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COI QUERY

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Question(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Latest developments on the security situation in the West Bank (1 January 2021 – 30 November 2021)</u>2. <u>Exit/entry for Palestinians from/to the West Bank</u>
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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Palestine/ West Bank

Security Situation

1. Latest development on the security situation in the West Bank (1 January 2021 – 30 November 2021)

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' estimations for 2021, 3.1 million Palestinians live in the West Bank, out of a total 5.2 million Palestinians living between the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.¹ As reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF):

'Since the 1970s, Israel has declared some 18 per cent of the West Bank, or nearly 30 per cent of Area C, as "firing zones" for military training. Humsa al Bqai'a is one of 38 Bedouin and herding communities partially or fully located within these "firing zones." These are some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank, with limited access to education and health services, and to water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, it is estimated that since 2009, some 7,400 Palestinian-owned structures have been destroyed, resulting in the displacement of over 11,000 people from their homes, including some displaced more than once.'²

Since April-May 2021, an escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine across all territories has led to an increase of security incidents and civilian casualties.³ Palestinian protests that started in East Jerusalem soon spread across the West Bank in May 2021. Israeli security forces responded to the protests with live fires, killing 15 protesters and injuring 1 700 in the West Bank only.⁴

The report of the Special Rapporteur stated that: 'over a period of two weeks in May 2021, the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory deteriorated significantly and the worst levels of violence and civilian casualties in years were seen in Gaza and across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem'.⁵ The escalation of violence has led to the 'rising of insecurity' in West Bank.⁶ In September 2021, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations referred that 'the situation of the Palestinian civilian population in Occupied Palestine is becoming more critical by the day as Israel, the occupying Power, continues to violate their human rights and

¹ PCBS, Estimated Population In The Palestine Mid-Year By Governorate, 1997-2026 - Projections for 2021, 26 May 2021, [url](#) CRS, The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations, Updated 26 October 2021, [url](#), p. 1

² OCHA and UNICEF, UN reiterates its call for demolitions to end and for international law to be respected, 5 February 2021, [url](#)

³ R2P Monitor, Issue 58, 1 September 2021, [url](#), p. 11; International Crisis Group, The Israel-Palestine Crisis: Causes, Consequences, Portents, 14 May 2021, [url](#); International Crisis Group and USMEP, Beyond Business as Usual in Israel-Palestine, Middle East Report N°225, 10 August 2021, [url](#), pp. 1,3,5,8

⁴ Crisis Group and USMEP, Beyond Business as Usual in Israel-Palestine, Middle East Report N°225, 10 August 2021, [url](#), pp. 12

⁵ UNHRC, Situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with a focus on the legal status of the settlements Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, 29 July 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶ MSF, "We are all afraid": Settler attacks against Palestinians in Hebron on the rise, 16 August 2021, [url](#)

breach international law'.⁷

Referring to the escalation in hostilities from May 2021, Acaps noted that:

'Recurrent episodes of violence in Gaza and the West Bank have affected Palestinians' social and material wellbeing. Disruption of support networks and livelihood systems affects people's ability to prevent negative impacts of the violence on their wellbeing and to avoid resorting to negative coping strategies'.⁸

In November 2021, the Washington Post revealed that 'the Israeli military has been conducting a broad surveillance effort in the occupied West Bank to monitor Palestinians by integrating facial recognition with a growing network of cameras and smartphones'.⁹

In October 2021, Israel announced plans to build additional 1 355 residences for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank.¹⁰ Following this announcement, the European Union (EU) called upon the Israeli government to halt such plans, adding that:

'Settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the parties. The European Union has consistently made clear that it will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by both sides'.¹¹

List of main security incidents

During the violence that erupted in May 2021, around 15 Palestinian protesters were killed and as many as 1 700 were injured by Israeli military forces in the West Bank only.¹² From January until the end of July 2021, 11 Palestinian children were killed by Israeli military forces in the West Bank.' In addition, a total of 410 attacks by settlers against Palestinians are reported to have occurred during the first 10 months of 2021, 108 of which were attacks against individuals and 302 were attacks against properties.¹³ Further, OHCHR reported that:

'These settler attacks are primarily directed against rural Palestinian families living on small farms or in villages and towns in the occupied West Bank located in close proximity to Israeli settlements. Many of these Palestinians reside in the so-called "Area C" of the West Bank, which is under complete Israeli security and civil control, and where Israel's *de facto* annexation stratagem is most evident'.¹⁴

Some of the security incidents that took place between the 1 January and 30 November 2021, and after the escalation of violence in May 2021, include:

- During July 2021, OCHA reported that three Palestinians, including two children, were killed in different incidents; and at least 1 090 were injured, including 141 children.¹⁵
- On 14 July Israel authorities 'confiscated 49 structures in the Palestinian herding community

⁷ UNGA Security Council, Identical letters dated 27 September 2021 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, A/ES-10/879-S/2021/829, 29 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁸ ACAPS, Palestine, Social Impacts of the humanitarian situation, Thematic Report, 19 October 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁹ Washington Post (The), Israel escalates surveillance of Palestinians with facial recognition program in West Bank, 8 November 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰ Al Jazeera, Israel to build 1,300 settlement units in occupied West Bank, 24 October 2021, [url](#)

¹¹ EEAS, Israel: Statement by the Spokesperson on new settlement expansion, 25 October 2021, [url](#)

¹² Crisis Group and USMEP, Beyond Business as Usual in Israel-Palestine, Middle East Report N°225, 10 August 2021, [url](#), pp. 12

¹³ OHCHR, UN experts condemn raid on West Bank NGO, urge Israel meaningfully probe child deaths, 13 August 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴ OHCHR, UN experts alarmed by rise in settler violence in occupied Palestinian territory, 10 November 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵ OCHA, Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Response to the escalation in the oPt Situation Report No. 8: 8-28 July 2021, 30 July 2021, [url](#), p. 1

of Ras al Tin (Ramallah). Thirteen households, comprising 84 people, including 53 children, were displaced'.¹⁶

- On 29 July, the main office of the NGO Defence for Children International was violated and the computers, laptops, hard drives and files of beneficiaries were taken by the Israeli forces.¹⁷
- During August 2021, 'the Israeli authorities demolished, forced people to demolish, or seized 118 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This resulted in the displacement of 191 people, including 116 children, and affected the livelihoods, or access to services, of nearly 1,400 others. All the structures were targeted due to the lack of building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain in Area C and East Jerusalem.'¹⁸
- Between 10-23 August 2021, 5 Palestinians were killed and 221 injured by the Israeli forces.¹⁹
- On 24 August 2021, Israeli forces raided a Palestinian refugee campus in Nablus. A 15-year-old boy died from live fire of the Israeli military forces.²⁰
- OCHA reported that during the period of 24 August–6 September 2021 'Israeli forces carried out 118 search-and-arrest operations and arrested 134 Palestinians across the West Bank'.²¹
- During September 2021, 'the Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced people to demolish eight Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits. This caused the displacement of two people, and affected the livelihoods of over 50 other people'.²²
- ACLED reported that, during the week 4-10 September 2021, tensions in West Bank were 'heightened' because of the 'escape of six high-security Palestinian prisoners from an Israeli prison'.²³
- On 16 September 2021, two people died in Jenin (north of West Bank) during raids of the Israeli military in order to arrest Hamas members.²⁴
- On 26 September 2021, 'Israeli occupying forces raided the village of Burqin, west of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, firing live ammunition at residents, killing two Palestinians and injuring four others'.²⁵
- During the weeks of 21 September until 4 October 2021, 6 Palestinians were killed, 328 [Palestinians] were injured, 80 [Palestinians] arrested and 70 'search-and-arrest' operations took place in the West Bank.²⁶
- During 5–18 October 2021, 'Israeli forces carried out 113 search-and-arrest operations and arrested about 150 Palestinians across the West Bank'.²⁷
- On 14 October 2021, a 14-year-old boy died by the Israeli forces and one injured and

¹⁶ OCHA, Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Response to the escalation in the oPt Situation Report No. 8: 8-28 July 2021, 30 July 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁷ New Arab (The), CCTV video shows Israeli forces raid office of NGO for Palestinian child prisoners, 30 July 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸ OCHA, West Bank Demolitions and Displacement: An Overview, August 2021, 30 September 2021, [url](#), p.1

¹⁹ OCHA, Protection of Civilians, occupied Palestinian territory, 10-23 August 2021, 27 August 2021, [url](#)

²⁰ New Arab (The), Israeli army kills Palestinian child during West Bank refugee camp storming, 24 August 2021, [url](#); OCHA, Protection of Civilians, occupied Palestinian territory, 24 August-6 September 2021, 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²¹ OCHA, Protection of Civilians, occupied Palestinian territory, 24 August -6 September 2021, 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²² OCHA, Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Response to the escalation in the oPt Situation Report No. 10: September 2021, 14 October 2021, [url](#), pp. 2-3

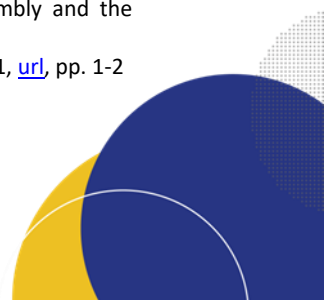
²³ ACLED, Regional Overview: Middle East 4-10 September 2021, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴ Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration, 27 September 2021, [url](#), p. 12

²⁵ UNGA Security Council, Identical letters dated 27 September 2021 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, 29 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²⁶ OCHA, Protection of Civilians, occupied Palestinian territory, 21 September- 4 October 2021, 8 October 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2

²⁷ OCHA, Protection of Civilians, occupied Palestinian territory, 5-18 October 2021, 22 October 2021. [url](#), p. 2



arrested near the Tunnels Checkpoint.²⁸

- According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)²⁹, during 7 – 13 October 2021, 154 raids were recorded ‘into the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem’.³⁰
- During 14-29 October 2021, ‘104 incursions [were recorded] into the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem: 100 civilians arrested, including 26 children, and 3 journalists (1 woman)’ by the Israeli forces.³¹
- On 5 November 2021, a 13-year-old boy was shot dead by Israeli military forces, in the village of Deir al-Hatab.³²
- Between 18-24 November 2021, five Palestinians were reported shot and wounded, including two children and a journalist, while 73 civilians were arrested, including 7 children and 3 women in the West Bank (including occupied East Jerusalem).³³

2. Exit/entry for Palestinians from/to the West Bank

The West Bank is divided in three areas (Area A, Area B and Area C) and it is controlled by different authorities. Specifically, Area A is controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA), Area B by the Israeli and the PA and Area C, which constitutes the 60 % (and more) of the West Bank, is controlled only by the Israeli authorities.³⁴ Additionally, ‘just 0.24% of public lands in the West Bank have been allocated to Palestinians, with 99.76 % going to Israeli settlements and infrastructure’.³⁵

As Human Rights Watch noted, the Israeli authorities ‘regularly deny entry into the West Bank to non-registered Palestinians who had lived in the West Bank but left temporarily (to study, work, marry, or for other reasons) and to their non-registered spouses and other family members.’ Further, the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order)—2003 prohibits Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza from obtaining citizenship or permanent residency in Israel and East Jerusalem, with few exceptions.³⁶

The Secretariat’s note of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) mentioned that:

‘In the West Bank, the occupying Power deploys a series of administrative and physical mechanisms that control Palestinian resources and pedestrian and vehicular movement. The multilayer control system includes a stringent permit regime, bureaucratic controls and hundreds of permanent and flying checkpoints, gates, earth mounds, roadblocks and trenches. Such restrictions obstruct productive activities and access to services, undermine social lives and impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance.’³⁷

²⁸ OCHA, Protection of Civilians, occupied Palestinian territory, 5-18 October 2021, 22 October 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²⁹ The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) is an independent Palestinian human rights organisation. The Centre enjoys Consultative Status with the ECOSOC of the United Nation. For more information, see PCHR, About us, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰ PCHR, Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (07 – 13 October 2021), 14 October 2021, [url](#)

³¹ PCHR, Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (14 – 20 October 2021), 21 October 2021, [url](#)

³² Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration, 8 November 2021, [url](#), p. 19

³³ PCHR, Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (18– 24 November 2021), 25 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁴ Al Jazeera, What are areas A, B, and C of the occupied West Bank?, 11 September 2019, [url](#)

³⁵ Save the Children, ‘Hope under the Rubble’, The impact of Israel’s home demolition policy on Palestinian children and their families, 28 June 2021, [url](#), p. 5

³⁶ Human Rights Watch, A Threshold Crossed, 27 April 2021, [url](#)

³⁷ UNCTAD, Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Note by the UNCTAD secretariat**, 20 September 2021, [url](#), p. 11

Patients residing in the West Bank need to apply for permit by the Israeli authorities in order to 'access health care in East Jerusalem and Israel' while

'Restrictions on the movement of Palestinians from the West Bank to Israel and East Jerusalem are less severe for certain sections of the population. Many women older than 50 years of age and men older than 55 years of age, as well as children under 13 years traveling with an approved adult, are exempted from the requirement to obtain a permit to travel – provided they are not traveling on a Saturday, before 8am or after 7pm'.³⁸

³⁸ WHO, occupied Palestinian Territory, Health Access Barriers for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory, Monthly Report, September 2021, 7 November 2021, [url](#), p. 4

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