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WEST BANK PROTECTION CONSORTIUM
Protecting Communitites from Forcible Transfer

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND FORCIBLE TRANSFER IN THE WEST BANK

HOW THE EXPLOITATION OF GENDER DYNAMICS DRIVES DISPLACEMENT

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Families from the Palestinian community of Mughayir al-Deir dismantle their shelters and leave the area following escalating settler violence and coercive conditions that forced their displacement. Photo: Ahmad Al-Bazz/NRC.

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DISCLAIMER

This report reflects the analysis of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of the contributors acknowledged above.

CONTENT NOTE

This document contains references to sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence and sexualised abuse, which some readers may find distressing.

COVER PHOTO

A woman points towards her former home in Wadi al-Seeq from her family's second displacement site. Photo: Farah Bayadsi/NRC

BACK COVER PHOTO

A woman looks out towards her demolished home in Umm al-Khair. Photo: J.Tamimi/WBPC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents gender-based and sexualised violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in Area C of the West Bank in contexts where Israeli forces were present and did not prevent or halt the violence, nor effectively investigate the abuses. In these circumstances, such violence is not occuring in isolation. It operates within a coercive environment that contributes to the forcible transfer of Palestinian communities.

The research results of this report found at least 16 cases of conflict-related sexual violence attributed to Israeli settlers and soldiers. These cases form part of a broader pattern of sexualised harassment, intimidation and humiliation, much of which remains underreported. Taken together, the evidence shows how sexualised violence is used to pressure communities, shape decisions about remaining or leaving their homes and land, and alter patterns of daily life.

Gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, constitutes a grave violation of bodily integrity and personal dignity. In the cases documented, it functions as a coercive tool that penetrates domestic space, fractures family life and renders continued civilian residence untenable. More than 70% of displaced households interviewed identified threats to women and children, particularly sexualised violence, as the decisive reason for leaving. In response, families adopt gendered protective strategies, including the partial transfer of women and children and recourse to early marriage, in an effort to reduce exposure to harm.

These abuses occur within a broader environment shaped by systematic discrimination and persistent impunity. It is reinforced by restrictions on access to land and resources, attacks on homes and civilian infrastructure, and rhetoric advocating the removal of Palestinian communities. Over time, these conditions create a coercive environment that pushes families and communities to leave their homes. When people are driven from their homes because remaining has become impossible, the displacement may amount to forcible transfer under international humanitarian law. Forcible transfer does not require physical force. It occurs when coercive conditions leave civilians with no genuine choice but to flee.

This pattern reflects several warning signs identified in the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes, including discrimination targeting a civilian population, tolerance of violence by non-state actors, and the absence of effective accountability.

A gender perspective shows that this pressure extends beyond public violence into the private sphere. Women and girls face heightened risks to bodily autonomy and personal safety. Families struggle to sustain livelihoods and maintain household stability. Community decision making and social cohesion weaken as insecurity deepens and access to resources declines.

Early-warning frameworks are designed for situations where repeated abuses and impunity signal escalating risk. Under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, States must respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. When credible information indicates a foreseeable risk of serious violations, States must use the diplomatic, political, economic and legal tools available to them to help prevent violations and bring them to an end.

In its 2024 Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed that serious breaches of peremptory norms trigger obligations for all States.

These include non-recognition of the unlawful situation, non-assistance in maintaining it, and cooperation to bring it to an end. To the extent that the patterns documented in this report form part of, or contribute to, such serious breaches, these obligations are engaged.

A woman and her family sleep under the open sky after their displacement, fearing their tent may collapse during the night. Photo: Farah Bayadsi/NRC.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Forcible transfer occurs within a coercive environment shaped by violence, restriction and economic pressure.**

  Across surveyed and interviewed households, settler violence affected **84%** of cases, alongside a pervasive sense of insecurity **(60%),** movement restrictions **(48%)**, and loss of access to water and electricity **(48%)**.

- **Sexual and gender-based violence operates within this coercive environment and directly drives displacement decisions.**

  More than **70%** of displaced households identified threats to women and children, particularly sexualised violence, as the decisive reason for leaving.

- **Gender-based violence acts as a coercive force that destabilises households and disrupts the conditions required for civilian life to continue.**

  Threats against women and girls place family members at risk, while men and boys experience physical violence and degrading treatment, fracturing internal coping capacity and decision-making.

- **Sexualised harassment, intimidation and humiliation have intensified, yet remain widely underreported within affected communities.**

  Participants described escalating conduct, including threats of rape, indecent exposure and harassment primarily targeting women and children, while men and boys were subjected to sexualised violence and humiliation.

- **Violence and intimidation increasingly penetrate domestic and intimate spaces.**

  Incidents in homes, bedrooms and the immediate surroundings of family dwellings mark a shift from public to private spheres, deepening their impact on dignity, safety and family life.

- **These patterns unfold within a context of persistent impunity.**

  Incidents repeatedly occur in the presence of Israeli forces without intervention or effective investigation, reinforcing coercive conditions and reducing the practical ability of communities to remain in place.

- **Families adopt gendered coping strategies under sustained coercion.**

  These include restricting women's movement, partially relocating women and children to reduce exposure to harm, increasing reliance on children for high-risk tasks, and early marriage, with at least six families reporting marriages arranged for girls aged 15–17.

- **The patterns documented align with recognised indicators of escalating atrocity risk.**

  These include discrimination targeting a civilian population, the normalisation of violence by non-state actors, the increasing use of sexualised violence as a coercive tactic, and the absence of accountability, all identified in the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes as warning signs of serious and potentially widespread violations.

- **Forcible transfer produces severe economic and social consequences for women.**

  87% of women who experienced forcible transfer reported losing all sources of income, alongside increased care responsibilities and reduced mobility.

- **Psychological harm is widespread and sustained, particularly among women and children.**

  90% of women reported increased psychological stress and trauma, while **63%** of participants observed heightened fear, anxiety and distress among children.

- **40% of children affected by displacement have lost access to education, disrupting learning and increasing long-term protection risks.**

RESEARCH METHODS & SOURCES

This report draws on 83 in-depth interviews, including 44 women and 39 men, and 12 focus group discussions conducted across 10 Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley, the South Hebron Hills and the central West Bank. Communities were selected based on documented exposure to settler violence, movement restrictions and displacement pressures. All had experienced partial or full forcible transfer, or faced an immediate risk of forcible transfer.

Participants included individuals at risk of eviction or settler violence, those already forcibly transferred, women, caregivers, youth activists, community leaders, and members of Bedouin and herding communities. The findings are qualitative and reflect recurring patterns across these high-risk communities. They are not intended to constitute a statistically representative sample of the West Bank as a whole.

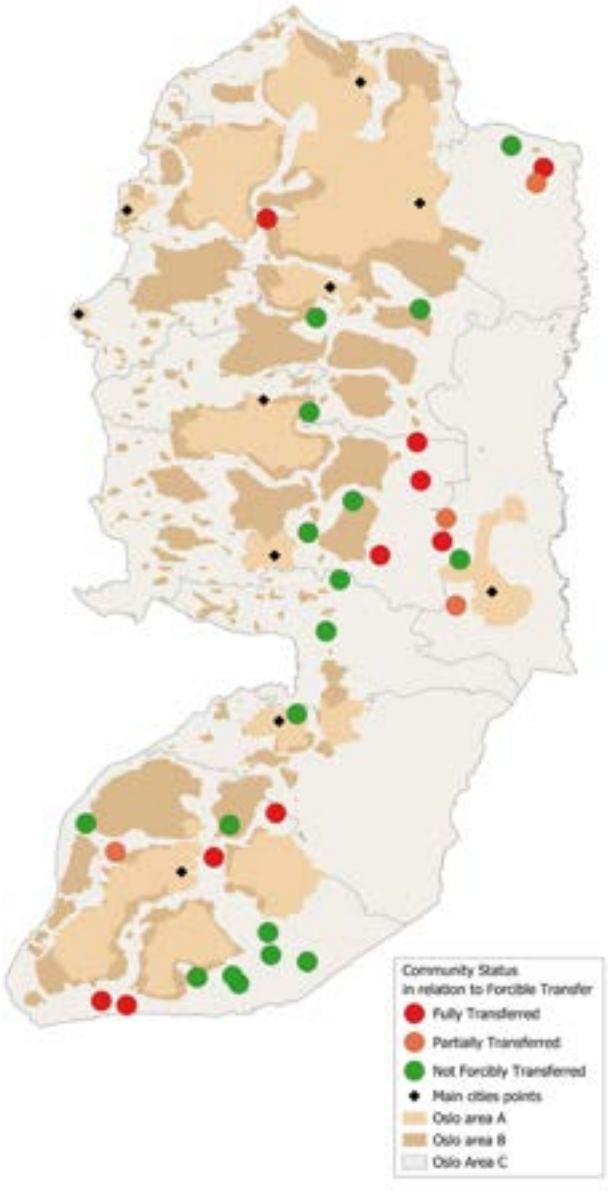
The report is further informed by 26 key informant interviews with community activists and leaders, legal experts, advocacy advisers, humanitarian, gender and protection practitioners, and local authorities.

It also draws on existing research, relevant international legal and gender frameworks, and policy and position papers produced by non-governmental organisations and United Nations agencies.

The analysis integrates West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs datasets, alongside relevant case studies. Community-sourced material, including photographs, videos, testimonials and other documentation, provides corroborating context.

All interviews were conducted with informed consent, and identifying details have been withheld to mitigate risks of retaliation. Findings were systematically triangulated across interviews, focus groups, documentary evidence and datasets, and cross-checked with field teams and affected communities to ensure factual accuracy and contextual consistency.

Map: Geographic distribution of areas



AN ESCALATING COERCIVE ENVIRONMENT IN THE WEST BANK

Since October 2023, forced displacement in the West Bank has accelerated sharply. While this report focuses on communities in Area C, the coercive environment shaping displacement decisions is influenced by broader developments across the West Bank, including military operations, movement restrictions and detention practices that affect mobility, livelihoods and perceptions of safety.

Since January 2023, when UN OCHA began systematically documenting displacement linked to specific incidents of settler violence, 1,037 Palestinian households, comprising more than 5,600 people, including over 2,600 children, have been displaced across 107 communities and residential areas. Of these, over 3,200 Palestinians were displaced from 38 communities that have since been completely emptied of their Palestinian residents. Additionally, in the first three months of 2026, the number of Palestinians displaced in the context of settler violence and access restrictions has reached 1,697, surpassing the whole of 2025.[1]

WBPC assessments indicate that 46,778 residents live in communities at high or imminent risk of displacement. If these communities were displaced, approximately 663 square kilometres would be affected, representing 11% of the West Bank and 19.5% of Area C, the part of the West Bank under full Israeli civil and military control. The loss of Palestinian residential and agricultural presence in these areas would significantly alter land control dynamics and increase exposure to expansion and consolidation of adjacent settlements.

This acceleration reflects a shift from episodic volatility to sustained, layered coercion affecting communities across the West Bank. Large-scale military operations have expanded in frequency and geographic scope, particularly in the northern governorates. These operations are accompanied by prolonged movement restrictions, detentions, access constraints and widespread demolitions that systematically disrupt daily life, labour access and service provision. In 2025 alone, over 1,659 structures were demolished, displacing more than 2,100 Palestinians.[2]

In parallel, settler violence has increased in scale and coordination. Bedouin and herding communities face repeated attacks, obstruction of grazing routes and water access, and limited accountability. In 2025, settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage reached their highest recorded levels since OCHA began monitoring in 2006, with more than 1,800 incidents documented across the West Bank.[3] In mid-February 2026, extremist settler groups circulated a 'monthly summary' claiming responsibility for 29 vehicles burned, 12 homes torched and 40 Palestinians injured across 33 towns and villages, openly framing the violence as a 'struggle against the Arab enemy'. [4]

Field monitoring shows that armed settlers often carry out attacks in the presence of Israeli forces. Armed settler groups, settlement-based reservists serving in regional defence battalions and state-funded settlement security coordinators increasingly function in close operational proximity, enabling coordinated raids, armed presence near homes, obstruction of grazing routes and rapid reinforcement during confrontations.[5] Military operations, settler violence and administrative enforcement measures increasingly interact, reinforcing pressure on communities and narrowing the practical space to remain.

Within this broader coercive environment, the UN Human Rights Office has warned that escalating settler violence has become a key driver of forced displacement in the West Bank, stating on 28 January 2026 that the forcible transfer of Palestinians within occupied territory constitutes a war crime and may amount to a crime against humanity.[6]

These developments are unfolding alongside policy decisions that extend Israeli administrative authority over land registration, planning and enforcement, including in areas previously administered by Palestinian institutions.[7] The resumption of land registration in Area C, the opening of land records for public inspection and the expansion of regulatory powers heighten procedural vulnerability for Palestinian housing, land and property rights. This places more homes and structures at risk of inspection, fines and demolition in communities already under sustained pressure.

Economic contraction has narrowed household coping capacity.[8] Tightened work permit regimes, mobility restrictions and recurrent asset destruction have reduced wage access, constrained agricultural income and increased reliance on humanitarian assistance. In this context, displacement decisions are shaped not only by acute incidents of violence, but by steady economic erosion that makes remaining in place increasingly difficult.

Across affected areas, displacement decisions are increasingly made at the household level, shaped by the combined effect of violence, administrative mea-

sures, economic decline and perceptions of safety. The steady loss of secure land tenure, reliable income and community protection is reshaping displacement patterns across high-risk areas. Absent sustained protective, economic and policy interventions, the current trajectory points to continued fragmentation of Palestinian rural presence in Area C and further consolidation of territorial vulnerability.

CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

United Nations bodies adopt a broad understanding of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), recognising a wide range of acts of a sexual nature committed within coercive, militarised environments.[9] United Nations Security Council resolutions, reports of the Secretary-General, OHCHR guidance and international jurisprudence recognise CRSV as encompassing sexualised intimidation, harassment by armed actors, coercive or degrading searches, forced nudity, and other forms of sexual humiliation used to intimidate, punish or control civilians.[10] International practice focuses on the sexualised nature of the act, the coercive environment, the wider context of impunity, and the connection to conflict dynamics, including the identity of perpetrators and survivors.[11]

Protection practitioners and women-led organisations working in the occupied West Bank consistently describe severe underreporting of gender-based violence, including CRSV.[12] Survivors rarely disclose these incidents to authorities or service providers. Key informants and participants linked underreporting to stigma, conservative social norms, pervasive insecurity, and the power imbalance associated with the occupation. Participants also described fear of retaliation as a central deterrent to disclosure. One woman said a senior Israeli military officer repeatedly contacted and threatened her after she considered reporting a violation. Men and boys described fears of shame, emasculation and further targeting as major barriers to reporting.

Since October 2023, participants and key informants have described an increase in settler conduct that takes sexualised and gendered forms, with more incidents encroaching into domestic space and more acts directed at women and children. These field observations align with findings by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which documented sexual and gender-based violence against Palestinians by Israeli forces and settlers, including forced public stripping and nudity, sexual harassment and threats of rape, and other sexualised abuse.[13] The Commission also documented cases in which perpetrators photographed victims and disseminated footage online.

> *"In [community name omitted], we have observed a clear shift as the situation has deteriorated. Settler behaviour is becoming increasingly sexualised, directed at both Palestinians and protective presence activists. We've seen unwanted touching, groping, and lewd gestures used deliberately to intimidate and humiliate. Sexualised harassment becomes part of the threat environment, signalling a deeper breakdown in restraint and a move towards more coercive tactics."*
>
> – Journalist, Jordan Valley (location withheld), 2026

DOCUMENTED FORMS OF SEXUALISED VIOLENCE

Participants described escalating patterns of sexual harassment in Area C, including sexualised insults and gestures, indecent exposure, intimidation, threats of sexual violence, and surveillance of intimate spaces such as bedrooms. Participants in Ein al-Duyuk reported repeated incidents in which settlers attempted to touch women's bodies while driving tractors close to homes and cultivated areas. Participants in Al-Baqa'a described a settler walking naked between Bedouin shelters shortly before the community fled overnight. OCHA reporting on Al-Baqa'a documented escalating settler violence and pressure that placed the community on the brink of vanishing following the establishment of a nearby outpost, reinforcing the broader coercive context described by residents.[14] Participants in multiple locations described settlers exposing themselves, making threats of rape, and stalking women as they walked to latrines.

> *"The settler constantly makes inappropriate gestures toward me."*
>
> – Community member, girl, Beit Dajan, 2026

Men and boys also experience sexualised humiliation, forced nudity and sexualised threats. In Wadi al-Seeq, after the community was forcibly displaced, three men reported that settlers detained them and attempted to sexually assault one man with a broomstick while he was blindfolded. They described forced stripping, beatings, burning and being urinated on, and said perpetrators circulated images of the abuse.[15] Similar abuses have also been reported elsewhere. In the Bethlehem governorate, testimony collected during a key informant interview described two 15-year-old boys herding cattle whom settlers attacked, beat, blindfolded and stripped. The account said one boy was urinated on and the other sustained a leg fracture. In another Palestinian Bedouin community in the Jordan Valley [specific location withheld], a violent settler raid was reported in which witnesses state that a Palestinian man was subjected to severe sexual assault in front of his family. Testimonies further indicate that women and girls were beaten, children were threatened with death, and threats of rape were made, while residents remained largely unprotected.[16]

In Khirbet Wadi al-Rakhim, a family member reported that an identified settler sexually harassed them and threatened them with reference to the Sde Teiman detention facility. Public reporting and human rights documentation describe severe abuse of Palestinian detainees in Israeli custody, including forced nudity, sexual violence, humiliation and the use of dogs for intimidation at facilities such as Sde Teiman.[17] In this context, invoking Sde Teiman functions as a threat.[18]

Similarly, there are also documented instances in which Israeli forces have subjected Palestinians to forced stripping during operations. For example, in Ramallah, three Palestinians were reportedly forced by Israeli forces to strip outdoors in freezing temperatures,[19] while in Masafer Yatta, a photograph circulated appeared to show Palestinian workers forced to undress by Israeli forces near the route of the Wall in the Wadi Siyal area south of Hebron.[20]

At the community level, technology-facilitated GBV affects both women and men. This includes digital blackmail, where footage from strip searches is shared within communities, exposing individuals to coercion, stigma, and an increased risk of further violence.[21]

Participants linked these acts to broader social dynamics under occupation. Many described social expectations that men and boys serve as protectors and providers, and they described threats or violence against female relatives as simultaneously directed at women and as a means of humiliating male family members. Participants repeatedly reported threats to harm or "slaughter" wives. Several described sexual harassment, including lewd gestures, and violence against women in front of male relatives as destabilising to family safety and community cohesion.

Source: @kivsa_schora. "Video depicting settlers threatening Palestinians with violence, including threats against their wives." Instagram Reel. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DQJEv_gDWkK/

TARGETING OF WOMEN & CHILDREN

Participants described armed settlers increasingly targeting women and children, including in incidents timed for moments when men were absent. Communities, including Ein al-Rashash, described intrusions during daytime hours when men left to work or access livelihoods.[22] In Susiya, participants described settlers physically assaulting a woman in her home during daytime hours.[23] Participants also described Israeli soldiers entering homes and questioning women when men were not present, including on matters perceived as intimate or culturally taboo.

> *"In Susiya, testimony was documented regarding sexual harassment and provocative acts carried out by settlers against a woman in her own house. Settlers pushed her to the wall in front of her children and said verbal sexual words, within the context of repeated attacks aimed at intimidating residents and forcing them to leave their land."*
>
> – Humanitarian worker, Jerusalem, 2026

> *"An adult Palestinian woman reported sexual assault allegedly perpetrated by Israeli settlers and in the presence of members of the Israeli military in [location witheld]. The incident occurred within a militarised environment where soldiers exercised control over access and movement. The case was assessed as high risk at the time of reporting. The alleged conduct raises serious concerns regarding sexual violence by state actors within an occupied territory ."*
>
> – Humanitarian worker, Hebron, 2025

Participants also said children face heightened harassment and intimidation. In Al-Farsiya, residents said settlers pointed rifles at children. Participants described adolescent boys as particularly exposed due to roles such as guarding homes, herding, travelling to school, and accompanying adults to land or routes perceived as dangerous.

> *"There used to be an unwritten rule that women and children were off-limits. That completely does not exist anymore."*
>
> – Human rights organisation representative, Tel Aviv, 2025

A young woman from the Mleihat community in Mu'arrajat East described avoiding eye contact with her brother after a settler made an obscene hand gesture, describing the shame it carried.

In Khirbet Zanuta, participants said settlers entered homes, harassed children and threw stun grenades into bedrooms. In Susiya, women described harassment while hanging laundry or supervising children only metres from their front doors. Others described drones hovering outside bedroom windows and cameras directed at beds.

In Wadi al-Qilt, participants reported settlers entering homes at night and announcing they would *"sleep in residents' beds"*. In Mikhmas, participants reported intoxicated settlers attempting to break into homes. In Ras Ein al-Auja, a woman reported settlers attempting to force open a latrine door while she was inside.

A woman from Jalboun described how harassment at night, stone-throwing and shouted threats changed family life. She said her children struggled to sleep and her husband slept with a stick by the door. *"We are still in our house, but it is no longer a home. I live with fear in every breath I take."*

Women and girls also described Israeli soldiers entering residential areas, questioning women, and maintaining close visibility into private living spaces, which participants linked to an atmosphere of surveillance and intimidation. One woman from a Bedouin community said settlers arrived at her home accompanied by Israeli forces. She said two female soldiers ordered her to remove her clothes and carried out a full-body inspection while she was naked. She described being instructed to open her legs in a way that caused pain, and she described derogatory comments and touching of intimate areas.

Findings by the UN Commission of Inquiry and Israeli human rights organisations provide documented context for the forms of conduct survivors described.[24]

INTRUSION INTO DOMESTIC SPACE

Field monitors and community members described a shift in where incidents occur. Participants said harassment and intimidation that once unfolded in open or communal areas increasingly take place within intimate domestic spaces, including courtyards, bedrooms and the immediate surroundings of family homes. Many described the invasion of domestic space as a profound violation of dignity and family integrity within local social norms.

> *"In Bedouin culture, any unwanted approach or interaction with a woman from someone outside the community is considered a serious violation, a kind of sexual assault. It's understood not just as inappropriate behaviour, but as an assault on her dignity."*
>
> – Humanitarian worker, Jerusalem, 2025

A family's bedroom is left charred after settlers entered and set it on fire in Mughayir al-Deir, Ramallah. Photo: Photographer identity withheld/PUI.

DISPLACEMENT DYNAMICS

COMMUNITY COPING UNDER SUSTAINEED COERCION

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews show how constant threats of violence reshape family and community protection practices in gender-differentiated ways. Participants described how checkpoints, road closures and roadblocks compound the pressure already imposed by settler violence. In this environment, families respond by tightening internal controls. Men, acting within severely constrained choices, described limiting the movement of women and girls to reduce exposure to harassment and assault. Women said these measures leave them increasingly confined to the home, dependent on male relatives for movement outside the community, and carrying even greater responsibility for childcare, food preparation, water collection and care for the elderly.

Under sustained threat, families also alter children's routines. In many herding communities, children traditionally assist with livestock and water collection. Since October 2023, participants described sharper dilemmas. Some families keep children close to shelters out of fear. Others continue to send boys, and at times girls, to herd animals, fetch water or move livestock because animals must be fed and water must be collected daily.

Participants explained that when men fear being directly targeted in open areas, families sometimes rely more heavily on children to carry out these tasks. Mothers frequently accompany them to fields, springs or grazing routes to deter harassment or intervene if violence erupts. Women described long walks across exposed terrain, balancing water containers or walking alongside livestock while scanning for approaching settlers. These journeys reduce time for income-generating activities and heighten exhaustion and anxiety.

Strong social expectations that men guard land, escort children and protect property drive daily movement decisions. Men and boys attempting to defend land, homes, or livestock face beatings, shootings, or arrest, significantly heightening risks of injury or death.[25] At the same time, men described calculating the risk of travelling to agricultural plots, roads or markets where attacks are more likely. According to data published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, from 7 October 2023 to 31 December 2025 Israeli forces and settlers killed at least 1,046 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.[26] OCHA data indicates that 76% of those killed were men and 21% were boys, underscoring the disproportionate exposure of males to lethal violence in fields, on roads and near settlements.

Participants linked these mobility decisions to deeply held concepts of dignity and honour. In written submissions and interviews, community members explained that dignity attaches to land, family and identity. Protecting land protects existence. Threats against women and children strike at that dignity as directly as attacks on fields or homes.

A Palestinian child runs home after arriving back from school. Wadi al-Seeq community, East of Ramallah. Ahmad Al-Bazz/NRC.

DRIVERS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

United Nations analyses of CRSV recognise that sexualised intimidation and humiliation can be used to instil fear in civilian populations, pressuring communities to leave and deterring return. The United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes identifies patterns of sexual violence, discrimination and impunity as warning signs in environments where populations face escalating risk.[27]

Among communities that had undergone forcible transfer, residents identified multiple drivers of their removal. Survey responses indicated violence from settlers in 84% of cases, a pervasive sense of insecurity in 60%, movement restrictions in 48%, loss of access to essential services such as water and electricity in 48%, psychological and emotional distress in 48%, and fear of losing livelihoods in 40%. These pressures converged over time.

More than 70% of surveyed households identified violence against women and children, including sexual harassment targeting girls and physical assaults against boys, as the decisive factor in their decision to leave their communities.

Participants described sexualised harassment as the moment when fear shifted from chronic to unbearable. They spoke of watching women and girls endure humiliation and of calculating what might happen next.

> *"What pushed me to take the decision of relocation was the harassment my wife, daughters and daughter-in-law were experiencing. Settlers started to approach the shelters when my son and I used to leave for work. And they were watching the women closely, whistling when women went out of the shelters in broad daylight and throwing stones at us at night. I was terrified that something bad might happen to my family because of this constant settlers' violence when I was away."*
>
> – Community member, man, Ras Ein al-Auja, 2025

> *"We left the area not by our own will, nor because we wanted to leave or abandon it. On the contrary, we left after long patience and long suffering. They tried to drive us out in every way, using the worst methods against us. In the end, they resorted to targeting women and terrorizing them. They confined a woman in a room and placed a settler at the door while she was alone inside. This was the last incident that happened before we left. it was the straw that broke the camel's back. This method is what forced us to leave our land in exchange for protecting the women. And this issue is very sensitive for us; it is what made us leave after years of patience and suffering."*
>
> – Community member, woman, location withheld, 2025

Participants also recounted settlers stating openly that their actions would force communities to leave. These statements accompanied broader patterns of harassment, intimidation and attacks on homes, land and family members.

Field data from the Protection Cluster show a marked deterioration in protection for Palestinian men and boys since October 2023.[28] They face concentrated risks of arbitrary arrest and detention, extensive use of force, expanding movement restrictions and degrading treatment, including forced stripping and sexualised humiliation during raids and in detention. Protection Cluster data further indicate that men comprise the vast majority of those detained and killed in the West Bank, with adolescent boys often treated as adults during incursions. For many families, the image of sons blindfolded, fathers stopped at checkpoints, or men shot while tending land alters daily calculations about movement, safety and how long remaining on the land remains possible

Protection Cluster data for the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from 7 October 2023 to 31 December 2025 illustrate the scale of this gendered exposure:

Indicator	Total	Men	Boys	% Male
Killed by Israeli forces or settlers	1019	798	221	97% male
Palestinians detained	9183			99% male
Administrative detention	3350	Majority men	Included boys	Overwhelmingly male
Classified as 'unlawful combatants'	1220	Majority men		Overwhelmingly male
Deaths in detention	85	84	1	100% male

Source: West Bank Protection Analysis Update, January 2026[29]

As these risks intensify, families narrow their world. Men weigh whether a trip to fields or grazing routes could end in arrest or worse. Women reduce movement to avoid harassment. Boys take on greater responsibilities while facing heightened exposure to force. When routes close, livestock go unfed and harvests fail. Some families send women and children away first, hoping separation will buy time. After months of raids, humiliation and economic erosion, remaining carries greater danger than departure. Displacement comes not from a single event, but from pressure that grips homes and land until leaving becomes the only choice.

PARTIAL FORCIBLE TRANSFER

Several communities described adopting partial relocation under sustained pressure. Families moved women and children to towns or relatives' homes perceived as safer, while men remained behind. Participants said these decisions often unfolded rapidly, with little time for extended consultation.

> *"I sent my daughters to the town and stayed here with my wife and sons. I was terrified that settlers might harm my daughters."*
>
> – Community member, man, Lubban al-Sharqiya, 2025

> *"I was not afraid for myself. … If he [my husband] had seen or heard, he might not have stayed silent, and they could have killed him. The best thing I did was to send my daughter to live at her grandmother's house in the town because I was afraid for her."*
>
> – Community member, woman, Wadi Sa'ir, 2026

Participants described how these separations hollow out community life. In communities such as Wadi al-Seeq, Anata and Ras al-Tin, families first sent women and children away, then watched social bonds weaken and services collapse. Without women's daily presence, informal networks of mutual aid fractured. Without children, schools and communal activities faltered.[30] Men and boys who remain are exposed to heightened risk, with adolescent boys often the first to encounter settlers during daily activities like herding or going to school. During attacks, men stay behind to protect land and property, and both men and boys face beatings, shootings, or arrest when attempting to defend their homes or livelihoods.[31] Over time, men are left living in isolation, often in empty shelters or near livestock, and in many cases this pattern of partial relocation leads to the full abandonment of communities.

Participants also said harassment often continued after families relocated, limiting any sense of durable safety.

EARLY MARRIAGE UNDER DISPLACEMENT PRESSURE

Official statistics indicated that early marriage among girls under 18 had declined over the previous decade, falling from about 24% of registered marriages in 2010 to around 12% in 2021.[32] In contrast, participants in high-risk communities described a renewed resort to early marriage in areas exposed to sustained settler violence and harassment.

Families explained that they arranged marriages for daughters aged between 15 and 17 in order to move them to what they perceived as safer households. Participants reported at least six such cases in recent years.

> *"At least six families reported choosing early marriage for their daughters between the ages of 15 and 17 to remove them from this environment."*
>
> – Women's legal aid advocate, Ramallah, 2025

Participants described early marriage as a painful choice taken under fear. Girls left school. Some moved to unfamiliar towns. While primarily impacting negatively on girls, child marriage and forced marriage indirectly increase pressure on boys, who may be forced to assume adult economic responsibilities prematurely as child heads of household.[33]

International evidence from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) links child marriage to higher school dropout, reduced economic opportunity, increased risk of gender-based violence and early pregnancy.[34] In communities already under strain, violence narrowed the choices families felt they had. Decisions presented as protection often carried long-term costs for girls' education, health and autonomy.

A woman mourns her demolished home in Umm al-Khair. Photo: J. Tamimi/WBPC.

AFTER DISPLACEMENT

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Participants linked psychological distress directly to forced displacement, prior attacks by settlers and Israeli forces, and the loss of safety that followed relocation. Women described persistent anxiety, intrusive memories and fear of renewed violence in new locations. 90% of women interviewed reported increased psychological stress and trauma following forcible transfer

Caregivers described how children changed after witnessing raids, night-time attacks, harassment on routes to school and the loss of their homes. 63% of participants reported increased fear, anxiety and trauma among children. 58% said children had lost safe spaces to play after families fled fields and open areas once used for recreation. Mothers and fathers described bed-wetting, withdrawal, aggression and nightmares, often linked to memories of armed settlers approaching homes or Israeli forces entering communities at night.

> *"My son refuses to play outside now. He says the land is sad and angry. He asks if the settlers will take the sky next."*
>
> – Community member, woman, Jalboun, 2025

> *"After displacement, six-year-old children now have to walk long, dangerous roads to reach school. They return frightened, telling me they saw settlers' tractors blocking their way. We live in constant fear. The children cry, saying they are scared to walk alone."*
>
> – Community member, woman, location withheld, 2025

Men also described emotional strain following the loss of land, livestock and income, and repeated harassment of family members. Participants spoke of shame, isolation and anxiety tied to an inability to provide stability or protect relatives under sustained threat.

> *"I used to be full of energy, helping other women in my community. Now I feel isolated and tired."*
>
> – Community member, woman, Wadi al-Seeq, 2025

A Palestinian man from Umm al-Khair, south-east of Hebron, stands in front of the Israeli settlement of Carmel. Photo: Ahmad Al-Bazz/NRC.

PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY LIFE AFTER RELOCATION

When families leave their communities due to sustained violence and coercion, they do not move into planned sites with services and security. Many end up in makeshift roadside shelters, on the edges of towns, or on land belonging to others. These locations often lack reliable water, sanitation, electricity and basic infrastructure. Families described living in places they did not choose and do not control.

Most relocate onto land owned by others without formal tenure or written agreement. In some cases, relatives or sympathetic landowners allow them to stay temporarily. In others, families occupy land informally because they have nowhere else to go. Either way, their presence remains precarious. Women and men described the constant awareness that they could be asked to leave again, reinforcing instability and fear.

Women spoke at length about how daily life changes after relocation. They described thin shelter walls, shared or improvised sanitation facilities and limited privacy. Without the nearby presence of sisters, mothers and trusted neighbours, they lose the informal networks that once offered practical help and emotional support. In their original communities, women relied on each other to share childcare, food preparation and protection. After relocation, many find themselves isolated among unfamiliar neighbours, with no one to call on in moments of distress.

Participants described how displacement narrows informal channels of influence and collective protection. In several Bedouin communities, kitchens once stood near communal gathering areas, allowing women to overhear deliberations and shape outcomes through conversation and mediation within the household. After relocation to scattered shelters or dense peripheral settings, those channels contracted. Women reported fewer opportunities to share information, guide decisions or coordinate protective responses through established social rhythms.

Heightened risks of detention and targeted violence against men have also increased women's visible responsibilities. In communities such as Mu'arrajat East, Umm al-Khair, Susiya and Masafer Yatta, women described documenting violations, engaging directly with humanitarian and diplomatic actors and organising community responses as part of ongoing survival and protection efforts.

Participants also described how displacement decisions rarely followed a single moment of choice. Families spoke of urgent, iterative discussions held under pressure, weighing children's safety against loss of land, livestock and dignity. One man explained: *"My wife was with me every step of the way from the moment I started thinking about leaving."* In several accounts, women acted decisively in moments of acute threat, gathering children, coordinating departure or urging relocation when violence escalated.

Relocation does not end exposure to violence. Participants described continued Israeli settler harassment in new locations, combined with overcrowding and financial strain. Several focus groups described a rise in tension within households as unemployment, debt and uncertainty deepened. Women explained that frustration and a sense of powerlessness sometimes spilled into the home.

> *"He was never like this before. But now, with no work, no land, and no peace, he takes it out on me."*
>
> – Community member, woman, Beit Dajan, 2025

COLLAPSE OF PASTORAL LIVELIHOODS

Interviews with households that experienced forcible transfer revealed extensive material loss across nearly every dimension of daily life:

Type of Loss	Percentage of Households Affected
Lost access to grazing and agricultural land	92%
Lost house or shelter	88%
Lost furniture, livestock or agricultural assets	84%
Lost access to livelihood opportunities	56%
Lost access to education for children	40%

In Area C, land anchors economic survival and social identity. Herding and Bedouin communities organise daily life around livestock, seasonal grazing and small-scale agriculture. Men typically manage grazing routes and market access, while women produce dairy, process wool, forage, weave and maintain household economies linked to livestock. Children assist with herding and water collection. These roles function together within a shared economic system. When Israeli authorities or settlers block access to grazing areas, water cisterns are confiscat-

ed or livstock are seized or killed, income declines, food security erodes and the social fabric organised around pastoral life begins to unravel. These shifts reflect changes across productive, reproductive and community-protective roles traditionally carried by women and men.

Families described how these economic disruptions reverberate within the household. Several women reported seeking income where possible to offset losses, while men described assisting more with childcare or domestic tasks when work opportunities disappeared, even as they continued night patrols or land monitoring. Families presented these adjustments as responses to survival pressures rather than as chosen transformations of long-standing norms.

A man forcibly transferred from Ras Ein al-Auja described the situation plainly: "You cannot stay if you cannot move." Without access to grazing routes and markets, remaining on the land becomes untenable

Another participant reflected on the rupture in daily life: *"I could never have imagined that I, who grew up herding and moving freely, would end up living in a place like this, surrounded by walls and fences."*

Relocation to roadside shelters or the outskirts of towns breaks this pattern of life. Families lose access to open rangeland and communal grazing space. Women no longer move between dispersed family sites to collect water, tend animals or visit female relatives. Instead, they remain confined to small plots or cramped shelters with limited opportunity to generate income.

Some families are displaced to areas near industrial zones or dense residential blocks where shared spaces include men who are not part of the family. Participants said families respond by tightening norms around modesty and limiting women's movement outside the immediate shelter. Activities such as dairy production, embroidery for local markets, foraging and beekeeping become unviable without land and mobility.

These changes carry intergenerational consequences. Children lose the opportunity to learn herding routes, animal care and seasonal rhythms. Parents struggle to explain why land that once sustained the family has become inaccessible.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has documented a sharp economic contraction in the West Bank since October 2023.[35] UNCTAD reported that intensified closures and the near-total halt of Palestinian labour in Israel drove GDP per capita down by 21% and unemployment up to 32%, deepening household vulnerability.

Women bear disproportionate economic losses. Eighty-seven% of women interviewed who experienced forcible transfer reported losing all sources of income, including dairy production, embroidery, foraging and beekeeping. Years of effort disappeared when families lost access to land and livestock.

"Everything I built vanished overnight," one woman said after losing the embroidery business she had sustained for 15 years.

A mother of seven and widow in the southern West Bank ran a small dairy initiative, producing yoghurt and cheese from her family's livestock and selling them at a local market. After forcible transfer, she lost her animals, her buyers and her primary means of supporting her household.

"Starting any project is already a challenge. But leaving it behind, after investing everything, your time, your savings, your energy, is heartbreak I can't describe."

Geography shapes how these pressures unfold. Participants from East Jerusalem and parts of the South Hebron Hills described greater access to education and international networks, which in some cases enabled women's engagement in documenting violations and engaging external actors. In more remote herding communities, families said insecurity reinforced restrictive norms even as women's unpaid and protective responsibilities expanded.

For families living under sustained coercion, displacement strips away both material foundations and the social arrangements that once structured daily life. Land, income and mobility diminish at the same time as care, protection and survival responsibilities intensify within the household. What remains is a compressed social order in which gender roles are not erased, but tightened under strain, narrowing options and reshaping futures for the next generation.

Residents of Ein Samiya look on as their community is dismantled and they are forced to flee due to persistent settler violence. Photo: Ahmad Al-Bazz/NRC.

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

ISRAEL'S OBILGATIONS AS AN OCCUPYING POWER

The patterns documented in this report, including sexual violence, sexualised humiliation, invasive searches, threats targeting women and children, and other forms of gender-based violence, engage binding protections under both international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The applicable lex specialis, namely the law of occupation, governs this analysis, as reflected in the 1907 Hague Regulations,[36] the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949,[37] and customary international humanitarian law. International human rights law continues to apply alongside it in occupied territory, as affirmed by the International Court of Justice in its Wall Advisory Opinion (2004)[38] and in Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (DRC v Uganda) (2005).[39]

Where such acts occur in the context of occupation and contribute to coercive conditions that pressure communities to abandon their homes and land, Israel's obligations as the occupying power are concrete andoperational.[40]

These obligations include taking effective, proactive measures to prevent foreseeable harm, to investigate violations promptly, independently and impartially, to hold perpetrators accountable, and to ensure the effective protection of the civilian population.[41] Under the law of occupation, the duty is not limited to refraining from direct

abuse. It requires the exercise of due diligence to prevent and respond to violence by third parties where such harm is foreseeable.[42]

Sanctioned settler Zohar Sabah (far right) sits alongside three Israeli soldiers in Mu'arrajat East on the day residents left their community. Photo: woman resident of Mu'arrajat East

When communities describe repeated harassment inside their homes, sexualised intimidation in fields and courtyards, and attacks unfolding in the presence of Israeli forces without meaningful intervention, the central legal question is whether the occupying power is discharging these duties in practice.

Article 43 of the 1907 Hague Regulations requires the occupying power to restore and ensure public order and civil life. Sustained violence, invasive searches, night raids and fear-driven displacement undermine the normal functioning of family life, livelihoods, and community governance. Where such conditions persist, the obligation to ensure public order and civil life is directly engaged.

Articles 27 and 29 of the Fourth Geneva Convention require humane treatment of protected persons and make the occupying power responsible for ensuring respect for the Convention.[43] Civilians must be protected against violence, intimidation and outrages upon personal dignity. Sexual violence, forced stripping, degrading searches and sexualised threats may, depending on the facts and severity, amount to outrages upon personal dignity or inhuman treatment within the meaning of the Convention.[44] These prohibitions are absolute. They require active protection and effective response, particularly where patterns of abuse are documented and foreseeable.

The ICRC 2025 Commentary to Article 27[45] emphasises that the duty to ensure humane treatment requires authorities exercising control over territory to prevent and respond to violence affecting protected persons. Customary international humanitarian law likewise prohibits rape and other forms of sexual violence (Rule 93)[46] and prohibits torture and cruel treatment (Rule 90).[47]

Under Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention,[48] torture, inhuman treatment, and unlawful deportation or transfer constitute grave breaches, giving rise to individual criminal responsibility and to obligations on States to search for and prosecute those responsible.

International criminal jurisprudence confirms that sexual violence in armed conflict may amount to torture or inhuman treatment. In Prosecutor v Furundžija,[49] the ICTY held that rape may constitute torture under international humanitarian law. Subsequent jurisprudence, including Prosecutor v Kunarac,[50] clarified that sexual violence may also constitute enslavement or outrages upon personal dignity, depending on the circumstances.

Article 49(1) of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits individual or mass forcible transfers of protected persons from occupied territory.[51] Forcible transfer does not require physical force alone. It encompasses situations where coercive conditions leave civilians with no genuine choice but to leave. Sustained sexualised harassment, threats to women and children, repeated attacks in domestic spaces and systematic impunity are legally relevant in assessing whether displacement occurs under coercion. Where gender-based violence forms part of the pressure environment driving communities to abandon their homes, it is directly pertinent to the prohibition of forcible transfer.

International criminal jurisprudence clarifies that forcible transfer includes displacement resulting from threats, fear of violence, coercion, or abuse of power, where civilians have no genuine choice but to leave their homes. The ICTY Appeals Chamber in Prosecutor v Stakić[52] held that "forcible" extends beyond physical force to situations of coercion or intimidation. This approach is reflected in Prosecutor v Krnojelac[53] and in the Elements of Crimes of the Rome Statute.[54]

Article 49(6) further prohibits the transfer by the occupying power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies. This rule is engaged where settlement expansion, outpost establishment, and displacement pressures unfold in parallel. The International Court of Justice reaffirmed in its 2024 Advisory Opinion[55] that such settlement activity violates international law.

Article 47 confirms that protected persons cannot be deprived of Convention protections through annexation or administrative changes introduced by the occupying power.[56] Administrative shifts in land registration, planning and enforcement do not diminish the protections owed to communities at risk of forcible transfer. The right of peoples to self-determination, reflected in the UN Charter and recognised in customary international law, further places limits on measures that fragment territory or alter its demographic composition, a principle reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in its July 2024 advisory opinion.[57]

Israel has ratified key human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. UN treaty bodies and the International Court of Justice have affirmed that these obligations extend to the occupied territory alongside international humanitarian law

The conduct documented in this report, including threats against women and girls, forced nudity, in-

vasive searches and coercive conditions affecting children, directly engages treaty protections relating to bodily integrity, privacy, family life, non-discrimination, education and protection from violence.[58] Where such conduct reaches the threshold of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or constitutes arbitrary interference with family life and home, additional non-derogable protections may be implicated.[59]

In its 2024 Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the International Court of Justice concluded that Israel's continued presence as an accupying power in the territory violates international law and must end as rapidly as possible. The Court indicated obligations including cessation of settlement activity, dismantling of settlement structures and reparation for harm caused by internationally wrongful acts. These authoritative findings situate the patterns described in this report within a legal framework already assessed at the highest judicial level.

Violence by settlers does not fall outside State responsibility where authorities fail to exercise due diligence to prevent or respond to foreseeable harm, where public officials tolerate or facilitate such violence, where private actors act under the direction or control of State organs, or where they exercise elements of governmental authority.

Under the Articles on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts,[60] where an internationally wrongful act is attributable to a State, it is under an obligation to cease the conduct, provide appropriate assurances and guarantees of non-repetition, and make full reparation for the injury caused.

Certain acts, such as wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, and unlawful deportation or transfer, constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention when the requisite legal elements are met. Other serious violations of international humanitarian law and serious breaches of peremptory norms, including the prohibitions of forcible transfer, torture and racial discrimination, carry additional legal consequences under general international law. The classification of specific conduct depends on the facts and applicable thresholds, but the legal framework governing such consequences is well established.

Sexual violence committed in armed conflict may constitute war crimes under international criminal law. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court criminalises rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, and other forms of sexual violence in international armed conflict.[61] Where such conduct occurs in the context of an unlawful occupation and forms part of a pattern of abuse contributing to the coercive displacement of protected persons, it may give rise to both State responsibility and individual criminal responsibility under international law.

Where such conduct occurs in the context of an unlawful occupation and forms part of a pattern of abuse contributing to the coercive displacement of protected persons, it may give rise to both State responsibility and individual criminal responsibility under international law.

THIRD STATES' OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

The coercive environment described in this report, including escalating sexualised violence, displacement pressures and patterns of impunity, engages not only the responsibilities of the occupying power but also obligations owed by all States under international law.

Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions requires States to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances.[62] This entails a duty to take appropriate steps, within their capacity and in accordance with international law, to influence compliance where there is a serious risk of violations. When credible and repeated information indicates violations affecting protected persons, including gender-based violence linked to coercive displacement, the obligation to ensure respect becomes operational.

The International Court of Justice has reaffirmed that serious breaches of peremptory norms of general international law give rise to obligations for all States.[63] These include the duties of non-recognition of the unlawful situation, non-assistance in maintaining it, and cooperation to bring it to an end through lawful means.

Accordingly, Third States are required to:

- Refrain from recognising as lawful a situation created by serious breaches of international law, including territorial or demographic changes resulting from unlawful settlement activity or forcible transfer.
- Avoid aiding or assisting in maintaining that situation, where they are aware of the circumstances of the internationally wrongful act.
- Cooperate, through lawful and proportionate means, to bring serious breaches to an end.

These obligations have practical implications for decisions relating to arms transfers, trade arrangements, investment, diplomatic engagement and security cooperation where there is a clear risk that such activities could contribute to settlement expansion, forcible transfer or serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, including gender-based violence in coercive settings. States must assess such risks in light of their existing treaty commitments and general international law obligations.

The early warning indicators described in this report, including escalating violence, displacement, sexualised intimidation and sustained impunity, are legally relevant in evaluating foreseeability and risk. Where credible information indicates a pattern of serious violations, international law requires States to exercise due diligence consistent with their obligations, using lawful and proportionate measures to prevent further harm and to protect affected civilian populations.

A child kneels in front of a demolished home in Umm al-Khair. Photo: J. Tamimi/WBPC.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS SEXUALISED VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT PRESSURES

A woman walks through her community following a mass demolition in Khallet Athaba. Photo: J. Tamimi/WBPC.

ISRAEL, THE OCCUPYING POWER

1. Enforce The Duty To Intervene And Protect Civilians

Enforce clear operational orders requiring immediate intervention when settlers engage in violence, sexualised harassment or intimidation against civilians, including incursions into homes and threats of sexual violence. Where Israeli forces are present, failure to intervene, or participation in such conduct, must trigger prompt and independent investigation.

Where credible evidence indicates repeated failure to intervene in foreseeable harm, command-level review and accountability measures must follow. Public reporting should detail incidents in which forces were present, the action taken and the outcome of any disciplinary or legal proceedings.

2. Protect Domestic Space And Bodily Integrity

Prohibit forced nudity, humiliating or degrading treatment, and the filming of individuals in states of undress during entry into homes by Israeli forces. Such conduct violates bodily integrity and must trigger prompt criminal investigation and appropriate disciplinary or judicial consequences.

3. Ensure Effective And Transparent Investigation Of Abuses Linked To Displacement

Refer all allegations of sexualised violence, forced stripping, degrading or invasive searches, intimidation and non-intervention linked to displacement to prompt criminal investigation outside the operational chain of command. Investigations must be conducted promptly and independently in practice, and be capable of examining both direct perpetrators and failures of command responsibility.

Make public aggregate data on investigative outcomes in cases involving settler violence and alleged non-intervention, including rates of indictment and disciplinary action.

4. Enable Safe And Voluntary Return And Restitution

Facilitate safe and voluntary return for civilians displaced under coercion by ensuring protection and security from Israeli settlers, restoring access to land and water, removing movement impediments, and providing restitution or compensation for destroyed or confiscated property, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

THIRD STATES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING UN BODIES

1. Recognise Sexualised Violence As A Displacement Driver In Policy And Reporting

Explicitly treat sexualised intimidation, forced nudity, domestic-space incursions, humiliating searches, and threats against women and children by Israeli forces and settlers as indicators of a coercive environment that contributes to, or results in, forcible transfer in diplomatic reporting, Human Rights Council and Security Council interventions, and donor risk frameworks.

Require missions and implementing partners to track and report these indicators systematically, using corroborated field monitoring and survivor-centred safeguards.

2. Strengthen Independent UN Reporting And Analysis

Sustain political and financial support for independent UN mechanisms documenting violence and displacement in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Encourage these mechanisms to examine and report on how patterns of sexualised intimidation and domestic-space violations contribute to displacement pressures in affected communities.

3. Embed Early-Warning Triggers In Diplomatic Decision-Making

Adopt clear red-flag thresholds based on credible and corroborated reporting, including documented spikes in sexualised violence and intimidation, incursions into homes and domestic spaces, and escalating threats directed at women and girls.

Link these thresholds to predetermined diplomatic responses, including senior-level representations, public attribution where appropriate, and timely adjustments to policy and funding decisions.

4. Operationalise Common Article 1 Through Graduated Escalation

Where credible and repeated reporting indicates sexualised intimidation, attacks occurring in the presence of Israeli forces without effective intervention, or partial relocation of women and children linked to protection concerns, initiate coordinated senior-level démarches and a formal review of bilateral cooperation for compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law.

Where patterns of violence and displacement continue in the absence of effective accountability, adopt targeted, lawful and proportionate measures consistent with international law. These may include suspension or restriction of specific cooperation streams that have a clear nexus to security assistance, trade preferences or research funding and where there is a foreseeable risk of contributing to serious violations.

5. Apply Non-Recognition And Non-Assistance Through Concrete Due-Diligence Tools

Ensure that public procurement, trade facilitation and investment guarantees do not benefit entities that are domiciled in, operating from, or materially supporting settlements or outposts, in accordance with domestic and international legal obligations. Material support should be assessed against objective criteria, including direct operational, financial or infrastructure contributions to settlement activity.

Conduct and make public, to the extent permitted by law, legal risk assessments for arms transfers and security cooperation where there is a foreseeable risk that such activities could contribute to serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, including forcible transfer.

A woman displaced from Wadi al-Seeq looks towards her family's third displacement site. Photo: Farah Bayadsi/NRC.

THIRD STATES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING UN BODIES

1. Integrate Sexualised Violence Into Displacement Forecasting

Develop a focused indicator set tracking sexualised violence and intimidation, incursions into homes and domestic spaces, and gendered patterns of exposure to violence, arrest and movement restrictions as early warning signs of displacement.

Systematically integrate these indicators into displacement risk analysis, early warning tools and donor briefings for communities facing sustained pressure, ensuring triangulation and do-no-harm safeguards.

2. Guarantee Confidential, Survivor-Centred Reporting Pathways

Maintain secure, culturally appropriate reporting channels, including anonymous options where necessary, and ensure that referrals to legal, psychosocial and medical services are handled under strict confidentiality to reduce the risk of reprisals.

3. Support Safe Community-Based Documentation

Provide legal accompaniment and practical guidance to community members who document violations, including clear protocols for secure evidence transfer and storage. Conduct regular risk assessments to minimise physical exposure and reduce the likelihood of reprisals, in coordination with protection actors.

4. Deploy Specialised CRSV Capacity In High-Risk Areas

Assign dedicated conflict-related sexual violence advisers or focal points to support safe documentation, survivor referral and pattern analysis in communities exposed to settler violence.

Ensure that advisers operate through established referral pathways, confidentiality protocols and survivor-centred approaches, and that documentation practices minimise retraumatisation and digital exposure. Findings should directly inform protection programming and advocacy.

Protection responses should address the distinct risks and roles of women, men, girls and boys under sustained coercion.

5. Stabilise Land-Based Livelihoods As Displacement Prevention

Prioritise restoration of grazing access, rehabilitation of water infrastructure, livestock replacement and women-led income support in communities facing sustained pressure. Pair economic support with housing, land and property legal assistance to help families resist demolition orders, challenge confiscations and remain on their land.

Design livelihood support with protection in mind, easing the pressures that push families to leave, limiting exposure of women and children to harassment, and reducing the conditions that drive family separation or early marriage.

6. Mitigate The Gendered Impact Of Relocation And Early Marriage

Support school continuity and safe mobility for relocated girls, provide targeted psychosocial services for adolescents, and deliver household income and education assistance that eases the financial pressures driving early marriage decisions.

Partner with women-led organisations and trusted community leaders to strengthen community-based protective alternatives that reduce exposure to violence while safeguarding education, autonomy and long-term wellbeing.

A Palestinian child sits in front of a temporary room his family built after their home was demolished by Israeli authorities in Rakeez, Masafer Yatta. Photo: Ahmad Al-Bazz/NRC.

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