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The State of the World's Human Rights; Palestine (State of) 2024

Palestinian armed groups fired hundreds of indiscriminate rockets and mortar shells towards Israel, including from civilian areas in Gaza, endangering civilians. Palestinian armed individuals or members of armed groups killed Israeli civilians, including hostages in Gaza and settlers living illegally in the occupied West Bank. Journalists and critics of the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank were arrested and arbitrarily detained. Critics of the authorities in Gaza were physically assaulted. Palestinians detained in the West Bank and released Israeli hostages reported torture and other ill-treatment. Women and girls were not protected by Palestinian authorities from gender-based violence and discrimination.

Background

In July and December, the parallel authorities of Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip announced their intention to mount joint efforts to rebuild Gaza once Israel's campaign of devastation and genocide ends. No Palestinian parliamentary elections had been held since 2006.

Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh resigned in February when his government came under pressure from the USA to take over governance of Gaza. President Mahmoud Abbas appointed a new prime minister, Mohammad Mustafa. Israeli authorities claimed responsibility for killing four Hamas leaders in Gaza, and were widely thought to be responsible for the assassination of two other senior Hamas politicians in Lebanon and Iran. Of the surviving Hamas leaders, Khalil al-Hayya led negotiations in Cairo, Egypt, for a ceasefire from October.

Violations of international humanitarian law

Armed conflict in Gaza

Palestinian armed groups fired hundreds of indiscriminate rockets and mortar shells towards Israel, causing no fatalities in Israel, according to OCHA. They fired indiscriminate rockets from or near civilian areas in Gaza and located their fighters in civilian areas, including shelters for displaced people, endangering Palestinian civilians.

Hamas's leaders continued to justify violence against civilians inside Israel. Abu Obeida, the spokesperson for Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, repeatedly made threats against civilian hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. Palestinian armed groups published some 20 videos, photographs and messages showing the suffering of hostages and captives. On 1 September the Israeli military announced that it had recovered the bodies of six Israelis – five civilians and one soldier – who had been shot at close range shortly before their retrieval. Statements posted by Abu Obeida suggested that they were killed to prevent their rescue.¹

Attacks on Israeli civilians

Palestinian armed individuals or groups killed 19 Israeli civilians, of whom seven were settlers living illegally in the occupied West Bank, according to OCHA. On 11 August, fighters from Al-Qassam Brigades killed an Israeli civilian and injured another near Mehola, an illegal Israeli settlement in the northern Jordan Valley.

Freedom of expression and assembly

West Bank

Demonstrators were occasionally met with violence from Palestinian police. Following the police's dispersal of a protest by university students in Ramallah on 30 April, 60 students complained of excessive use of force by police to the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), the Palestinian national human rights institution.

Critics of the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank were arrested and held without charge. The ICHR received more than 241 complaints of arbitrary detention.

According to the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA), 41 journalists were detained by the Palestinian police for periods ranging from a few hours to a week, and interrogated about their work.

Gaza

According to the international Committee to Protect Journalists, journalists came under pressure from Palestinian authorities in Gaza. On 8 July, Amin Abed, a prominent critic of Hamas, was assaulted in Jabalia

refugee camp in northern Gaza by masked armed men whom he identified as Hamas affiliates. He required hospitalization for multiple fractures. In November and December, nine journalists were attacked or otherwise prevented from reporting. Government officials stopped journalists from covering local protests against Hamas's management of aid scarcity, according to MADA.

Unlawful killings

West Bank

Eyewitnesses reported excessive use of force by Palestinian police conducting armed arrest raids on Jenin and other Palestinian towns in the northern West Bank. ICHR and Lawyers for Justice reported that Palestinian police killed 15 Palestinians during these raids, including two children, who were alleged to be members of Palestinian armed groups. On 1 May, Palestinian forces shot and killed Ahmed Abu al-Ful, a member of an armed group, while he was driving in Tulkarem. Witnesses said he was unarmed at the time of the shooting, though the police disputed this. No criminal investigation was opened into his killing, according to the ICHR.

Palestinian police did not intervene to prevent the killing in Jenin of Karam al-Jabarin by armed men affiliated with Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) on 21 March. Police failed to investigate the case or make arrests, despite the public announcement of his "execution" by PIJ. Armed groups affiliated with PIJ recruited child fighters for their clashes with Palestinian security forces.

Gaza

On 26 September, Hamas security forces killed aid worker Islam Hijazi in Khan Younis in central Gaza by firing 90 bullets at her car. Hamas blamed the killing on mistaken identification and failed to conduct any investigation or hold those responsible accountable.

Torture and other ill-treatment

OCHA reported that 97 civilians and soldiers taken by Palestinian fighters on 7 October 2023 remained captive in Gaza, including two children: five-year-old Ariel Bibas and his one-year-old brother Kfir. All hostages were held without contact with the ICRC. Dozens of hostages were feared killed either in attacks by Israeli forces or in unlawful killings by Palestinian armed groups. Hostages who were released said that they had endured or witnessed severe beatings and sexual assault.²

Between January and November, the ICHR received 123 complaints of torture and other ill-treatment in Palestinian detention centres and prisons in the West Bank, mostly during interrogations. Because of the

ongoing conflict, the ICHR could not collect complaints of torture or other ill-treatment by Palestinian authorities against Palestinians in Gaza.

Right to truth, justice and reparation

Hamas authorities continued to consistently fail to conduct investigations into serious violations of international law, including possible war crimes.

Arrest warrants were issued by the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber on 21 November against Al-Qassam Brigades leader Mohammed Deif, as well as Israel's prime minister and former minister of defence. Israeli forces claimed to have killed Mohammed Deif in July.

Women's and girls' rights

Women and girls were not protected by Palestinian authorities from gender-based violence and discrimination. Women in camps for displaced people in southern Gaza reported to local women's rights organizations that they faced domestic abuse as well as harassment and injury in crowds at food distribution points.

Enforced disappearances

Despite relatives' appeals to the Ministry of the Interior, the fate of six men subjected to enforced disappearance by Palestinian authorities in the West Bank town of Salfit in 2002 remained undisclosed.

The conditions and whereabouts of two citizens of Israel with mental disabilities, Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed, remained undisclosed after they went missing in Gaza in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Right to a healthy environment

Just 1% of Palestine's waste was recycled.

In March, authorities conducted training aimed at building a climate-resilient healthcare system.

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1. [Israel/OPT: Amnesty International's Research Into Hamas-Led Attacks of 7 October 2023 and Treatment of Hostages, 2 December ↵](#)
 2. ["Israel/OPT: Hamas and other armed groups must immediately release civilians held hostage in Gaza", 12 July ↵](#)

Associated documents

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State of Palestine

Report on the human rights situation (covering 2024)

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