

JLAC's 2020

Annual Report



JERUSALEM LEGAL AID AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER



Cover photo taken by:
Bahaa Nasser/ Wafa

JLAC's 2020 Annual Report



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A loss for the nation, the people, and all Palestinian and Arab human rights defenders

In December of 2020, we at JLAC endured the loss of our dear family member, Mr. Salim Khileh (board member, former staffer, and advocacy campaign leader), after his four-year battle with cancer and later Covid-19. He will be remembered fondly, as a gentle and brave man, who dedicated his life to social justice work until his last breath. A life lived as a microcosm of the Palestinian struggle itself, Salim was born in historic Palestine, was soon after forcefully displaced as a refugee to the West Bank, and later in life forced into exile in the Arab world. Only after the establishment of the PA was he able to return to Palestine, where he continued his liberation and social justice efforts on Palestinian soil. And It was to this land, that he was later entrusted and laid to rest.



A Message from JLAC's Chairman and Director

Our Gratitude and Pledge

2020 was a difficult and exceptional year for the entire world, though to varying extents depending on the country. A unique challenge was created in the occupied Palestinian territory, as the year began with the announcement of what was called the American “peace plan”. A plan that can be called anything but bearing peace. Rather it gave a political cover to such war crimes committed by Israel as; plunder, annexation of occupied lands, intensified forcible transfer policies and procedures, settler crimes and continued attacks, the siege of the Gaza Strip, and new plans within the framework of Judaizing occupied Jerusalem and legitimizing it as the eternal capital of Israel. The later has involved; the design and construction of highways and roads in a way to isolate Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem from each other and turn them into enclaves, and the announcement of a new organizational plan limiting residential construction on 689 dunums considered the most vital in East Jerusalem.

Additionally, American and Israeli financial pressures, Arab complicity, and the undeclared blockade of the Palestinian Authority, have culminated in normalization agreements that have nothing to do with any international or legal standards. A number of Arab countries have also allowed trade with settlements, whose establishment constitute a war crime.

Indeed, we are headed in the direction of further shrinking of the space allotted to civil society institutions, with funding restrictions being imposed by donor agencies in response to pressures by Israeli entities (whether official or positioning themselves as research or non-profit organizations). JLAC has been the direct recipient of smear tactics from Israeli official institutions and Palestinian informal groups, draining JLAC's limited energies in combating them.

In 2020, Jerusalem witnessed the highest number of persons displaced from the city (through house demolition) since demolitions began to be formally documented in 2009. Area C also witnessed the highest number of demolition orders issued, and thus the largest number of forced displacement cases adopted by JLAC, in one year since its establishment. During 2020, JLAC served to provided direct services to 13,927 Palestinian families (from among which 2,444 families were protected from forced displacement, through the treatment of 3,356 cases before the courts (of which 584 were new cases). Such is compared to the treatment of 2,998 cases (of which 378 were new) in 2019; a 12% increase in the total number of files, and a 40% increase in the number of new files.



Towards ensuring community preparedness in facing the pandemic, JLAC mobilized its resources and energies in providing hygiene kits and accompanying legal and health workshops to 3,709 Palestinian families in 16 rural and 18 Bedouin communities, as well as 9 schools, in the Jordan Valley and areas in proximity to the Annexation Wall, whom are dually being threatened with displacement. Such was achieved at the peak of enforced containment shutdowns/closures and difficulty of movement between governorates.

The tremendous efforts achieved by JLAC in 2020, despite the difficult conditions faced (by way of movement and access, containment measures on one hand, and new Israeli instructions and procedures that impede due process, on the other), truly bespeak of JLAC's team spirit and the sense of

commitment among its staff, all its bodies, volunteers and allies.

Additionally, to such, we owe this achievement to JLAC's 11 partners (i.e. states, faith-based institutions, multilateral agencies, international bodies, and international non-governmental organizations) whom placed their trust in us and allowed for the needed financial flexibility to ensure responsiveness in this trying time. To them, we offer our gratitude and pledge to persist in our work with the utmost diligence, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability and to serve as an example of best practice for both our peers and the vulnerable groups we collectively seek to defend.

Amin Inabi/ Chairman of the Board of Directors
Issam Aruri/ General Director

Who We Are

The Jerusalem Legal Aid & Human Rights Center (JLAC) has been tirelessly working to secure Palestinians' human rights, since its establishment by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in 1974. While the specific violations addressed shifted over the years to accommodate the most pressing concerns at the time, over the last decade JLAC has been focused on safeguarding vulnerable communities in their homes and lands (in East Jerusalem and Area C) and securing their public freedoms. To these effects, JLAC provides pro bono legal aid, outreach and advocacy efforts in holding the various Duty Bearers (i.e. the Israeli government in East Jerusalem, its military in Area C, and the Palestinian Authority) to account.

Vision

A free and independent Palestinian society founded on the principles of justice, in which human dignity is protected.

Mission

As a Palestinian human rights organization, JLAC works to protect vulnerable groups exposed to recurring violations of human rights (whether by the Israeli occupation or under the Palestinian Authority) through: available legal mechanisms, fostering a culture of human rights, promoting legal knowledge, and using advocacy tools towards activating accountability mechanisms and urging the prosecution of perpetrators, at both national and international levels.



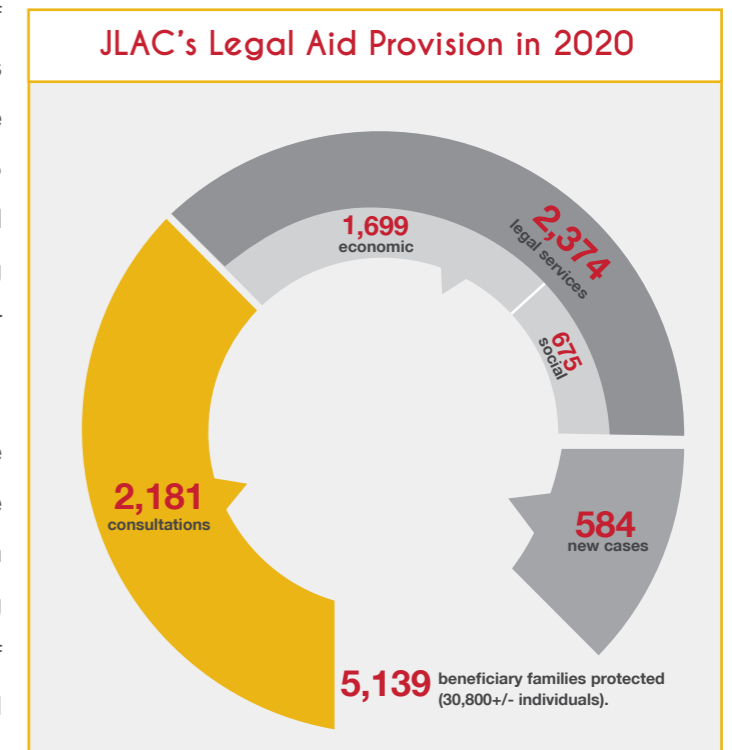
Our Year in Review



JLAC employees a three-fold approach in ensuring the protection of its serviced communities; legal aid, community outreach, and advocacy. Legal aid encompasses consultation (as provided in office, through social media, telephone, in the field, and as delivered during the legal mobile clinic's community sessions), legal services (aiding Jerusalemites' in overcoming the language barrier by filling out Hebrew language forms), and legal representation (involving individual cases taken before relevant committees and courts, and necessary correspondences therein, and public interest cases challenging particular principles).

Despite the challenges posed in 2020, by way of intensified expansionist efforts and Coronavirus containment shutdowns, JLAC served to provide 2,181 consultations, 2,374 legal services (675 involving social and 1,699 economic rights), and 584 new individual cases; collectively protecting the rights of 5,139 beneficiary families (or approximately 30,800+/- individuals).

Such is in additions to the thousands more provided with continuous protection through the follow-up of the 2,772 cases accumulated from previous years and the hundreds more benefiting from the 20 public interest cases treated (16 of which were new) in 2020. (See page 28 for full breakdown of case information).



+ 2,772 cases accumulated from previous years



Community outreach also serves to equip individuals from among serviced communities and their local governing authorities (or in the case of Jerusalemites' their local community-based organizations) with the needed knowledge and tools in challenging the various violations address by JLAC when they arise. As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, JLAC took the decision to hold off on "non-essential" outreach efforts, as to not expose communities and staff to any non-essential group gatherings. However, exceptions were made for protection related discussions or for communities that are facing imminent risk of demolition/displacement (and have called upon JLAC to come and provide emergency awareness raising and consultation i.e. going over demolition orders, addressing types of documentation to prepare for case development, means of gathering documentation given certain departments being closed due to Coronavirus containment shutdowns, etc.). In certain instances, JLAC provided less urgent training virtually (as was the case for women's groups in Jerusalem). In 2020, JLAC served to collectively provide 52 community awareness and training opportunities, directly outreaching 766 women, men, girls and boys. Such is in addition to 6 roundtable discussions and sector level workshops, collectively outreaching another 198 people.

Moreover, JLAC's advocacy work has served to mobilize communities, raise the profile of particular

matters of concern before Duty Bearers (whether with the Palestinian Authority or the international community/ "Third States"), and engage various accountability mechanisms.

In 2020, such took the form of developing 8 thematic studies and reports, 30 updates, statements, and factsheets, 47 educational announcements on social media, 10 presentations and field visits, 3 short documentaries, 3 posters, utilization of UN and ICC mechanisms, and participation in member coalitions and advocacy networks. (See page 33 for more details).

Through raising additional funds and use of existing contingencies JLAC was able to provide 3,709 Bedouin and rural families, amounting to approximately 22,000+ persons (across for than 34 communities in the Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, Salfit, and Qalqilya governorates), with essential hygiene kits. An additional 640 hygiene kits were provided to 9 targeted schools in the Jordan Valley, and another 750 hygiene kits to involved formal bodies.

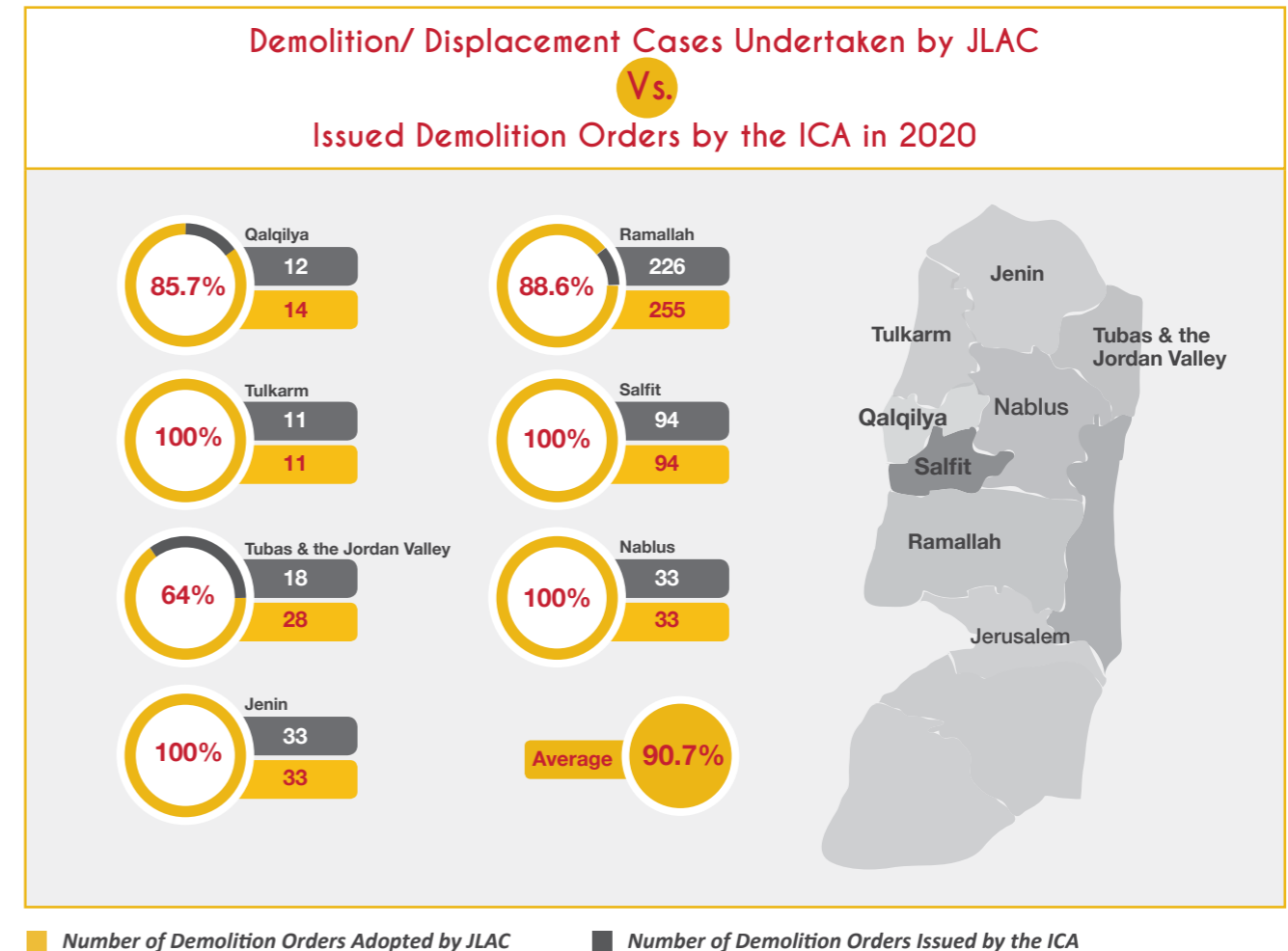
The following sections will serve to further illustrate JLAC's achievements in 2020 in addressing house demolition, forced displacement, land confiscation, confiscation of equipment and goods, social and economic rights of Jerusalemites, freedom of movement, and public freedoms under the PA.

House Demolition and Forced Displacement

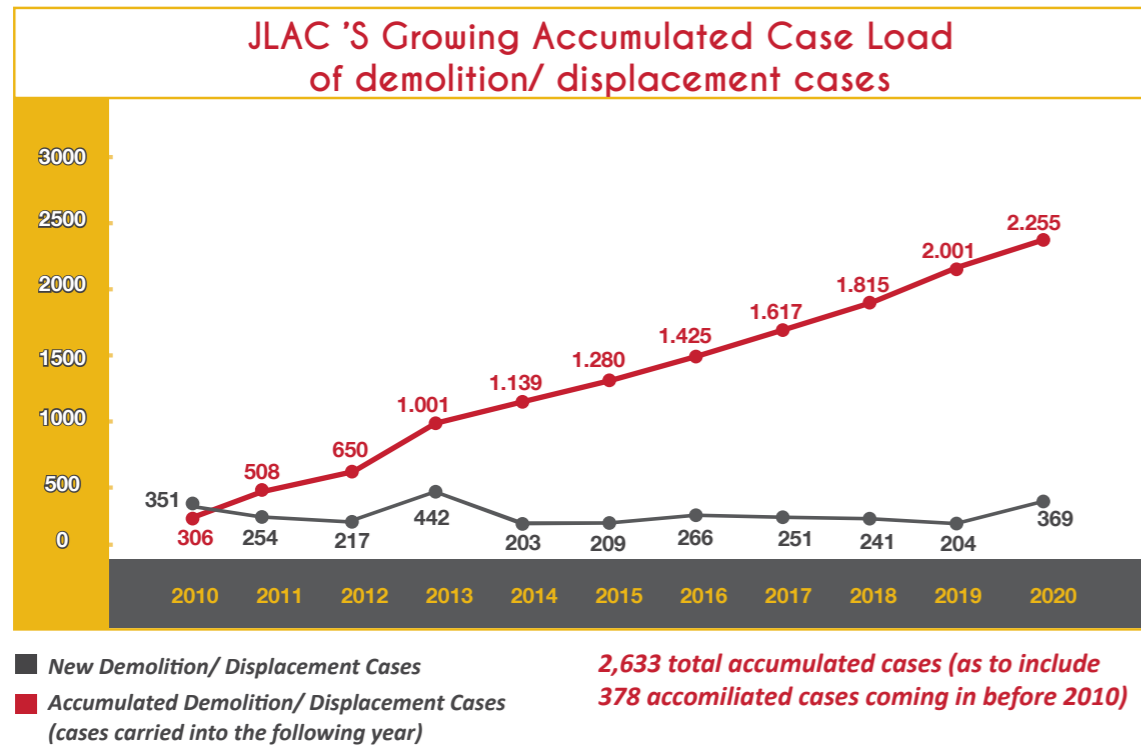
Despite Israel's declared moratorium on demolition in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic and consequent importance of adequate housing, it persisted in and intensified demolition efforts with 2020 alone noting a 136% increase in demolition from the year prior (from 623 structures demolished in 2019 to 846 structures in 2020), displacing 996 persons. In so doing, violating the right to adequate housing as reaffirmed in numerous international instruments ratified by Israel (i.e. UDHR, ICESCR, CERD, CEDAW, and CRC, among others).

Despite the influx of demolition cases coming in and litigation challenges posed by Coronavirus containment shutdowns, JLAC dually undertook 180% more demolition and displacement cases in 2020 as compared with 2019 (369 cases in 2020 vs. 204 cases in 2019). As has been the case for nearly a decade now, protection from demolition

and displacement are among JLAC's main areas of intervention where it has emerged not only as a key legal actor, but the largest provider of legal aid among its serviced localities (the entirety of the West Bank, except Bethlehem and Hebron). In 2020 alone, JLAC served to adopt 403/817 issued demolition orders in the entirety of the West Bank, amounting to an overwhelming 49% of the total orders, with all other actors providing the remaining needed aid. This figure is up from 43% (199 addressed by JLAC out of the total 456 demolition orders issued) in 2019. In particular governorates (i.e. in Tulkarm, Salfit, Nablus and Jenin) this figure has reached up to 100% of total demolition orders being addressed by JLAC; with an average of 90.7% of demolition orders being addressed by JLAC in its serviced governorates in 2020.



While this is a major achievement for JLAC, it comes with a heavy toll; the constantly growing burden of accumulated cases (currently standing at the end of 2020 at 3,053 cases among all case types). For operating within an unjust legal system, JLAC can not hope for more than buying families time in their homes and lands. Moreover, this precarious situation is consistently threatened with the emergence of new amendments or military orders seeking to further shrink what limited space for due process there remains. In 2020, JLAC served to undertake 369 new cases of demolition and displacement, while also following up the 2,379 accumulated such cases from previous years (amounting to the protection of 2,748 beneficiary families and approximately 16,500+/- persons). Of the 369 new demolition and displacement cases adopted by JLAC in 2020, only 115 closed (31%), leaving remaining 254 (69%) to be carried into 2021, adding to the ever-growing burden of on-going cases (standing at the close of 2020 at 2,633 total accumulated cases, for demolition/displacement cases alone).



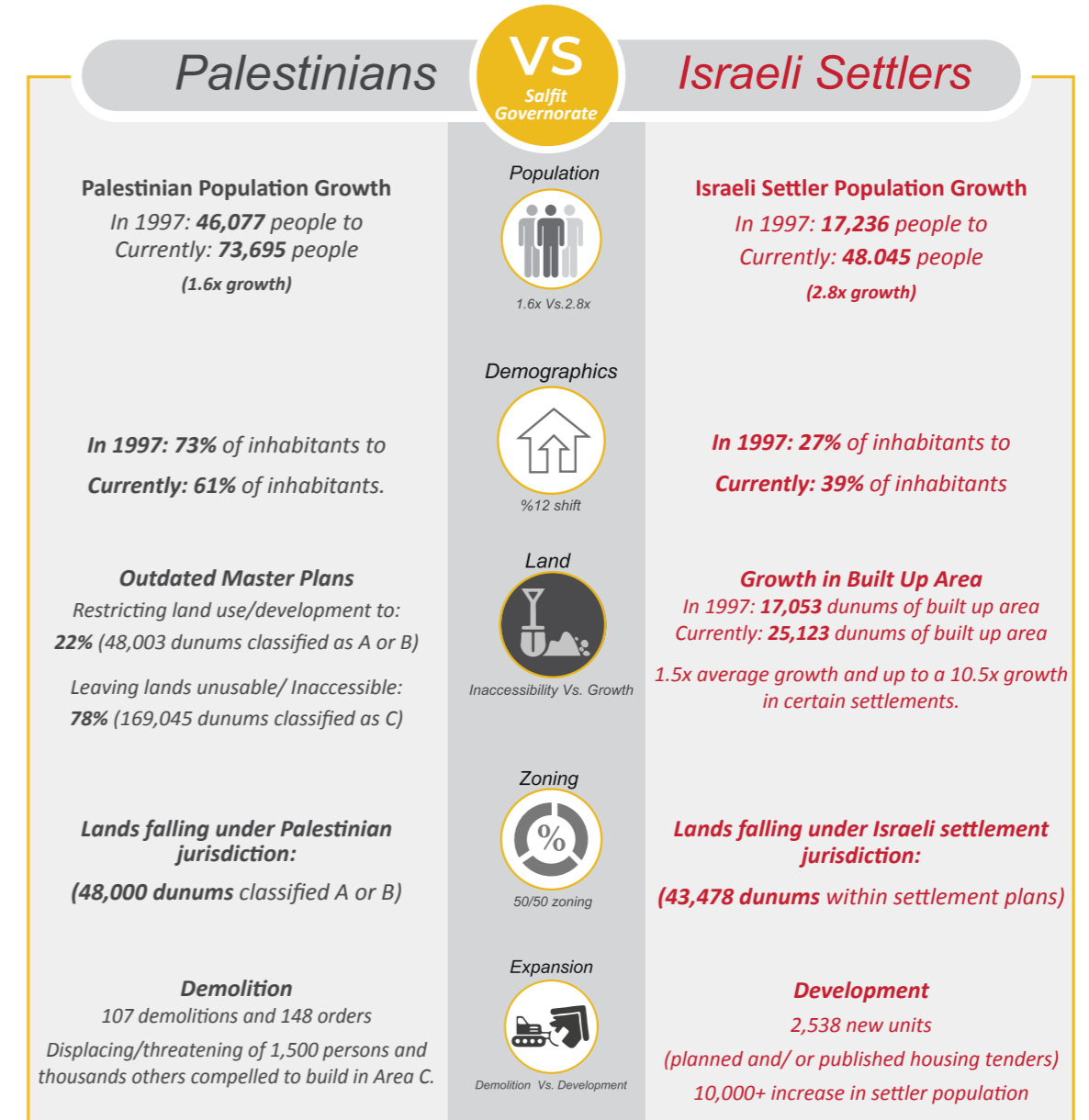
Schools Protected

Demolition and displacement cases involve the protection of individual homes, entire Bedouin communities, livelihood structures (i.e. agricultural facilities and water cisterns), and public facilities as schools. 17 schools have been protected by JLAC since 2004; 13 of the schools have since had their cases positively closed, with 4 remaining pending (though secured for the time being) and requiring continued legal aid by JLAC (i.e. Deir Ballut School- case undertaken in 2004, Khirbet Jubara School- 2008, Fasayil School- 2009, Al Aqaba School – 2009, Beitin School – 2010, Anata Kindergarten – 2011, Al Mu'arrajat School – 2011, Jaba' School -2014, Al Mu'arrajat Kindergarten 2015, An Nuwei'ma School – 2016, Frosh Beit Dajan School - 2018, Al Mu'arrajat School – 2018, and Oued Soliman School – 2018, closed positively and Silwad School -2017, Arab Ramadin School – 2017, An Nabi Samuel School – 2017, and Al-Auja School – 2020 remaining on-going). For without the protection of these particular schools, often built within the remote communities they service, secondary students would otherwise enter the labor market (in regards to boys) or succumb to early marriage (in the case of girls). Girls are particularly more vulnerable to dropping out when limited to schools beyond their community and the consequent long daily treks along unsecured footpaths or highways, as their families fear for their personal security.



Land Confiscation

In 2020, 3,512 tenders for new settlement housing units (1,727 tenders in East Jerusalem and 1,785 in Area C of the West Bank) were advertised, in addition to the 12,159 plans promoted in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem); towards augmenting the settlement population (currently standing at 633,600 settlers in 250 settlements and outposts), as per figures published by Peace Now. Among the plans deposited included the E1 plan after an 8-year freeze. Facilitating this end is the confiscation of Palestinian private lands through such measures as; freezing the land registration process, reclassifying privately owned land, establishing “military zones” under the guise of military necessity, cutting off access to land through highways, fencing, settlement structures, and the Annexation Wall. In so doing, violating the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Hague Convention of 1907 (Article 26), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and the Treaty of Rome of 1957 (Article 47) which address the confiscation of private property by an occupying power, with the latter explicitly stating that “pillage is formally forbidden”. Each year JLAC strives to undertake a small (but pungent) number of land confiscation cases that serve a strategic purpose for a community (i.e. disrupting settlement expansion plans, ensuring contiguity of Palestinian communities to each other, etc.); although such cases require years to actuate and are littered with many hurdles to surmount (i.e. proof of land use, despite the presence of physical obstacles limiting/denying physical access, restrictions in land registration, among a host of other challenges.). In 2020, JLAC served to address 96 cases of land confiscation (37 of which were new and 59 accumulated from previous years).



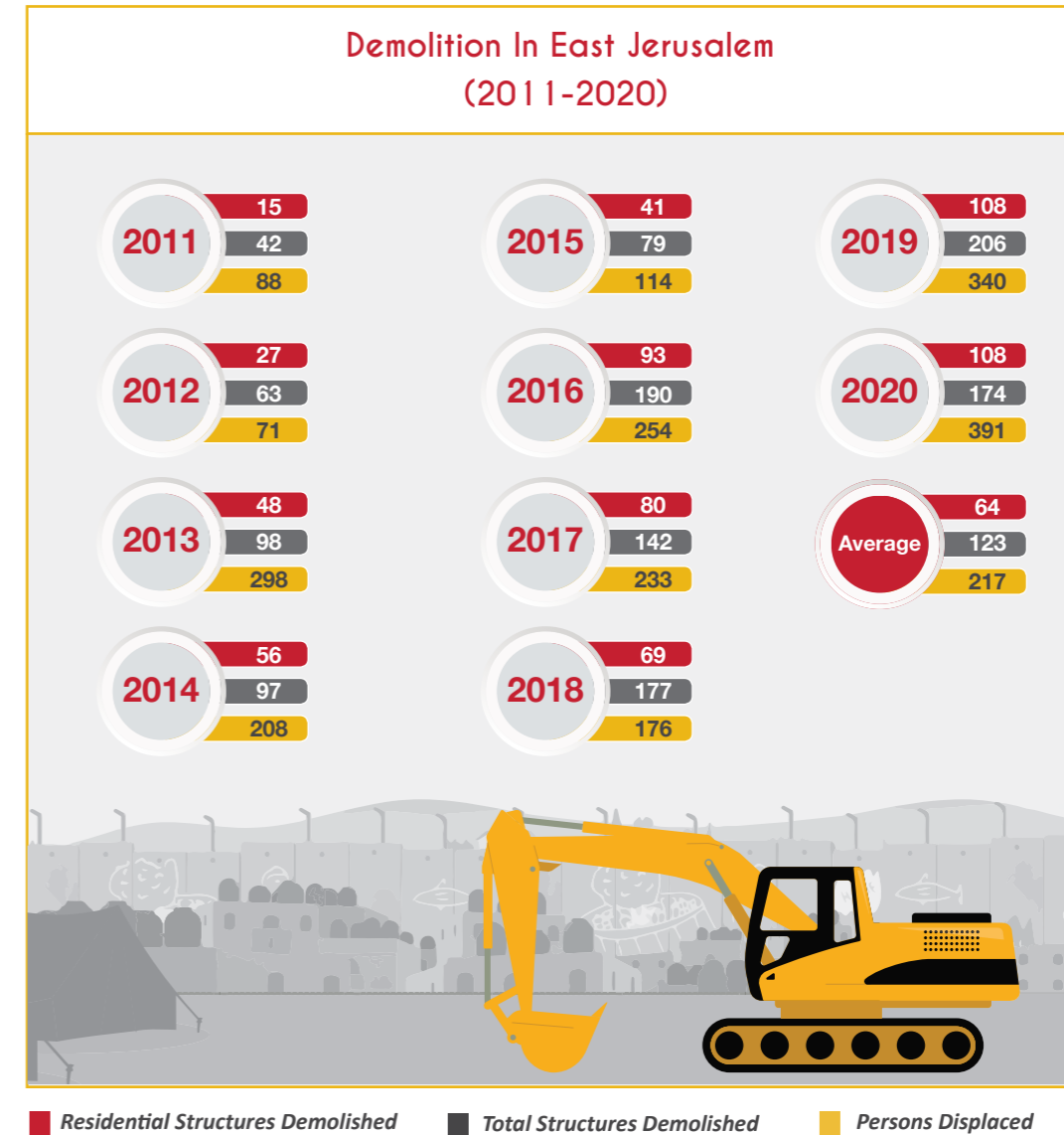
Confiscation of Equipment & Goods

While settlers squatting on Palestinian land receive stipends by the Israeli government, and have free reign to pillage Palestinian resources (i.e. land and water) for their enterprises which dually exploit cheap Palestinian laborers; Palestinians still able to farm their lands in Area C are meeting the additional challenge of the confiscation of vehicles and machinery essential in the rehabilitation and farming of their land. and Humanitarian aid (in the form of goods) coming into communities, as provided by donor agencies, also run the risk of being confiscated. This power is vested to Israeli military forces by military order 1651 article 60-65 of 2006 and those orders reinforcing Israeli Supreme Court ruling no. 1651, which allow for the arbitrary confiscation of such items, even when on one's own land, under the guise of being situated in a flying military zone or in proximity to settlements. Such in violation of Article 33 of the 1949 4th Geneva Convention prohibiting pillage (theft under the cover of war) by an Occupying Power. Moreover, the Fourth Geneva Convention recognizes the right of protected person to make application to the protecting powers or national and international actors that might assist them and forbids the willful impediment of relief supplies. Confiscations set farmers back months while they try to retrieve their livelihood items (equating to the loss of income), in addition to the hefty fines issued for alleged storage fees (among other fees). JLAC has noted a steady influx of such cases coming in to its offices over the last several years. In 2020, JLAC treated 47 cases of confiscated equipment and goods (34 of which were new cases and 13 accumulated from previous years), in an effort to reinstate the livelihoods of the families and communities involved.



Jerusalem

Israel's policies for the city of Jerusalem are rooted in demographic engineering, as executed through various soft (i.e. burdensome taxations and disparity in service delivery, design/construction of roads in a way to facilitate the contiguity of Jewish neighborhoods at the expense of isolating Palestinian communities, etc.) and more direct tactics (i.e. house demolition, ID revocation, denial of family reunification, home and actual arrest of juveniles, etc.). The current formal plan for Jerusalem (known as the Jerusalem 2020 Master Plan) blatantly aims to adjust the population ratio between Palestinian (currently standing at 341,729 persons or 38%) and Jewish inhabitants (standing at 559,571 persons or 62%) in Jerusalem to 30% Palestinian and 70% Jewish. While there exists an annual need for 1,500 new housing units to meet natural growth rates for Palestinian residents of the City (in addition to those needed in overcoming existing overcrowding), out of the 21,000 housing units licensed in 2019 only 1,570 plans/licenses (not actual construction), 7.5% of the total, were issued to Palestinians. Moreover, a recent OCHA report stated that 18,000 homes in East Jerusalem are classified as unlicensed and subject to demolition (with the 60,000+ Palestinians housed in these homes subject to displacement. As per a report by Ir Amim entitled "The Stark Rise in Home Demolition in East Jerusalem in 2019" published in January 2020, the municipality of Jerusalem has demolished 1,226 structures in the last 10 years, at an annual average 123 demolished structures per annum (of which 64 are residential structures). Alarming, 2020 witnessed 391 structures being demolished (108 of which were residential). And while the annual average of displaced persons stood at 217 persons per year; 393 persons were displaced in 2020. Indeed, 2020 saw the highest number of residential structures demolished and displaced persons in Jerusalem in recent years.



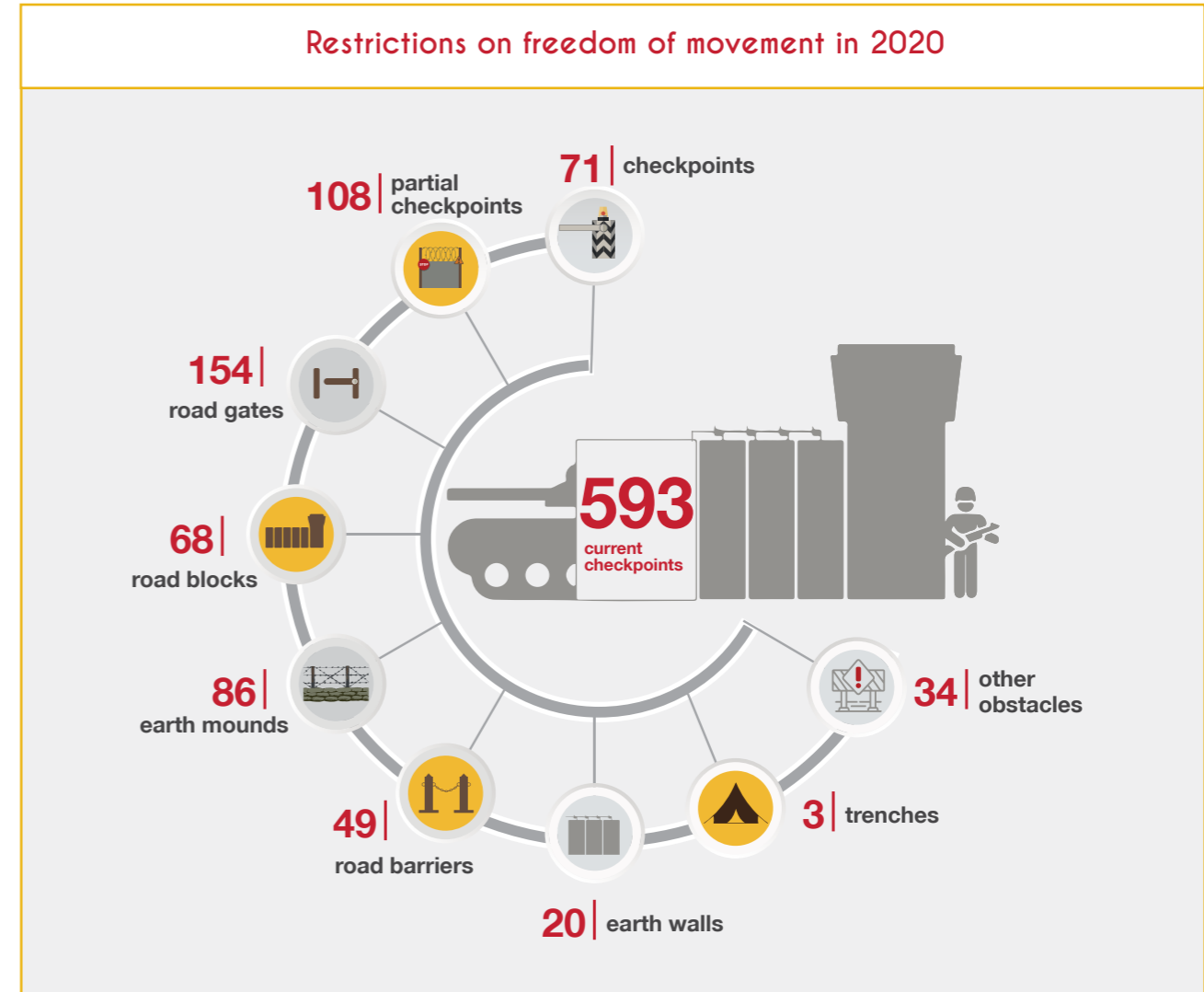
The permanent residency status of Jerusalemites makes them additionally subject to a range of social (i.e. ID revocation, the denial or restriction of family reunification and child registration, etc.) and economic push factors (i.e. burdensome taxation, denial of health insurance, unemployment, and other due economic rights) in violation of IHL (i.e. Article 7(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ICESCR, etc.). In an effort to strength Palestinians' steadfastness in Jerusalem, JLAC's Jerusalem office is focused on providing legal aid in addressing house demolition and violations of a social and economic nature. In 2020 alone, JLAC served to provide 681 legal consultations, 2,374 legal service (675 involving social rights and 1,699 involving economic rights, among other issues of concern), and 111 new individual cases (24 house demolition, 16 social and 71 economic rights cases); collectively directly protecting 3,166 beneficiary families (amounting to nearly 20,000 persons). Such is in addition to the 176 accumulated cases from prior years which were also address in 2020, benefiting an additional 1,000+/- persons.



Freedom of Movement

The contiguity of settlements to each other and to Israel, is maintained at the expense of Palestinians' fragmentation. Such is facilitated through the imposed permit regime, travel bans, the Annexation Wall, closed military zones/ restricted areas, and the 593 current checkpoints and physical obstacles (i.e. 71 checkpoints, 108 partial checkpoints, 154 road gates, 68 road blocks, 86 earth mounds, 49 road barriers, 20 earth walls, 3 trenches, and 34 obstacles classified as "other"), as per recent OCHA figures. Such collectively impede access to livelihood, health, and education, resources, and ability to fulfill social and religious pursuits. While violations to the freedom of movement impacts West Bankers to varying extents, approximately 11,000 Palestinians in particular have found themselves enclaved in the 19 communities falling within the seem-zone (areas between the Annexation Wall and its deviation from the "green-line"). Such has rendered them completely enclaved by the Annexation Wall and associated checkpoints and fences, with severe restrictions (on who and what may go in and out) transforming their vicinities nearly into prisons. Specifically, JLAC addresses violations to the freedom of movement pertaining to accessing medical services, travel bans, and visitation of detainees (with medical related travel permits also benefiting Gazans seeking medical care in Jerusalem), with 15 such cases treated in 2020 (12 new and 3 accumulated from previous years).

Restrictions on freedom of movement in 2020



Public Freedoms

Palestinians are facing a two-fold dilemma in actuating their sovereignty and full human rights; Israel's breakdown of the State of Palestine's territorial integrity and contiguity and the Palestinian Authorities' undermining of the separation of powers and good governance and a host of human rights violations perpetuated. Such violations include unconstitutional presidential decrees, appointment of the judiciary, unenforced court rulings by security personnel, arbitrary dismissal of governmental employees based on political affiliation, political arrest and torture; in violation of the Palestinian constitution or the "Basic Law" and the various international treaties the State of Palestine has ascribed to (i.e. CEDAW, CRC, ICCPR, ICEFRD, CAT, CRPD, etc.). In mitigating such ends, JLAC continued its coalition work through 2020 in addressing needed public freedoms reforms and treated 42 individual (of which 13 were new) and 6 public interest cases (of which 4 were new). Assisting, in extension, more than 250 persons (the beneficiaries and their families) through the facilitated due process and hundreds more through the public interest reforms.



Table of Cases in 2020

Case Type			Treated Cases		Closed			On-going
			New	Accumulated	Positive	Negative	Other	
1	Public Interest	Public Interest (Israel)	14		4			10
			12	2	2	1	1	
	Public Interest (PA)	6		1			5	
	4	2	1	0	0			
2	Land Confiscation		96		6			90
	37	59	2	2	2			
3	Confiscation of Equipment/Aid		47		32			15
	34	13	26	2	4			
4	Settler Violence Documentation		66		0			66
	6	60	0	0	0			
5	Demolition/ Displacement	House Demolition /WB	1442		21			1421
			119	1323	1	12	8	
		House Demolition /EJ	113		33			80
			24	89	17	0	16	
		Agricultural FacilitiesDem.	712		60			652
	125	587	2	32	26			
Forced Displacement	481		1			480		
	101	380	1	0	0			
6	Jerusalem	Social Rights	81		46			35
			16	65	24	5	17	
		Economic Rights	93		73			20
	71	22	62	1	10			
8	Freedom of Movement		15		15			0
	12	3	6	0	9			
9	Bodies Campaign		145		2			143
	10	135	1	0	1			
10	Public Freedoms (PA)		40		4			36
	13	27	1	0	3			
11	Misc.	Miscellaneous (Israel)	3		3			0
			0	3	1	1	1	
		Miscellaneous (PA)	2		2			0
	0	2	2	0	0			
12	Legal Representation Total		3356		303			3053
	584	2772	149	56	98			
13	Legal Services/EJ		2,374 legal services (675 involving social and 1,699 economic rights)					
14	Legal Consultations		2,181 consultations provided (681 in Jerusalem and 1,500 in remainder of West Bank)					



Covid-19 Response

In the midst of the global pandemic, Palestinians had to dually contend with escalating human rights violations by Israel and the limitations in combating offenses posed by mitigation shutdowns (i.e. closed or backed-up essential offices and courts, access/movement restrictions, etc.). During this time JLAC succeeded in quickly and effectively adapting its resources and programing in responding to the new state of emergency.

Such was marked by administrative, structural, and programmatic flexibility in ensuring the continuation of its service delivery, as well as, the provision of essential hygiene kits. Through additional funds provided by the NRC, along with contingencies from JLAC's core funds, JLAC was immediately able to provide 486 Bedouin families (across 18 communities in the Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, Salfit, and Qalqilya governorates) and 372 rural families (across 16 villages and towns), amounting to 5,000 +/- persons. In the months that followed, through the reallocation of contingencies from an AFD funded project, JLAC was able to provide several other batches of hygiene kits targeting 8 villages in the Jordan Valley; the first batch providing 1,244 hygiene kits servicing 2,854 families (amounting to approximately 17,000+ persons), the second batch providing 640 hygiene kits to 9 targeted schools in the area, and a third batch to providing 750 hygiene kits to involved formal bodies.

Hygiene kits distribution were also accompanied with legal and health awareness sessions being provided by JLAC's lawyers and, in certain instances, partnered health care providers (e.g. Medical Relief, Union of Health Care Committees, Health Work Committees). During the height of the first wave of the pandemic (in March and April of 2020), JLAC also provided administrative supervision and legal consultation to Hotel St. George in East Jerusalem, while it was functioning as a testing and quarantine facility (servicing those ill with Covid-19 or suspected of having Covid-19, such as arriving travelers, returning laborers, etc.).

JLAC'S COVID-19 Response Distribution of Hygiene Kits in 2020

Bedouin families in Area C

482 families
(2,800+/-
persons)



Rural families in Area C

3,226 families
(19,200+/-
persons)



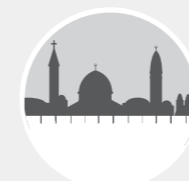
640 Hygiene Kits

*Targeted
9 schools in
Area C*



750 Hygiene Kits

*Formal Bodies
(local councils
& ministries)*



Administrative supervision and legal consultation for quarantine facility in East Jerusalem

Community Outreach

JLAC works to equip individuals and communities with the needed legal knowledge (of discriminatory Israeli measures and available legal mechanisms in confronting them) in ensuring their preparedness when faced with the various human rights violations the Center addresses. Such takes the form of community awareness sessions and training of local councils (in Area C) or community-based organizations- CBOs (in East Jerusalem), which ultimately contribute to more streamlined legal aid provision and strengthened referral systems.

Moreover, JLAC also holds more public trainings events as hosted by universities (for law students and other specialties) or involving peer organizations (both local and international) and official bodies, towards broadening the pool of available professionals able to address protection related human rights violations. This year, also saw for the first time at JLAC, the implementation of human rights training targeting school-aged children, as a means of instilling a culture of human rights within the new generation and strengthening their resolve. In 2020, JLAC served to collectively provide 52 community awareness and training opportunities, directly outreaching 766 women, men, girls and boys. Such is in addition to 6 roundtable discussions or sector level workshops, collectively outreaching an additional 198 people. Towards streamlining protection mechanisms at a sector level JLAC developed 6 guidelines in 2020, in addition to the 6 manuals and strategies it developed towards developing the Center's operations and service delivery (most notably the Code of Conduct).



Advocacy

Given the discriminatory nature of the dual legal system imposed upon Palestinians, oftentimes available legal mechanisms are exhausted without remedying the situation. Consequently, JLAC has increasingly felt the need to couple its legal aid and outreach with international advocacy efforts. In 2020, such took the form of the development of; 8 thematic studies and reports, 30 updates, statements, and factsheets, 3 short documentaries, 3 posters. The materials addressed a range of pressing matters shedding light on particular bills, developments, communities, or structures. More to this affect, JLAC held 10 in-office or field debriefs for visiting delegations or parliamentarians situated abroad, towards informing them of key developments and needed action. JLAC also utilized UN and ICC mechanisms, speaking before relevant committees and submitting produced materials. Additionally, 47 educational announcements were posted on JLAC's social media during the year, towards ensuring continued knowledge dissemination and protection of rights given Coronavirus containment shutdowns. JLAC also participated in a number of international advocacy forums (i.e. EMHRN, the OCHA-led Protection Cluster and associated working groups), engaged in a number of local subject focused coalitions (i.e. the Palestinian NGO Network- PNGO, Palestinian Human Rights Organizations' Council-PHROC , the Civil Coalition to Monitor Legislations, the Coalition to Monitor Application of Court Rulings, the Coalition for Jerusalem, the Palestinian Coalition against Torture, etc.), and maintained several local advocacy campaigns (i.e. the National Campaign for Retrieving Palestinians' and Arab Bodies and the Disclosure of the Fate of those Missing, the Campaign for Disabled-Accessibility of Public Facilities, etc.)



A Selection of Materials Produced by JLAC in 2020 (not exhaustive):

Factsheets

- Qalqilya (<https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Qalqiliya-%20JLAC-%20EU%20feb%202020.pdf>)
- Tulkarm ([https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Tulkarm-JLAC-%20EU%20Feb%202020\(2\).pdf](https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Tulkarm-JLAC-%20EU%20Feb%202020(2).pdf))
- Wadi as Seeq ([https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Wad%20as%20Seeq-fs\(1\).pdf](https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Wad%20as%20Seeq-fs(1).pdf))
- Salfit (https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Salfit-%20JLAC_pub.pdf)
- Qarawat Bani Hassan (<https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Qarawat%20Bani%20Hassan-fs.pdf>)

Legal/ Situation Updates and Statements

- Urgent Appeal for Diplomatic Pressure in Saving Al Auja Waterfalls Secondary School (<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=o1rxoqa2178yloqt8bcqu>)
- JLAC Saves Al-Auja Secondary School from Demolition (<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=78z85ca2217y355f13hr1>)
- Palestinian Civil Society Organizations Welcome the Report of the Special Rapporteur addressing Israel's Collective Punishment Policy (<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=m53xspa2139ybxvj7j5mn>)
- The Crime of Forcible Transfer Continues Despite State of Emergency (<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=p5vbfna1983yskdpInb5z>)
- JLAC Requests to Stop Demolitions of Water Facilities and to Freeze Confiscation Orders against Equipment (<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=prte4oa2022yxf21h6jb>)
- Israeli Apartheid Undermines Palestinian Right to Health Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic (<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=26x13ca2009y9wnlnzvlid>)
- AStatementofHumanSolidarityintheTimeofCorona(<https://www.jlac.ps/details.php?id=3ilvnra1996y9grm3txvm>)

Papers

- As Impunity Reigns ([https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Impunity%20Reigns-ENG\(1\).pdf](https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/Impunity%20Reigns-ENG(1).pdf))
- COVID-19 and the Systematic Neglect of Palestinians in East Jerusalem ([https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/COVID-19%20-Ver1_4%20-%20Interactrive\(1\).pdf](https://www.jlac.ps/userfiles/COVID-19%20-Ver1_4%20-%20Interactrive(1).pdf))
- Two additional studies were conducted in 2020, but to be launched in 2021; The Warmth of Our Sons (on the detainment of Palestinian corpses) and The Case of Al-'Issawiyah (on the collective punishment faced by this community in East Jerusalem).

Challenges Faced in 2020



JLAC was able to fulfill its 2020 plans (drawn during the relative comforts of late 2019) despite the major challenges faced this year, most notable among which include;

- The Coronavirus pandemic and the impact of associated containment shutdowns and risks to beneficiary and employee health. Containment shutdowns served to limit the operability of courts and formal entities issuing needed case documentation. Such was overcome by round-the-clock efforts on the part of JLAC's lawyers and paralegals to acquire needed force majeure time extensions to ensure that demolition/displacement cases were secure. Legal service efforts were also intensified to ensure that due health and economic rights/benefits (i.e. reinstating health insurance, unemployment benefits, etc.) were in order for serviced Jerusalemites as to be better equipped to face the Coronavirus pandemic. Containment shutdowns initially impacted staff mobility and access to targeted communities in undertaking usual field visits, case follow-up, and outreach. On-line and digital means of case follow-up and consultation were developed to ensure continuous availability and access to beneficiaries. Such required development of infrastructural inputs as the procurement of laptop devices, software, etc. On two occasions in 2020, infection by a JLAC team members with Covid-19 prompted a short-term shut-down of JLAC's offices (i.e. Nablus and Jerusalem offices). Thankfully, the three JLAC team members have since recovered and returned

to their posts. Among the lessons learned from this time-period is the need to digitize access to and delivery of JLAC's services and to consider the validity of working remotely as an effective means of operations.

- Intensified settlement expansion and violence was unleashed and given a green-light by the announced so called "peace plan". Such has been translated into intensified demolition and displacement, as facilitated by the issuance of new military orders and regulations clearly aimed at expediting and complicating (augmenting the procedural work needed) the due process involved in each individual case. In turn, making it less likely for a case to be won in the short time allotted to provide protection. (See several JLAC statements/publications on the matter on page 33).
- The aim of pro-Israeli groups to shrink the space available to Palestinian civil society (and Palestinian solidarity efforts abroad) through such means as attempting to dry available funding resources has succeeded to some extent. Pressures have caused certain donor agencies to shy away from funding the human rights sector, while others have imposed new "due diligences" and conditions in funding the sector. The matter of conditional funding sparked a debate among Palestinian civil society and nearly polarized it, with JLAC among those initially facing harsh backlash for negotiating the new EU condition and reaching the conclusion to sign. For keen to act in alignment with the mainstream values of the sector, JLAC spear-

headed a sector-level discussion and legal review of the new clause towards reaching an informed consensus therein. The clause, with its clarifications, was collectively found to be in alignment with existing Palestinian legislation governing civil society work and non-threatening; with the majority of the sector since adopting this stance.

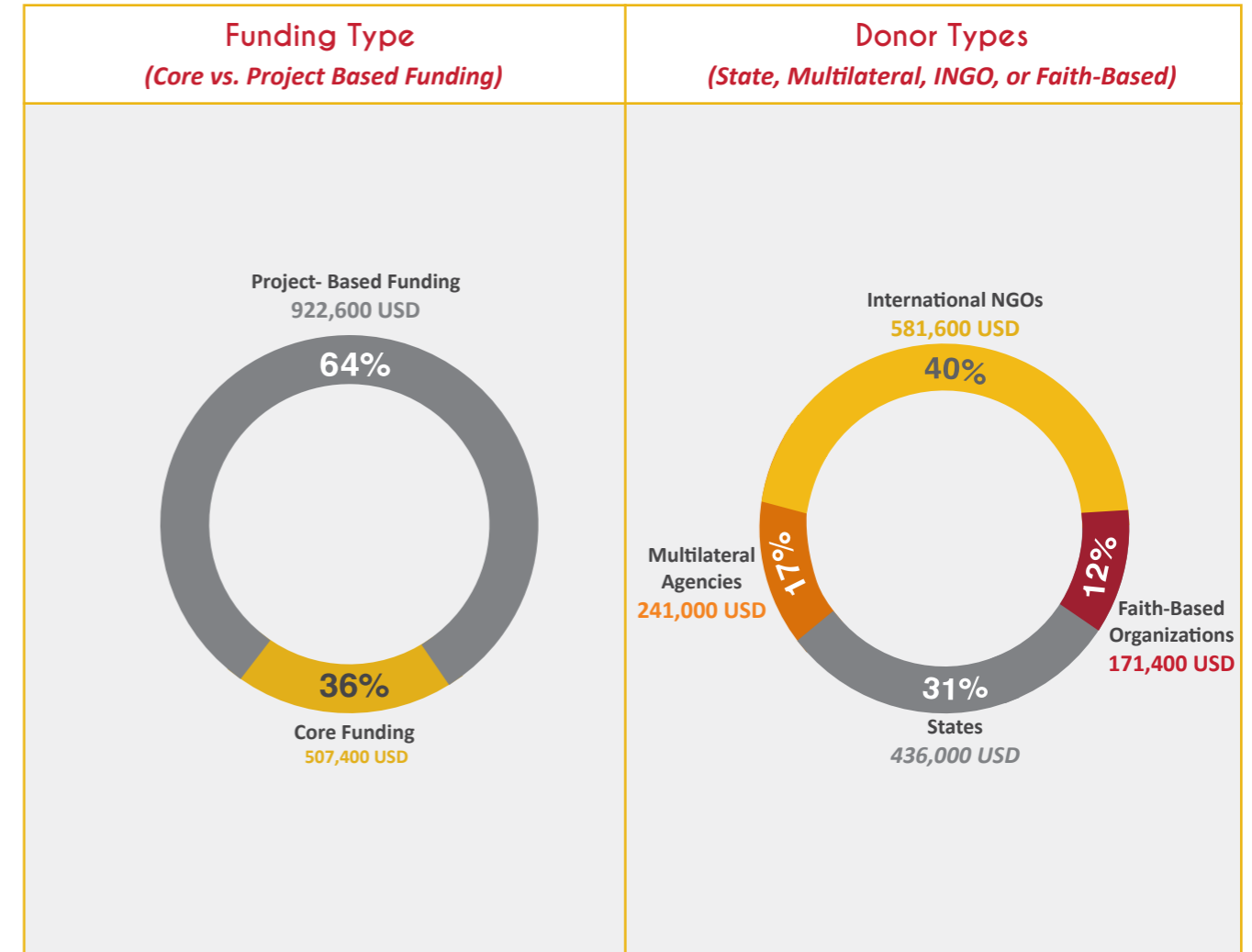
- Internally, while the start of the year showed promise of elections and possible progress in the internal state of human rights and rule of law in Palestinian Authority governed areas; the pandemic and the resulting state of emergency, financial deficits, and other pressures by the state of Israel have only served to further deteriorate the situation. Towards the end of the year, arrests against those exercising their freedom of expression and new burdens imposed on the NGO sector were renewed. Such is in addition to the continued absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council, consolidated powers, and lack of accountability.
- The alignment of many conservative world Powers with the far-right has noted a change in the global discourse, jeopardized IHL and tolerating and even facilitating Israeli violations therein.

- Arising threats by non-state actors against HR defenders, especially women organizations, surrounding discussions of harmonizing domestic laws with international treaties and covenants acceded to by Palestine. Other threats by non-official groups' anonymous websites and electronic sites targeting representatives of civil society organizations, including a number of JLAC staffers.

Moving forward, JLAC anticipates much of the same challenges (and our resilience in overcoming them) to persist in 2021. Such will require flexibility both in planning and execution, raising alerts when needed towards improving risk management, and considering before-thought unfeasible administrative approaches (as working remotely or digitizing service delivery). The most significant challenge, however, is that of maintaining hope despite mounting pressures of various kinds upon the Palestinian people. A challenge JLAC has and will continue to dedicate itself and its resource in meeting.



Analysis of 2020 Funds



Contact Us

Ramallah Office
Millennium Building, 3th floor
Kamal Nasser Street
Tel: +970 2 2987981
Fax: +970 2 2987982



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