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MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières
(Author)

Israeli forces and settlers ramp up violence against Palestinians in West Bank

The trail of destruction can be seen not only through the people with gunshot and shrapnel wounds at Jenin hospital, but also in the city itself. There, infrastructure and symbolic Palestinian buildings have been torn up and destroyed by bulldozers and tanks.

Violent incursions and incidents are not unique to Jenin. Across the West Bank, 165 Palestinians have been killed since 7 October and more than 2,400 have been injured, according to the Palestinian authorities. In addition, as many as 6,000 Gazans who had jobs in Israel before the war, but whose work permits have since been cancelled, now find themselves living in displacement centres across the West Bank, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Labour.

MSF teams visit these displacement centres to donate medical supplies, including medications for non-communicable diseases, and offer [mental health](#) support. Some patients have told MSF staff that they were beaten, humiliated and abused while being detained by Israeli forces in the weeks since 7 October.

“We have treated some patients who showed signs of being tied up and beaten, reportedly by Israeli forces,” says Yanis Anagnostou, MSF mental health activity manager in Jenin. “They report being tormented for several hours before being left at the West Bank border.”

Violence and forced displacement

In Hebron governorate in the south of the West Bank, violence involving Israeli forces and settlers, forcible displacement, and restrictions on people's movements have impacted every aspect of Palestinians' everyday

lives. Local people have told MSF teams, who have worked in the area since 2001, how they feel unsafe even walking down their own streets and how their access to basic services, including food markets and healthcare, is heavily restricted.

Since 7 October, at least 111 Palestinian families, comprising around 905 people, have had no choice but to leave their homes in the West Bank due to violence and intimidation by Israeli forces and settlers, according to the UN.

In South Hebron Hills, among the dozens of families [displaced](#) from their homes, two families were forced to leave after settlers burnt their home, stole solar panels and water barrels, and cut water pipes. Our teams responded by providing mental healthcare and displacement kits to those affected.

MSF teams based in Hebron are also providing families with essential relief items, including blankets, mattresses and heaters, as well as offering mental health support to people who have been exposed to violence or forcibly displaced from their homes.

“One woman, whose home was burned to the ground, told me how unsafe, afraid and insecure she still feels,” says Mariam Qabas, MSF health promotion supervisor in Hebron. “She told me: ‘I never thought of leaving my land or house like this, but I cannot risk my sons and my family. I cannot see the future; I feel helpless and powerless.’”

“These are completely normal reactions to such abnormal circumstances, where people are facing intense violence and insecurity, says Qabas.”

MSF urges Israeli authorities to show restraint in the West Bank, to put an end to the violence and forced displacements of Palestinians. They must stop implementing restrictive measures that impede the ability of Palestinians to access basic services, including medical care.

As the bombardments and collective punishment of people in Gaza continue unabated, and the lawlessness and bloodshed spills over to the West Bank, the need for a ceasefire is more desperate than ever.

Zouhir, like many other Gazans displaced across the West Bank, has been following the events in Gaza from a crowded sports hall in Jenin, where he and hundreds of other displaced workers sleep.

“Today, our suffering is that we are away from our children and our families,” he says. “We speak to our children back in Gaza and we cry. I wish they would send me back to Gaza, where my children and grandchildren are. Our suffering is that we are powerless, and we can’t do anything.”

ecoi.net description:

West Bank: Continuing armed conflict since 7 October 2023; at least 165 Palestinians killed and more than 2,400 injured

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State of Palestine

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