



*Under the protection of soldiers, settlers throw rocks at elderly Palestinians near the Teyaseer, Tubas. Photo by Nedal Eshayah*

## FACTSHEET

### “ALARMING AND URGENT”: THE ESCALATION OF SETTLER VIOLENCE AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN THE WEST BANK

While the world focuses on the bombardment enacted on the Gaza Strip, the West Bank is witnessing what the UN is calling an “alarming and urgent” escalation of violence. The formation of an emergency government in Israel and the declaration of war has dually served to tighten the occupation’s grip over the West Bank. Being dealt with as a closed military zone, the territory has been subject to access

restrictions, near daily military raids, wholesale arrests of civilians, and the intensified arming of settlers, resulting in mounting death and injury tolls and displacement of civilians.

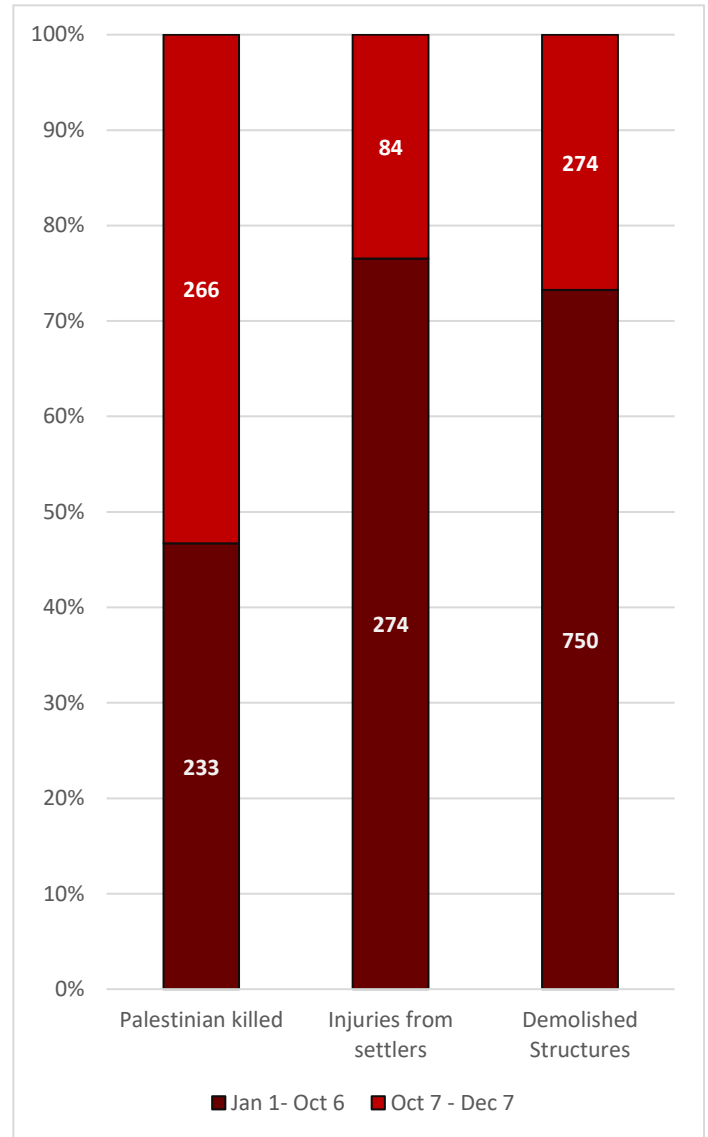
According to OCHA and through the previous two months (*October 7 – December 14*) 262 Palestinians have been killed, including 67 children (*11 people, including 3 children, were killed by settlers and the remainder*

*killed by the Israeli military*). This figure is more than half of the fatalities reported in 2023 (499), as per OCHA. This is in addition to the 3,512 Palestinians, including 542 children, who have been injured (*83 Palestinians were injured by settlers and the remainder by the Israeli military*). Wholesale arrest campaigns have also resulted in 3,680 Palestinians being arrested (*3 killed under custody*), with an additional 5,000+/- Gazan workers detained in Israel, with OHCHR reporting beatings and ill-treatment of detainees, “possibly amounting to torture”.

Access restrictions in the form of fixed checkpoints, flying checkpoints, gates, earth mounds and concrete blocks, manned by Israeli military forces, along with the prevalence of sporadic attacks by armed Israeli settlers have made travel between cities, towns and villages, in the West Bank both dangerous and time-consuming.

**High increase of Settler Violence**

The situation is being further aggravated by the efforts of Israel’s Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, to distribute 10,000 firearms and combat equipment (*i.e., protective vests, helmets, etc.*) among Israeli



civilians predominantly in the West Bank<sup>1</sup>. Already at a record high averaging 3 incidents a day in the first nine months of 2023, settler violence spiked following 7 October to 7 incidents a day. According to OCHA, 328 settler attacks against Palestinians were recorded, of which 80 of the incidents involved physical assault and 248 solely damage to property.

Much of this violence has been directed at herders and Bedouin communities, one of the most vulnerable groups in the West Bank in what was described as daylight displacement by settler militias with the support of the army towards the aim of completely displacement. According to OCHA, the past year through September witnessed 1,105 herders (*comprising nearly 12% of the herder population in the West Bank*) being pushed out of their communities through coercive or forceful means<sup>2</sup>. This is compared 963 herders (*including 353 children*) from **among 21 Palestinian communities being forcefully**

### **expelled by armed settler groups since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Of these communities, 15 were forcefully displaced in full (*i.e., Khamat al-Hamra, Khirbet 'Ein a-Rashash, Wadi a-Siq, Mleihat, Southern a-Nassariyah, Khirbet Jib'it, Community near Tuqu', Khirbet a-Taybah, 'Atiriyah, Maktal Msallam, Khirbet a-Radhem, Khirbet Zanutah, A'nizan, Al-Qanoub, and Bariyet Hizma*) and 6 were forcefully displaced in part (*i.e. Khirbet Susiya, Community south of 'Ein Shibli, Khirbet Samrah area, Nab'a al-Ghazal/al-Farisiyah, Khalet Hamad/khirbet Tal al-Hai, and Badu Jebas/East Taybah*).

Such displacement was carried out under physical assault, threat of murder, destruction of property, theft, and blocking of passageways by settlers, with often the Israeli army brought in as a form of additional intimidation and coercion as to negotiate a “humanitarian corridor” for the displacement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ben-gvir-says-10000-assault-rifles-purchased-for-civilian-security-teams/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/FactSheet-Displacement-of-Palestinian-herders-Sep-23.pdf>

For example, settlers distributed leaflets to Palestinians threatening them to leave to neighboring Jordan or be killed. One of these leaflets says, “*This is your last chance to run to Jordan before we kill our enemies and expel you from our Holy Land, promised to us by God,*” the leaflets stated, warning of a new “**major Nakba**”.

While in the Arab Al-Ka’abna community, settlers hanged dolls covered in blood at the entrance of a school, after vandalizing it, in an attempt to instill fear among Palestinian children.

Israeli authorities have also continued to carry out house demolitions despite the inoperability of military courts, the danger for Palestinian civilians (*including lawyers*) to approach military facilities, and consequent inability to accessing due process. Since 7 October, **274 demolitions have been carried** according to OCHA figures, displacing an additional **711 people**. Two settlements also took formal measures to encroach on Palestinian privately owned land for alleged military necessity in clear violation to International Law, as per JLAC’s case files. On 11 October, the Israeli Military Commander issued military order number 8/23 that

authorized the settlement of Psagot to annex 24,000 m<sup>2</sup> land belonging to multiple families in the town of Al Bireh in the governorate of Ramallah and Al Bireh.

The order also noted that trees and shrubbery are to be cleared as to allow for the land’s use as a “vantage point” if needed militarily. The settlement’s existing area being at a higher elevation to the land in



A leaflet that warns Palestinians of a new “major Nakba”

question debunks its' alleged military necessity and further attests to Israel's persistence to gain stronger footholds in Palestinian land. A similar military order (order number 24/23 MD) was issued on October 28 in affect confiscating 9000 m<sup>2</sup> of privately owned Palestinian land belonging to the villages of Burka and Silat adh Dhahr in the Nablus governorate towards the purpose of repopulating the settlement of Homesh, dismantled as part of the 2005 disengagement plan.

### Conclusion

The wave of violence and forced displacement in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) demands immediate global attention. The alarming increase in settler attacks, herder displacement, and house demolitions reveals a systematic and deliberate effort to tighten any two-state solution. These actions, coupled with the distribution of firearms and land annexations, not only violate international law but also signal a looming threat of ethnic

cleansing. JCHR urge the international community to urgently address these violations, reaffirm the significance of international law, and advocate for a resolution that respects the rights and dignity for Palestinians.



*Dolls covered in blood at the entrance of the Arab Al-Kaabna School*

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