

workers to a higher risk of violence and other abuse.

RIGHT TO HOUSING

The crisis of housing availability and affordability continued, with record numbers experiencing homelessness, including children. In March, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights criticized the continued lack of culturally appropriate housing for Travellers and Roma.

In May, the government-appointed Housing Commission's review of housing policy found "ineffective decision-making" and high public expenditure relative to other European states. It recommended a "radical strategic reset of housing policy". It also proposed wording for the constitutional referendum on housing promised by the government but not held by year's end.

REFUGEES' AND MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

The government failed to revise its plan for phasing out the inadequate "direct provision" asylum accommodation system. Due to lack of availability, and as a lower priority group, thousands of single male asylum seekers were left without accommodation; many were forced to sleep rough. In August, the High Court ruled that the state failed in its duty to provide for their basic needs.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

In September, civil society organization Transgender Equality Network Ireland published research into transgender and non-binary people's experiences of general and gender-affirming healthcare services. It found long waiting lists for, and negative mental health effects from, the specialist National Gender Service. It also found frequent pathologization and lack of knowledge among general healthcare providers.

DISCRIMINATION

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern at persistent discrimination and

racism against the Traveller and Roma communities.

The Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act came into force in December, increasing sentences for certain crimes proven to be motivated by hatred.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

State of Israel

Israel committed genocide in Gaza, including by causing some of the highest known death tolls among children, journalists, and health and humanitarian workers of any recent conflict in the world, and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians conditions calculated to bring about their physical destruction. Armed conflict with Lebanon caused civilian deaths and mass displacement. Israel committed the crime of apartheid, including through the forcible transfer and displacement of Palestinians both in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. State-backed violent settlers enjoyed impunity while conscientious objectors were imprisoned. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed in militarized arrest raids in the occupied West Bank. Thousands of Palestinians were subjected to arbitrary detention and to ill-treatment, amounting to torture in many cases. The International Court of Justice's instructions to avert genocide and end illegal occupation were ignored. Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly came under attack.

BACKGROUND

Israel entrenched its military occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank through the expansion and fortification of military zones, and of settlements in the West Bank. In

November, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed the then defence minister, Yoav Gallant, citing disagreements over indefinite direct Israeli military control of Gaza and recruitment of *Haredi* (ultra-orthodox) Jews to the army.

The conflict between Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based armed group, and Israel escalated significantly. On 23 September the Israeli military launched Operation Northern Arrows. On 1 October, Israel began a ground invasion into southern Lebanon. On 27 November, an Israel/Lebanon ceasefire deal was signed.

In April and October, Israeli attacks on Iranian targets killed senior military officers, and Iranian forces launched missiles towards Israel, which killed one Palestinian man in Jericho, a city in the eastern part of the West Bank.

VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Armed conflict in Gaza

Israel perpetrated the crime of genocide in Gaza by killing Palestinian civilians, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about Palestinians' physical destruction by causing mass forced displacement, obstructing or denying life-saving aid, and by damaging or destroying life-sustaining infrastructure.¹

Israeli attacks during the year caused at least 23,000 immediate fatalities, according to the Health Cluster and WHO in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Some 60% of those killed were women, children and older people. The high civilian death toll was a result of direct, disproportionate or indiscriminate attacks. On 16 April, 15 civilians on Market Street in Al-Maghazi refugee camp, central Gaza, were killed deliberately in an Israeli air strike. They included 10 children playing around a football table. One of the children had previously fled Gaza City with his family to avoid starvation.²

OCHA reported that 52,214 Palestinians suffered conflict-related injuries during the

year. Based on reports from doctors treating traumatic injuries to the lower limbs, head and spine, the WHO calculated in July that around 25% of those injured in Gaza would have acute and ongoing rehabilitation needs for years.

Some 90% of Gaza's population were displaced, most of them multiple times. On 6 May, Israel began a large-scale military operation in eastern Rafah that extended to the whole governorate, despite warnings of catastrophic humanitarian consequences and a legally binding order from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to refrain from doing so. The operation displaced 1.2 million Palestinians living there, the vast majority of whom were already internally displaced. It also closed and destroyed much of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

Following repeated mass "evacuation" orders, on 6 October Israeli forces ordered the displacement of the remaining 300,000 Palestinians from North Gaza governorate. More than 1 million people, half of whom were children, were living in tents during winter, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council. Five newborn babies died of hypothermia between 24 and 29 December, according to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Israeli forces attacked hospitals, medical staff and humanitarian workers, killing scores in drone and artillery attacks and air strikes. Of Gaza's 36 hospitals, only 17 were still partly functional at the end of the year, due to Israeli attacks. An Israeli raid on Kamal Adwan hospital on 27 December put the last major health facility in North Gaza out of service, while its director, Hussam Abu Safiya, was arbitrarily detained along with 240 other personnel and patients.

All humanitarian organizations reported excessive Israeli restrictions and delays on approvals of aid transfers. For example, Médecins Sans Frontières said in December that negotiating the import of essential refrigeration for medical items took five months, and that sterilization equipment was blocked at the border. As a result of the Israeli military siege, 96% of Gaza's 1 million

children were malnourished, and some 60,000 children under the age of five suffered acute malnutrition by the end of the year. Nearly 2 million people faced critical to catastrophic food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). At least 34 people died of starvation between April and June, according to UN reports.

On 28 October the Knesset passed a law prohibiting contact between Israeli officials, such as those managing aid transfer approvals, and UNRWA, the main agency providing aid, education and health services. The law prohibited UNRWA from operating in East Jerusalem and Israel and closed the organization's headquarters.³

Israeli soldiers carried out wanton destruction without imperative military necessity.⁴ Areas particularly affected included the eastern perimeter, amounting to 16% of Gaza and particularly its productive agricultural land, and the towns of Khuza'a in the south and Shuja'iya in the north.

The conflict reduced Gaza's water supply to less than 5 litres a day per person throughout the year. Oxfam reported in July that severe water shortages were caused by systematic destruction of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure. All sewage treatment facilities had been destroyed by the end of June and heavy machinery was broken at southern Gaza's main landfill site. The WHO reported that 727,909 people, particularly children, had been affected by water- and sanitation-related diseases such as hepatitis A by 28 May.

All of Gaza's universities and colleges, along with hundreds of mosques and three churches, were damaged or destroyed. Most schools were transformed into shelters for displaced people and in November UNICEF reported that 95% of school buildings had sustained damage.

Armed conflict with Hezbollah

Throughout the year, Hezbollah repeatedly fired unguided rockets into populated civilian areas of Israel, killing and wounding civilians and damaging and destroying civilian homes.⁵ Hezbollah attacks killed more than

100 people and displaced an estimated 63,000 residents of northern Israel. In October, after Israel's ground invasion of southern Lebanon, Amnesty International documented three Hezbollah rocket attacks that killed eight civilians, injured at least 16, and which may constitute war crimes.

APARTHEID Forcible transfer

OCHA reported that in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities demolished 1,763 buildings, permanently displacing some 4,500 Palestinians, the highest figure in one year since 2009.

Israel continued its campaign of destroying Palestinian villages in the West Bank. According to the NGO B'Tselem, the Israeli military administration subjected the populations of six Palestinian villages in the West Bank to forcible transfer by demolishing their homes, and threatened at least 40 more communities, each with several hundred inhabitants, with the same fate. Israeli forces allowed or encouraged settlers to terrorize the inhabitants with impunity and sometimes participated in the violence.

Israel established 43 new settlements in the West Bank in addition to around 330 established in previous years, according to Peace Now, an Israeli anti-occupation organization. Some 2,400 hectares of land in the West Bank were declared Israeli state land, the largest confiscation of territory in the OPT since 1992.

Within Israel, the Ministry of National Security announced in November that there had been a 400% increase in demolitions of Bedouin homes in the Negev/Naqab region in southern Israel since the start of the year, compared to the number of demolitions in 2022. On 8 May, 300 Palestinian Bedouin citizens of Israel were made homeless when the authorities demolished their village, Wadi al-Khalil, without proper consultation.⁶ On 3 June, 500 Bedouin of Ras Jrahah village were ordered by a district court to demolish their own homes and move to a government-approved unfinished township under a separate, Bedouin-only authority. On 14

November, all remaining infrastructure and the mosque in Umm al-Hiran were demolished by militarized police units. The Israeli authorities said that the demolitions were necessary to make way for new or expanding Jewish communities.

The Deportation of Families of Terrorists Law, passed on 7 November, allowed the removal of Israeli citizenship or Jerusalem residency from family members of detainees alleged to have “supported terrorism” or people who have been convicted of security offences: a form of collective punishment. The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order), nearly continuously renewed since 2003, continued to put certain categories of Palestinians at risk of statelessness.

Freedom of movement

Some 3,500 children from Gaza with chronic illnesses, who had been scheduled to receive treatment in the West Bank after 7 October 2023, had their permits cancelled. Twenty-two patients from Gaza, including five newborn babies, who had been in Israeli or East Jerusalem hospitals in 2023, were sent back to Gaza following an order issued on 19 June without receiving the medical care for which they had been referred.

OCHA counted 793 roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank, obstructing Palestinians’ movement between Palestinian villages and towns, and delaying access by emergency services. Military permission, previously granted twice yearly for accessing privately owned agricultural land, was cancelled entirely, affecting farmers in 105 locations in the West Bank. The Israeli army sealed off large towns and refugee camps in the northern West Bank and placed them under curfew for days during raids. The WHO recorded twice as many incidents of obstruction of medical responders in the West Bank compared to the previous year.

Some 100,000 Palestinian workers in the West Bank had their permits to work in Israel cancelled. New permits were rarely issued.

UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which investigated cases where journalists were killed in connection with their work, Israeli attacks killed 74 Palestinian journalists in the OPT.

According to OCHA, some 487 Palestinians, including 90 children, were killed during militarized arrest raids in the towns of Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus and Tubas in the northern West Bank. Israeli authorities did not investigate the apparently unlawful killings.⁷

Settlers killed six Palestinians and injured 356, according to OCHA, mostly in rural localities such as the hills south of Nablus, the South Hebron Hills, and in areas of East Jerusalem and Hebron. State-backed settler violence contributed to the forcible transfer of the Palestinian population.⁸

ARBITRARY DETENTION

Israeli forces arrested more than 10,000 Palestinians and subjected Palestinians from Gaza to enforced disappearance or incommunicado detention.⁹ According to the NGO Hamoked, some 5,262 Palestinians were held without charge or trial at the end of the year: 3,376 under administrative detention orders and 1,886 under the Unlawful Combatants Law.

In November the defence minister announced that Israel would no longer issue administrative detention orders against Jewish settlers.

At least 10 of 156 Palestinian citizens of Israel arrested in 2023 on vague and overreaching charges of “persistent consumption of terrorist materials” – based on allegations that they had viewed footage from Gaza on social media – remained in pretrial detention in February, according to the NGO Mossawa Centre.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Released detainees and prison staff speaking as whistle-blowers testified to the routine use of severe physical violence, including sexual assault and rape, against Palestinian detainees in all detention facilities. The denial of sufficient food, water, sleep, daylight and

medical treatment was systematic. At least 54 Palestinian detainees died in custody, according to the Palestinian Prisoners Society. Adnan Al-Bursh, a leading orthopaedic surgeon in Gaza, died in Ofer Prison in the West Bank in mid-April without being charged with a criminal offence. Eyewitnesses said he had been severely beaten.

The Military Advocate General opened 44 criminal investigations into deaths in detention and eight into allegations of torture, leading to just one indictment.

The Israeli authorities suspended visits from the ICRC and detainees' families to Palestinians in Israeli detention, contributing to lack of accountability around the treatment of detainees.

RIGHT TO TRUTH, JUSTICE AND REPARATION

Israeli authorities failed to independently, effectively and transparently investigate violations of international law committed by Israeli forces, including possible war crimes and genocide in Gaza, and unlawful killings in the West Bank. No independent investigators were allowed into Gaza.

On 26 January, 28 March and 24 May, the ICJ ordered Israel to implement provisional measures to prevent genocide in Gaza. Israeli authorities repeatedly ignored such orders.

On 19 July the ICJ found that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory was illegal under international law.

On 21 November the ICC issued arrest warrants against the prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the then defence minister, Yoav Gallant, and one Hamas leader for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to be barred from entering Israel and the OPT. It received no response from the Israeli government to 15 requests for information and reported that the Israeli government had told Israeli doctors not to cooperate with its investigation into Palestinian fighters' war crimes in southern Israel.

Sanctions imposed on individual armed Jewish supremacist settlers and specific settler organizations by France, the UK and the USA at the start of the year did not appear to have deterred further acts of state-backed settler violence or the complicity of Israeli soldiers in the settlers' attacks.

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' RIGHTS

Pregnant and breastfeeding women were disproportionately affected by the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. According to the IPC, 16,500 pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza were acutely malnourished. Women and girls faced diseases due to the destruction of sanitary infrastructure and the majority of health facilities including maternity and neonatal wards.

Domestic and gender-based violence increased both in Israel and in Gaza in the context of mass displacement and armed conflict.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY

Palestinian citizens of Israel faced arrest and discrimination when they expressed their opposition to the Israeli forces' attacks on Gaza. Human rights lawyer Ahmad Khalefa was released to house arrest in February after spending 110 days in pretrial detention for organizing anti-war protests in October 2023. The charges against him of "incitement to terrorism" and "identifying with a terrorist organization" were unsubstantiated, according to the NGO Human Rights Defenders Fund.

The Mossawa Centre said in June that it had received some 400 requests for assistance from workers who were dismissed by their Israeli employers, especially the Clalit health provider, for social media posts opposing Israeli attacks on Gaza.

Thousands of Jewish Israelis held demonstrations against the government. They were met with police water cannon, and dozens were arrested. On 2 September the finance minister applied a court injunction to block the Histadrut, Israel's largest trade union, from calling a one-day general strike in support of the protesters. On 22

September, Israeli forces raided and shut Al Jazeera's offices in Ramallah, having closed the broadcaster's offices in Jerusalem months earlier. Israeli authorities continued to ban foreign journalists from entering Gaza, and the Israeli Supreme Court turned down petitions by the Foreign Press Association requesting access.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS' RIGHTS

Nine Jewish and two Palestinian citizens of Israel were jailed for refusing to serve in the army based on their objections to military occupation, apartheid and genocide against Palestinians. Two of them, teenagers Tal Mitnick and Itamar Greenberg, were imprisoned for six months.

RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

In June the UN Environment Programme noted that debris from mass destruction of infrastructure, white phosphorus ordnance and industrial and medical waste was releasing extremely high levels of hazardous substances in Gaza. It estimated that, were bombing to cease immediately, it would take 45 years to clear and recycle the debris and waste.

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1. *Israel/OPT: "You Feel Like You Are Subhuman": Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza*, 5 December 1
 2. "Israel/OPT: Israeli air strikes that killed 44 civilians further evidence of war crimes – new investigation", 27 May 1
 3. "Israel/OPT: Law to ban UNRWA amounts to criminalization of humanitarian aid", 29 October 1
 4. "Israel/OPT: Israeli military must be investigated for war crime of wanton destruction in Gaza – new investigation", 5 September 1
 5. "Israel: Hezbollah's use of inherently inaccurate weapons to launch unlawful attacks violates international law", 20 December 1
 6. "Israel/OPT: Over 300 Palestinian Bedouin face forced evictions following mass home demolitions in Negev/Naqab", 9 May 1
 7. "Israel/OPT: Palestinians face drastic escalation in unlawful killings, displacement as Israel launches West Bank military operation", 28 August 1
 8. "State-backed deadly rampage by Israeli settlers underscores urgent need to dismantle apartheid", 22 April 1
 9. "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza", 18 July 1

ITALY

Republic of Italy

There were new reports of torture by prison officers. Violence against women continued at an alarmingly high level. Racialized and LGBTI people continued to experience racism and discrimination, including by state officials. Italy attempted to send asylum seekers rescued at sea to Albania, to have their claim examined outside of the country. Police used excessive and unnecessary force against protesters on multiple occasions and limited people's right to freedom of peaceful assembly. About 10% of the population lived in absolute poverty. Barriers to abortion persisted. Human-induced climate change caused an extreme heatwave in July.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Thousands of detainees endured substandard conditions in overcrowded and dilapidated cells. There was concern that such conditions contributed to the rising number of suicides among detainees, numbering 83 as of 20 December.

Conditions in migrant repatriation centres also failed to meet international standards, with people held in bare cages with concrete furniture, inadequate hygiene facilities and lacking meaningful activities.

In April, prosecutors revealed that 13 prison officers had been arrested and eight suspended on allegations of torture and other violations against children in Milan juvenile prison. Two former prison directors were also being investigated for failure to prevent and report the abuses, which spanned years.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

There were 95 killings of women in domestic violence incidents, with 59 killed by their partners or former partners.

In February, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern at the "high prevalence of gender-based violence against women" and