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Israel's continuing oppressive and discriminatory system of governing Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) constituted a system of apartheid, and Israeli officials committed the crime of apartheid under international law. Israeli forces launched a three-day offensive on the occupied Gaza Strip in August during which they committed apparent war crimes. This compounded the impact of a 15-year ongoing Israeli blockade that amounts to illegal collective punishment and further fragments Palestinian territory. Israel escalated its crackdown on Palestinians' freedom of association. It also imposed arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement and closures that amounted to collective punishment, mainly in the northern West Bank, ostensibly in response to armed attacks by Palestinians on Israeli soldiers and settlers. The year saw a rise in the number of Palestinians unlawfully killed and seriously injured by Israeli forces during raids in the West Bank. Administrative detentions of Palestinians hit a 14-year high, and torture

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and other ill-treatment continued. Israeli forces demolished al-Araqib village in the Negev/Naqab for the 211th time. A further 35 Palestinian-Bedouin towns in Israel were still denied formal recognition and residents faced possible forcible transfer. Authorities failed to process asylum claims for thousands of asylum seekers, and imposed restrictions on their right to work.

Background

In March, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the OPT determined that the “political system of entrenched rule” in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip “satisfies the prevailing evidentiary standard for the existence of apartheid”. In November, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing reached the same conclusion in relation to Israel’s policies of home demolitions. Some states, including South Africa, condemned Israeli apartheid, echoing statements by Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organizations. Despite this growing recognition, Israel continued to enjoy impunity thanks to the support of its key allies.

In October, the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, concluded that the occupation of the OPT is unlawful due to its permanence and Israel’s measures to annex Palestinian land in law and in practice. In 2022, such measures included retroactive authorization of settlement outposts, including by the Israeli Supreme Court.

In November, Israel held its fifth elections in three years after the collapse of an ideologically diverse coalition government, which continued to discriminate against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. The vote was polarized between those supporting and opposing former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, while consensus on maintaining Israel’s occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories remained. The right-wing

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bloc, led by Benjamin Netanyahu and a religious-nationalist coalition, secured a majority of seats and formed a government in December.

Apartheid

In February, Amnesty International released a 280-page report showing how Israel was imposing an institutionalized regime of oppression and domination against the Palestinian people wherever it exercised control over their rights, fragmenting and segregating Palestinian citizens of Israel, residents of the OPT and Palestinian refugees denied the right of return. Through massive seizures of land and property, unlawful killings, infliction of serious injuries, forcible transfers, arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement, and denial of nationality, among other inhuman or inhumane acts, Israeli officials would be responsible for the crime against humanity of apartheid, which falls under the jurisdiction of the ICC.¹

In March, Israeli authorities re-enacted the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (temporary order) that imposes sweeping restrictions on Palestinian family unification between Israeli citizens or residents and their spouses from the OPT to maintain a Jewish demographic majority.

In July, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld a law authorizing the interior minister to strip citizens of their citizenship if convicted of acts that amount to “breach of allegiance to the state”. Since its enactment in 2008, application of the law has only been considered against Palestinian citizens. On 20 September, the Israeli Appeals Tribunal approved the revocation of stay or temporary residency permits of 10 Palestinians – four children, three women and three men – living in Jerusalem because they are distant relatives of a Palestinian assailant. On 18 December, Israel deported French-Palestinian human rights defender Salah Hammouri following the revocation of his East Jerusalem residency.²

Unlawful attacks and killings

Armed conflict between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza

On 5 August, Israel launched an offensive on the Gaza Strip targeting the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and its armed wing, destroying or damaging some 1,700 Palestinian homes and displacing hundreds of civilians. The Israeli army and Palestinian armed groups committed apparent war crimes during the three days of fighting. (See State of Palestine entry.)³

According to the UN, 49 Palestinians were killed, including 31 civilians. Amnesty International established that Israeli forces killed 17 of the civilians, including eight children. Seven civilians, including four children, were killed by a rocket that misfired apparently launched by a Palestinian armed group. On 7 August, an Israeli missile, apparently fired by a drone, hit Al-Falluja cemetery in Jabalia refugee camp, killing five children and injuring one, in an apparent direct attack on civilians or indiscriminate attack.

West Bank

Israeli forces killed 151 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and injured 9,875, according to OCHA-OPT, amid a surge of military incursions that involved excessive use of force, including unlawful killings and apparent extrajudicial executions.⁴ Defense for Children International-Palestine reported that Israeli forces or settlers killed 36 children across the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

On 11 May, Israeli soldiers killed Shirin Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-US Al Jazeera correspondent, and injured her colleague, while they were covering an Israeli army raid in Jenin Camp. In September, the Israeli authorities admitted that an Israeli soldier “likely” killed the journalist but concluded that no criminal offence had been committed.

Right to truth, justice and reparation

Israeli authorities continued to refuse to cooperate with the investigation by the ICC Office of the Prosecutor, despite a 2021 decision by the ICC to initiate an investigation into the situation in Palestine. The authorities also failed to adequately investigate violations and crimes under international law.

Freedom of movement

In the West Bank, 175 permanent checkpoints and other roadblocks, as well as scores of temporary irregular barriers and a draconian permit regime, supported by a repressive biometric surveillance system, continued to control and fragment Palestinian communities.

In October, Israeli authorities placed additional restrictions on freedom of movement in the occupied West Bank reportedly in response to Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians, through sweeping and arbitrary closures that severely disrupted everyday life and amounted to unlawful collective punishment. In April, the Israeli army closed checkpoints into Jenin in a move that appeared designed to stifle Jenin's businesses and trade with Palestinian citizens of Israel. In October, Israeli forces re-imposed a closure on Jenin and closed off Nablus for three weeks, and Shufat refugee camp in occupied East Jerusalem for over a week, gravely affecting the freedom of movement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians living in those areas and restricting access to medical aid and other essential services.

According to COGAT, a unit of the defence ministry, Israel revoked the permits to work in Israel of 2,500 Palestinians as a means of collective punishment.

A new procedure issued by the Israeli military authorities came into effect in October, restricting the ability of foreign passport holders to live with their Palestinian spouses in the West Bank by limiting their visas to a maximum of six months, requiring couples to request permanent residency status in the West Bank, which is subject to Israeli approval.

In Gaza, the illegal Israeli blockade entered its 16th year. According to Gaza-based human rights organization Al-Mezan, nine patients, including three children, died while waiting for Israeli permits to receive life-saving treatment outside of the Gaza Strip, amid a complex bureaucratic entanglement between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas administration.

The only power plant in Gaza was forced to shut for two days in August because of a week-long Israeli closure of all crossings, which prevented the delivery of fuel.

Forced evictions

Tens of thousands of Palestinians remained at risk of forced evictions in Israel and the OPT, including some 5,000 living in shepherding communities in the Jordan Valley and South Hebron Hills. Israeli authorities demolished 952 Palestinian structures across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 1,031 Palestinians, and affecting the livelihoods of thousands of others.

On 4 May, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld a decision to forcibly transfer over 1,000 residents of Masafer Yatta in the South Hebron Hills from their ancestral land, which Israel had designated as “firing zone 918”, a military training zone closed to Palestinian access.

In July, the Israeli Supreme Court legalized the settlement outpost of Mitzpe Kramim, built on private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank, claiming that it was “purchased in good faith”. This reversed its 2020 decision that ordered the government to evacuate the outpost.

According to OCHA, 2022 was the sixth consecutive year that saw an increase in state-backed settler violence against Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, reaching a peak in October during the olive harvest season. The Israeli army and police continued to fail to investigate complaints by Palestinians about such violence.

In Israel, the authorities continued to deny official recognition to 35 Palestinian villages in the Negev/Naqab, depriving them of essential services. In January, the Israeli Land Authority and the Jewish National Fund began planting trees on lands belonging to the village of Saawa al-Atrash in the Negev/Naqab to forcibly transfer its Palestinian population.

In December, Israeli authorities demolished tents and structures in al-Araqib for the 211th time since 2010.

Arbitrary detention

Israeli authorities increased their use of administrative detention, prompting a mass boycott of Israeli military courts by hundreds of detainees including Salah Hammouri, who went on hunger strike together with 29 others in protest at their detention without charge or trial. By 31 December, 866 individuals, all but two of them Palestinians, were administratively detained, the highest number in 14 years.

On 15 April, Israeli police arrested more than 400 Palestinians, including children, journalists and worshippers, during a raid on the al-Aqsa mosque compound in the Old City of Jerusalem. According to the

Palestinian Red Crescent, at least 152 Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets, live ammunition and stun grenades, and were beaten. Most were released after several hours.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Israeli forces continued to subject Palestinian detainees to torture and other ill-treatment. As in previous years, the internal investigation unit of the police, Mahash, failed to properly investigate complaints of torture. On 24 November, the Beersheba District Court extended, by four months, the solitary confinement of Ahmad Manasra, imprisoned as a 13-year-old in 2015 and held in solitary confinement since November 2021, an act that amounts to torture. The same court had rejected in September his appeal for early release on medical grounds despite his severe mental health condition.

Freedom of association and expression

On 18 August, Israeli soldiers raided the offices of seven Palestinian civil society organizations in Ramallah, vandalizing equipment, seizing files, and issuing closure orders based on the 1945 Defense (Emergency) Regulations.⁵

On 29 September, the Israeli Central Elections Committee disqualified the Palestinian party Balad from running in Israeli parliamentary elections because it called for a “state for all of its citizens”, in violation of Israel’s Basic Law. The Israeli Supreme Court reversed the decision in October.

On 24 November, the Israeli military renewed by 45 days and for the fourth time the detention of four Jewish Israeli teenagers – Einat Gerlitz, Eytan Moshe Rubin, Nave Shabtay and Shahar Schwartz – who were first

imprisoned in September for refusing, on grounds of conscience, to enrol in compulsory military service.

Failure to tackle climate crisis and environmental degradation

On 28 June, the government introduced a climate bill, which proposed to reduce Israel's greenhouse gas emissions by 27% by 2030. The bill remained pending. Meanwhile, Israel's military industrial complex, including its August offensive in Gaza, exacerbated environmental damage caused in previous attacks that Israel continued to disregard.

In March, Israeli planes resumed aerial spraying of herbicides on the buffer zone in the Gaza Strip, damaging Palestinian farmland.

LGBTI people's rights

On 14 February, Israel's health ministry published a circular banning medical practitioners from conducting medical "conversion therapy" to change the sexual orientation of gay and lesbian individuals, but failed to grant it legislative status.

Women's rights

In Israel, marriage and divorce remained under the exclusive jurisdiction of religious courts, leading to systematic discrimination against women in personal status matters.

Despite legal protections against domestic violence, 24 women were killed by partners or relatives according to the Israeli police. Some 69 women were killed between January 2020 and August 2022. Of the 40 femicides against Palestinian women in Israel during that period, 58% were not

resolved by the police while all 29 femicides of Jewish-Israeli women in the same period were resolved.

Refugees' and migrants' rights

Israel welcomed tens of thousands of people fleeing Ukraine and allowed thousands of Jewish Ukrainians to settle under the 1950 Law of Return, while continuing to deny Palestinian refugees their right of return.

Israel continued to reject asylum applications of nearly 30,000 African asylum seekers, primarily from Eritrea and Sudan. Following a 2021 court decision, over 2,000 Sudanese asylum seekers from Darfur, Blue Nile and the Nuba mountains were given temporary residence permits, including access to national health insurance and other benefits.

In October, a commission appointed by Israel's minister of interior concluded that asylum seekers from Darfur and the Nuba mountains were no longer at risk of persecution on ethnic grounds and could be returned safely to Sudan's capital Khartoum, amid concerns of a possible reversal of Israel's general non-deportation policy.

Government regulations banning some 20,000 asylum seekers from work in 17 Israeli cities unless they seek employment in construction, agriculture, hospitality and institutional nursing, came into effect in October.

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1. *Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity*, 1 February
 2. "Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A perfect storm of apartheid policies led to Salah Hammouri's deportation", 21 December

3. "They Were Just Kids: Evidence of War Crimes During Israel's August 2022 Gaza Offensive", 25 October
4. *Israel/OPT: Continuing patterns of unlawful killings and other crimes further entrench apartheid*, 11 May
5. "Israel/OPT: The stifling of Palestinian civil society organizations must end", 18 August

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