Israeli settlers marched in the Old City of Jerusalem and At Tur area. Settlers threw stones, resulting in damage to 17 Palestinian-owned vehicles and four shops. Eight Palestinians and two settlers were injured. Israeli forces intervened and fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets injuring an additional five Palestinians and arresting two. On 24 May, three Palestinians were injured by live ammunition and one by shrapnel as Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, entered the Palestinian village of Burqa (Nablus), attacking residents and damaging homes, water tanks, and livestock shelters. On 26 May, a group of approximately 50 armed Israeli settlers reportedly from Adi Ad Israeli settlement outpost opened fire, threw stones, and physically assaulted Palestinians who were working on their land between Al Mughayyir and Turmus'aya villages (east of Ramallah). Six Palestinians were injured, including two with live ammunition. The settlers set fire to five Palestinian-owned vehicles, damaged four with stones, and damaged fodder for livestock. On 29 May, Israeli settlers, reportedly from a newly erected settlement outpost called Sde Yonatan, threw stones and injured two Palestinian farmers working their lands in Deir Dibwan (Ramallah). During the same incident, settlers threw stones damaging five vehicles and one home and set fire to another vehicle. According to community sources, in eight separate incidents, more than 500 trees and saplings were vandalized on Palestinian land near Israeli settlements, during the reporting period. According to local sources and eyewitnesses, in six incidents in Qaryut, Sabastiya, and Burqa (all in Nablus), Ramin (Tulkram), and Beit Ummar (Hebron) settlers set fire to cultivated land, causing damage to crop, and broke into farmlands, damaging agricultural structures, water pipelines and metal fences. In the remaining five incidents reported across the West Bank, people known or believed to be Israeli settlers threw stones and vandalized eight Palestinian vehicles.



- **Two Israeli settlers were injured by stone-throwing at vehicles while traveling on West Bank roads in Nablus and Ramallah on 23 and 29 May. Additionally, one soldier was injured in a ramming attack.** In an additional three separate incidents, Palestinians fired shots at Israeli vehicles near Nablus, Jenin, and Bethlehem, resulting in damage to three Israeli vehicles. In two other incidents near Ramallah and Jericho, individuals presumed to be Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles causing damage. Israeli sources reported that a total of seven Israeli-plated vehicles were damaged during the reporting period. In a separate event on 21 May, an Israeli soldier was injured in a ramming attack on the main road of Huwwara town in Nablus. The Israeli military stated that the assailant fled the scene, prompting Israeli forces to launch a manhunt in the area, leading to restrictions on Palestinian access and movement in and out of the area.
- **Residents of the Palestinian herding community of Ein Samiya in Ramallah relocated from their community on 22 May, due to repeated settler violence, reduced grazing land due to settlement expansion, demolitions, and threats to their school from the Israeli authorities.** A total of 33 households comprising 178 people, including 78 children, were displaced. In her statement on 25 May 2023, the Acting Humanitarian Coordinator, Yvonne Helle highlighted the non-voluntary nature of their displacement and expressed concern about the coercive environment in the West Bank, which has led to similar displacement in Wadi as Seeq and Ras a Tin (both in Ramallah) and Lifjim (Nablus) communities, resulting in the displacement of more than 180 Palestinians since 2022. During the night of May 23, Israeli settlers broke into the community of Ein Samiya and vandalized the community's school, damaged water tanks, and destroyed three mobile latrines.
- **Intensified Israeli settlement activities near the Palestinian village of Burqa (Nablus) have raised concerns over people's safety and access to livelihoods.** On 18 May, the Israeli military lifted a ban on the entry of Israelis to the settlement of Homesh and allocated land to a settler regional council. On 25 May, Israeli settlers began erecting new structures in the settlement. These activities are reportedly part of an Israeli initiative to "regularize" the settlement, originally built on privately-owned Palestinian land, with Palestinian landowners denied access to their land ever since. The settlement was evacuated in 2005 and subsequently re-established as a religious school.
- **Israeli authorities demolished, confiscated, or forced people to demolish 43 structures in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank, including eleven homes, citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible to obtain.** As a result, 56 Palestinians, including 33 children, were displaced, and the livelihoods of more than 200 others were affected. One of the affected structures was provided by donors as humanitarian assistance in Umm al Kheir herding community in Hebron, located in an area designated by the Israeli authorities as a 'firing zone 917' and declared closed for Israeli military training. More than 80 percent of the affected structures (35) were in Area C. The remaining eight structures were demolished in East Jerusalem, including two residential structures demolished in the Wadi Qaddum area of Silwan, resulting in the displacement of seven households comprising 39 people, including 22 children. Five out of the eight structures demolished in East Jerusalem were destroyed by their owners to avoid the payment of fines to the Israeli authorities. Additionally (not counted above), during an Israeli military operation in Balata Refugee Camp in Area A of the West Bank, Israeli forces destroyed three residential structures, displacing six households comprising 34 people, including 20 children.
- **On 23 May, Israeli forces raided Ni'lin village (Ramallah) in Area B of the West Bank and demolished on punitive grounds the multiple-story home of a family whose member killed one Israeli and injured two others in an attack in Israel on 9 March 2023.** One household, comprising 14 people, including eight children, was displaced, and two households were otherwise affected. **Since the beginning of 2023, eleven homes and one agricultural structure have been demolished on punitive grounds, compared with 14 structures in 2022 and three in 2021. Punitive demolitions are a form of collective punishment and as such are illegal under international law.**

- **On two occasions, Israeli forces temporarily displaced three households, comprising 14 people, from the herding community of in Al Farisiya-Nab'a al Ghazal the northern Jordan Valley for four hours, citing military training purposes.** This community is located in an Israeli-declared 'firing zones and is considered to be at high risk of forcible transfer. Firing zones cover almost 30 per cent of Area C and are home to 38 communities comprising 6,200 people.
- **Closures across the West Bank continue to disrupt the access of thousands of Palestinians to livelihoods and services.** On 23 and 25 May, the Israeli army erected earth mounds and closed the road gate at the entrances to Shufa (Tulkarm) and Beit Iksa (Jerusalem) villages for one day and two hours, respectively, obstructing the movement of at least 1,400 Palestinians. Reportedly in the Shufa case, this was in response to a shooting incident against Israeli settler vehicles, that led to the injury of one settler. Additionally in two separate incidents on 16 May, the Israeli army installed two road gates: one at the entrance of Jericho city and the other on a road leading to agricultural land in Al 'Auja community in Jericho, hampering Palestinian access in and out of Jericho city and to agricultural lands. In the H2 area of Hebron city, a total of 12 flying checkpoints were reported, up from a biweekly average of two since the beginning of 2023, leading to long delays. Additionally, Palestinian access to Al Mughayyir village (Ramallah) continued to be restricted during the reporting period, reportedly due to stone-throwing at Israeli settler vehicles.
- **In the Gaza Strip, in at least 15 incidents, Israeli forces opened "warning fire" at Palestinians approaching or near Israel's perimeter fence or off the coast, presumably to enforce access restrictions.** No injuries or damage were reported, although the work of farmers and fishermen was disrupted. On three occasions, Israeli military bulldozers leveled land inside Gaza near the perimeter fence in Rafah, Khan-Younis and the Middle Area. On 18 May, Palestinians gathered near the perimeter fence in Gaza city to protest the annual Jerusalem Day "Flag March". The protests led to confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinian protestors near the fence, resulting in injuries to 11 Palestinians, including two children, a woman, and a paramedic.

Footnotes

¹ Palestinians killed or injured by people who are not members of Israeli forces, e.g., by Israeli civilians or with Palestinian rockets falling short, as well as those whose immediate cause of death or the perpetrator's identity remain disputed, unclear, or unknown, are counted separately. In this reporting period, one Palestinian was killed by an Israeli settler, is counted separately.

² Israeli casualties in these charts include people who were injured while running to shelters during Palestinian rocket attacks. Foreign nationals killed in Palestinian attacks and people whose immediate cause of death or the perpetrator's identity remain disputed, unclear, or unknown, are counted separately.

OCHA protection of civilians data includes incidents that occurred outside the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) only if they involved residents of the oPt as either victims or perpetrators.

The most updated data and more breakdowns are available at ochaopt.org/data.