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West Bank

Occupied Palestinian Territory



PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT

Unrelenting Violence and Continued
Rights Violations



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INTRODUCTION

Testimonies and data collected by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association (PARC) in July and August 2025 across ten governorates of the West Bank provide clear evidence of grave violations of international humanitarian law, which prohibits torture, cruel or degrading treatment, and requires the humane treatment of civilians. Accounts reveal systematic patterns of abuse by Israeli forces and settlers, including arbitrary and excessive use of force—such as live fire against unarmed civilians—physical assault, collective punishment, home demolitions, land destruction, and settlement expansion.

This Protection Monitoring exercise has observed that these violations have escalated sharply since October 7th, 2023, with Israeli forces more openly cooperating with settlers to tighten restrictions and undermine the rights of Palestinian communities as a result.

Large-scale military operations in camps and residential areas have further intensified civilian harm, including widespread destruction, displacement, and loss of life.

Interviews conducted for this report and data from other organisations also indicate growing risks for women and girls, including administrative detention, abuse at checkpoints, and targeted settler violence.

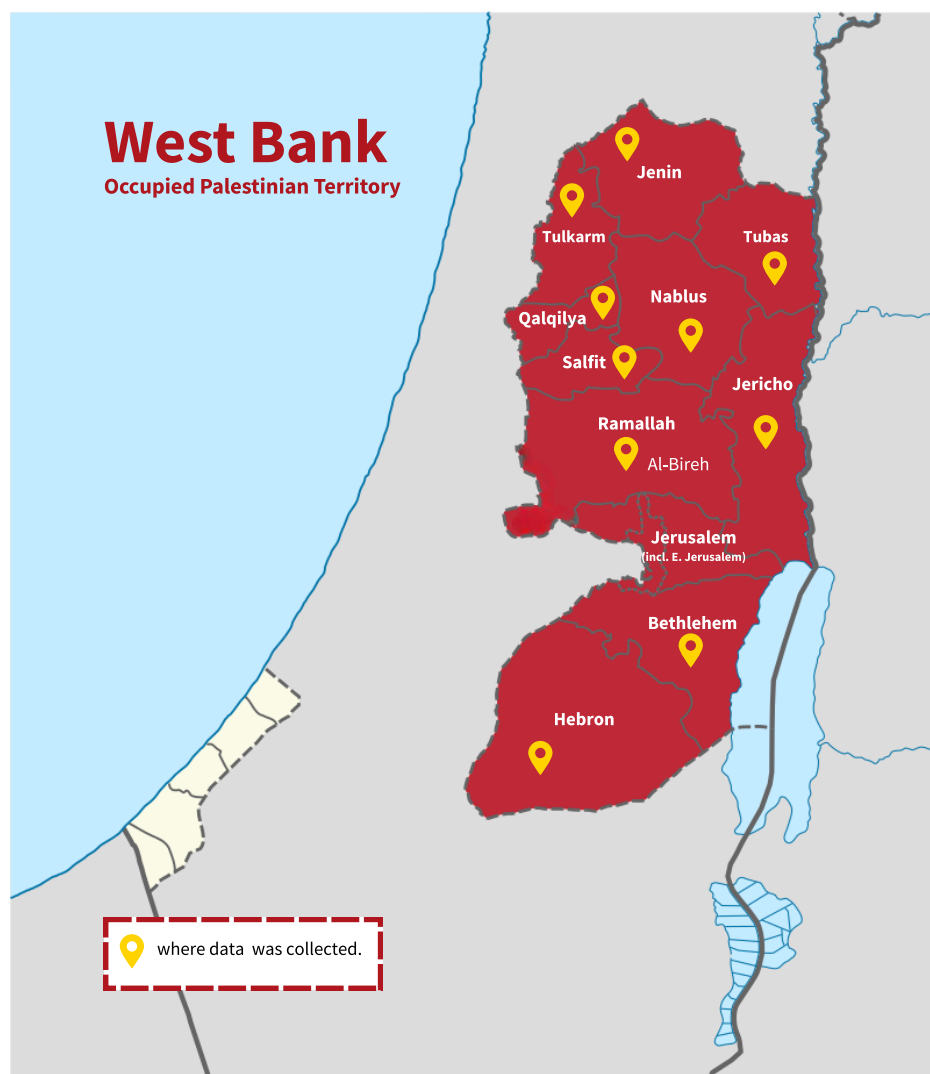
These entrenched practices are fragmenting communities, eroding livelihoods, and subjecting families to immense psychological distress, underscoring the urgent need for accountability, protective interventions, and stronger international action to safeguard civilians.

METHODOLOGY

This report is the result of collaboration between the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Findings are based on a quantitative survey with 134 individuals (56 women and 78 men), complemented by 52 in-depth qualitative interviews (25 women and 27 men). Data was collected between 2 July and 6 August 2025 across ten West Bank governorates: Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Jericho, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah and al-Bireh, Salfit, Tubas, and Tulkarem.

Collection was carried out by community protection committees established by PARC. By working with community members already present in the West Bank, PARC and DRC were able to overcome obstacles that would otherwise hamper data collection, particularly movement restrictions linked to roadblocks, checkpoints and other safety risks. The data was analysed by DRC, with the report and recommendations jointly developed with PARC. This protection monitoring report aims to further inform evidence-based programming in the West Bank. The report does not document reported violations that have occurred in the West Bank between August 7th, 2025, and the release of this report.

Special attention was given to disaggregating protection data by age, gender, and diversity, including persons with disabilities. Leveraging the contextual knowledge of community committees and PARC staff, evidence was also generated on groups at heightened risk of settler violence and dispossession by the Israeli military, including Bedouin and herder communities, farmers, and individuals in areas at risk of forcible transfer and home demolitions, primarily in Area C.



PROTECTION RISKS

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Out of 134 respondents, 89% reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe in their area of residence. Notably, none reported feeling safe. Qualitative interviews with 52 respondents confirmed that safety had worsened significantly since October 2023 and particularly in the past three months. Across all locations, respondents attributed this solely to increased settler violence and military operations, including incursions, raids, and searches. Among surveyed respondents, 50% reported daily violations, 28% weekly, and 20% monthly. These findings, reinforced by testimonies, reveal systematic violations of International Humanitarian Law,¹ which obliges the protection of civilians' dignity, integrity, humane treatment, and family unity. Evidence collected consistently points to clear, recurring patterns of violations, underscoring the urgent need for accountability and civilian protection.

Arbitrary Violence and Inhumane Treatment

As the occupying power, Israel is legally obligated to protect all persons under its control. Yet it has consistently failed to prevent or hold accountable attacks carried out by illegal settlers. Testimonies and accounts show settler presence and violence have reached record levels across the West Bank. Of 134 respondents surveyed, 72% reported direct experience of settler violence in the past one to three months, often multiple times.

Settler violence takes many forms: intimidation, beatings, unleashing attack dogs, and targeted assaults using firearms, grenades, Molotov cocktails, and improvised explosives. Numerous accounts describe homes deliberately set on fire while residents were inside, vehicles destroyed, and farmland burnt, trees and crops uprooted. Several respondents reported being hospitalized with critical injuries, while others recounted family members killed.

Many testimonies also pointed to direct collusion between settlers and the military. At times, this manifests as tacit complicity - soldiers watching as violations occur without intervening. A male respondent in Jericho recounted repeated settler attacks, including theft of 100 sheep and arson attempts on his home, all while soldiers stood by. Another respondent from Nablus also shared:

“Oh, I saw they [illegal settlers] burned our house, stole the sheep, and tried to kidnap our children. The military prevented the young men in our village from helping us.” (Male respondent, Nablus)

In other cases, this collusion takes the form of active cooperation between illegal settlers and the military. Respondents noted that any attempt at self-defense against settlers led to reprisals, including administrative detention without charge, with the majority of Palestinians in administrative detention in 2024 having been held for a period of six months to a year.²

Although documented for years^{3/4} Israeli forces' passivity in preventing settler violence and their protection of settlers has become even more blatant since October 2023.⁵ In practice, illegal settlers operate with near-total immunity under the protection of the Israeli military. This systematic shielding has emboldened settlers, fueling both the escalation of violence and consolidating their unlawful presence.

Reported patterns of behavior indicate that violations by settlers and Israeli forces are increasingly interwoven.⁶ A male respondent from Hebron also explained that illegal settlers sometimes wear military uniforms, making it nearly impossible for Palestinians to differentiate them from military personnel.

Beyond settler attacks, respondents described systematic abuses by Israeli forces. Nearly half (45%) reported direct experience of nighttime house searches or raids within the past three months. These often involved severe beatings, stun grenades, or sniper fire against unarmed civilians, and destruction of property. At least 31 respondents (23%) reported serious injuries or family members killed during raids. One man from Jericho described being beaten so severely by soldiers that he suffered internal bleeding requiring urgent hospitalization. Another, also from Jericho, reported broken ribs after a military assault.

By Israeli military law, soldiers may enter Palestinian homes in the West Bank without a warrant, while warrants are required for settlers' homes.⁷ This has enabled hundreds of raids each month on Palestinian villages and towns carried out on vague security grounds. Respondents emphasized that raids were often conducted without justification, with soldiers citing only "security purposes." In practice, it has also been widely documented that the pattern of arbitrary searches and incursion, including night raids, are deliberately used by Israeli forces to humiliate, instill fear and terrorise families.^{8/9}

"The Israeli forces entered my house in the middle of the night, tied my children's and husband's hands, blindfolded them, and took a selfie with them. This happened at 2:00 a.m." (Female respondent, Qalqilya)

A respondent from Nablus shared that the when the military raided their town, they started beating the young men and children right in front of their families to humiliate them.

Gendered impacts of violations

While all groups in the West Bank are affected, men and boys face heightened risks of being stopped, assaulted, or detained. They are often targeted for attempting to defend their families during settler attacks, exposing them to further violence and arrest.

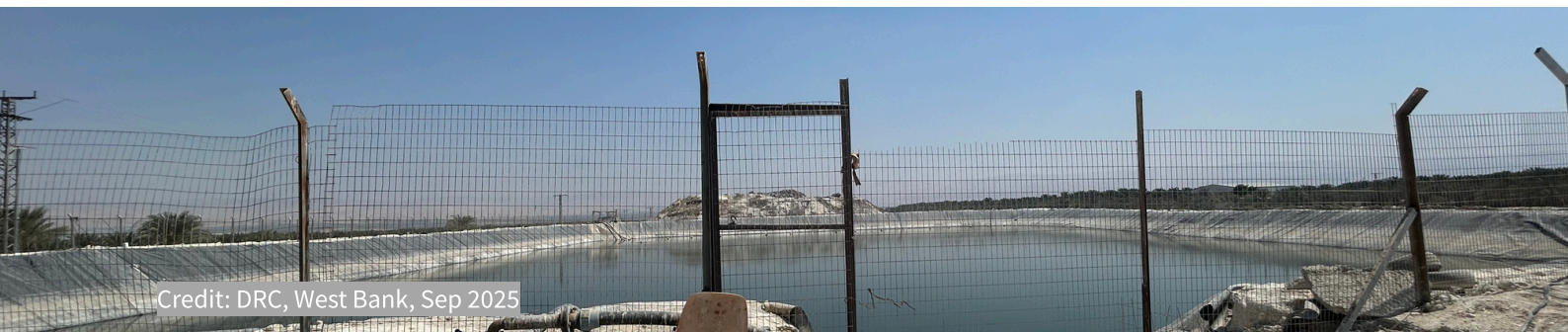
Since October 7, 2023, however, violence and abuses are increasingly being expanded to target men, women, and children indiscriminately. Respondents reported increasing risks of detention for women, both at checkpoints and during night raids. Several testimonies describe women – including sometimes elderly women, and girls detained as leverage to force male relatives to surrender to Israeli forces.

"When they want to arrest a man, they arrest his daughter, mother, or wife to force him to turn himself in." (Male respondent, Qalqilya)

A female respondent from Hebron recounted that after settlers attacked shepherds, soldiers detained all the women and girls who had intervened. Settler assaults on women, including elderly women, were also reported.

Night raids on family homes have long been used also to arrest children and youth. There are testimonies of youth being arrested or children being left terrified after their parents' detention.

"They arrest of young men and children. On the day of the incident that occurred on 28 March 2025, all the young men of the community were arrested, including our neighbor's son, who is no more than fourteen years old. They are arrested while grazing sheep." (Male respondent, Hebron)



Credit: DRC, West Bank, Sep 2025

Collective punitive measures

Incidents of arbitrary arrest without due process, including those intended to coerce civilians into surrender, may amount to collective punishment.

Respondents described military raids in which parents were taken into custody, leaving children behind traumatized and unprotected or individuals placed on security watchlists- practices aimed at deliberately inflicting harm on family units.^{10/11} Other practices involve mass arrests of men and youth during military raids, with many held under administrative detention without charge, which may amount of collective punishment according to OHCHR.¹² The imposition of full lockdowns or curfews on villages and towns after military incursions constitutes another form of collective punishment. At times, these lasted several days, confining residents without access to food, medicine, or essential supplies.

“A while ago, the military entered the town and imposed a curfew for more than two days. They searched the entire town and set up interrogation centres in homes that had been forcibly evicted, using them to interrogate most of the young men... They enter, search, break things, arrest people, and steal. Nothing is off-limits.” (Male respondent, Qalqilya).

By failing to protect Palestinians and allowing settlers to act with impunity, Israeli authorities have increasingly blurred the line between abuses committed by the Israeli security forces and settler attacks. This de facto state-sponsored systemic violence against Palestinian communities blatantly violates international law.¹³

The discriminatory multiple-tier legal system leaves Palestinians subjected to violence and criminalization while Israeli settlers and soldiers are allowed to act with impunity. Palestinians are largely unable to access meaningful legal recourse for violations of their rights, including attacks and other mistreatments, and are left with only little to no options for self-protection and a profound sense of powerlessness. These policies and practices are part of a larger system of control which drives the discrimination and deprivation of rights and agency for Palestinians.¹⁴

“Withdrawing, staying silent, and submitting provides even less protection.” (Female respondent, Hebron).

FORCIBLE TRANSFER AND HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY VIOLATIONS

Out of 134 individuals surveyed, 94% reported a housing, land, or property violation in the past three months. Nearly half of respondents (48%) said they were deliberately prevented from accessing their land by the military declaring agricultural land a “security zone” or “firing zone,” or confiscating fields under “state land” or “military orders.” Access routes to farmland are often blocked, preventing cultivation or olive harvesting, and attempting to reach fields can lead to detention or live fire.

“The army is standing at the gate of my farm, preventing me from entering, and detained me for hours.” (Male respondent, Tulkarem)

Settler violence and settlement expansion compound the issue. Respondents described how settler cattle herders seize grazing land for new outposts, provoking confrontations with Bedouin communities. Farmers reported attacks, theft of livestock, uprooting of trees, and destruction of crops and equipment.

The Israeli Civil Administration (COGAT) routinely denies rebuilding permits after such incidents, pressuring families to abandon their land. Palestinians live in constant fear of having their unattended property seized. One respondent from Ramallah stated, ***"Anyone who tries to reach their land is assaulted and shot at by the army and the settlers."***

Bedouins and herding communities remain at heightened risk of dispossession, eviction and home demolitions. Nineteen of the 134 respondents had received demolition or eviction notices or had already experienced demolition at the time of data collection, the majority of whom were Bedouins or herders.

In recent months, Israeli authorities have dramatically ramped up home demolitions,¹⁵ which are now occurring not only in Area C (under full Israeli military and civil control), but also increasingly in Areas B (under Palestinian civil authority and Israeli military control), and A (under full civil and security control of the Palestinian Authority).

In Area C, demolitions are mostly justified by COGAT as administrative demolitions, frequently tied to “unpermitted construction.” Respondents consistently described being denied building permits or permission for even minor repairs. Noncompliance results in eviction or demolition orders. Primarily in Area C, and also in area A and B, demolitions of Palestinians privately-owned structures and resulting displacements of Palestinians families have severely increased in 2024 and in 2025 compared to previous years.¹⁶

“The Israeli occupation has not allowed us to repair our home and threatened to demolish it if we add even one stone.” (Male respondent, Jericho governorate)

Residents of Al-Mughayir (Ramallah and al-Bireh, Area C) reported stop-work orders under the pretext of unlicensed construction. This practice, together with violence by Israeli forces and settlers are part of a larger pattern aimed at forcibly removing Palestinian communities, including Bedouin communities in the West Bank.¹⁷ This is achieved in part by issuing stop-work-orders on Palestinian properties/structures, which most of the time are inhabited, under the claim of ‘unlicensed construction’ within Area C. Families were given deadlines to secure permits — an impossible requirement in most cases — after which demolitions followed. A respondent from Nablus, also in Area C, said they were barred from planting trees, ploughing land, or harvesting olives. According to the respondent, official documents claimed that all houses in the area belonged to the settlements and the military. They explained that if anyone attempted to access these lands, tanks would arrive and threaten to attack. Those who defied these restrictions faced the risk of having their homes demolished as well.

In Areas A and B, where the Palestinian Authority (PA) manages civil affairs, demolitions are often carried out under vague “security reasons” which might encompass punitive demolitions of homes belonging to families of individuals accused of attacks¹⁸ or large-scale military operations seeing during which destroyed with explosives, forcing residents to flee without notice. Respondents also recount receiving demolition orders after neighborhoods were declared “closed military zones.” While it was not highlighted by respondents, cases of land considered as Area A or B under the Oslo Accords, bordering Area C, being arbitrarily reclassified as the latter, were also reported before 2023.¹⁹



Credit: DRC, West Bank, Sep 2025

“One of my family members requested a structural plan from the Israeli army to build a house next to his family home in Area B. The land was suddenly reclassified as Area C, showing how Israel constantly changes structural plans to justify demolitions.” (Female respondent, Jericho governorate)

It has been documented that Israeli authorities routinely rely on assertions of military necessity (or designation of areas as firing zones) to justify large-scale home demolitions, and grounds for destruction, arguing this is vital to the safety of Israeli security forces and settlers, while often providing little or no transparent evidence supporting the necessity claim. These practices have been documented for an extensive period of time during the occupation of the West Bank and have either continued or increased since October 2023.²⁰ These practices have no legal grounds. Israel is signatory to international humanitarian law conventions and is dutybound to uphold them. International law prohibits the destruction of private property, other than exceptional cases of imperative military necessity that cannot be met in any other way.²¹

Forced displacement & forcible transfer: The intensification of large-scale military operations, unlawful demolitions of Palestinian homes combined with the expansion of settlements and settler violence as well as the tightening of movement restrictions have created increasingly unlivable conditions for Palestinians. These set of intertwined policies and practices enforced by Israeli authorities, military and settlers compounds a coercive environment that induces forcible transfer. These combined actions have resulted in the forced displacement of nearly 40,000 Palestinians from their homes between January 2024 and August 2025²² and the emptying out of several refugee camps or areas including Tulkarem, Jenin, Masafer Yatta in the last months alone and at an unprecedented scale in recent years. These recent actions (evictions, coercive measures, land grabbing) are part of an ongoing policy of transfer, fragmentation and dispossession, which dates back to the occupation that began in 1967.^{23/24/25}

Among the survey respondents 31% reported being forcibly displaced from their places of origin as a result of escalating state-backed settler violence or direct military interventions. New arrivals of displaced Palestinians were also observed in several communities in the past 3 months. During the same period, approximately 140 families were displaced from the refugee camps in Tulkarem and Nour Shams—both under demolition and evacuation orders—to Deir al-Ghusun in Tulkarm Governorate. Some Palestinian families forcibly displaced from Tulkarem were also reported to arrive in Jayyus, Qalqilya (11–13 families). Respondents in Hebron reported arrivals from Masafer Yatta, due to demolitions and settler violence. Four to ten Bedouin and herder families from Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, and Nablus were also displaced to Al-Auja in Jericho Governorate, due to home demolitions and loss of livelihoods. This results in other protection concerns including severely restricted freedom of movement, family separation, and risk of injury or death due to the use of live-fire. The forced displacement of Palestinian communities is inseparable from systematic dispossession and denial of rights, aimed at expanding settlements and disrupting Palestinian demographic contiguity.²⁶ Any individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportation of protected persons from the occupied Palestinian territory, constitutes a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention²⁷ and is a war crime.

MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS

All respondents surveyed and interviewed reported that movement restrictions across the West Bank have significantly intensified since 7 October 2023. Multiple checkpoints often line main routes forcing residents to be delayed or withheld at different points during a single journey. Out of 134 respondents, nearly all reported being stopped or delayed at checkpoints at least once in the past three months. Most were stopped between one and ten times. Several respondents, mostly from Ramallah and al-Bireh reported between 31 and 50 stops.

In the town of Jayyus, Qalqilya governorate, some respondents observed up to ten checkpoints at any given time, while in Deir al-Ghusun, Tulkarem governorate, up to five checkpoints were counted. Checkpoints may be permanent or temporary, commonly placed at town entry and exit points, but also within towns themselves, further fragmenting communities. Residents of Um Safa (Ramallah governorate) and Al Auja (Jericho governorate) described several internal checkpoints dividing neighborhoods and obstructing both pedestrian and vehicle movement. Delays typically range from one to four hours (reported by 88% of respondents), while 7% faced waits exceeding five hours. Only 5% reported delays under an hour. Longer waits were especially common in Salfit, Jericho, Tubas, and Ramallah and al-Bireh.

In addition to military checkpoints, informal checkpoints are set up by illegal settlers, further restricting movement and introducing more unpredictability and risk. These barriers often appear suddenly, without warning or official notification. Residents rely on word of mouth to navigate the shifting landscape of restrictions, but this exposes them to the risk of being stopped, forced to turn back, or being detained. As one woman from Jericho explained: ***“Any trip outside the house is considered a risk.”***

Respondents described widespread intimidation, humiliation, beatings, and arbitrary arrests at checkpoints. A woman from Qalqilya recounted:

“I see them at the checkpoints making young men get out of their cars, searching them, abusing and extorting them. If they want to, they arrest them, take their phones to check them, and many people have their phones returned to them broken.”

A male respondent from the same area added:

“I have witnessed incidents where young people were arrested at these checkpoints after being beaten, blindfolded, and having their phones confiscated. They were sometimes beaten because of a photo or post on their phone.”

The presence of checkpoints alone does not capture the full extent of movement barriers imposed on Palestinians across the West Bank. These restrictions are often compounded by a plethora of other obstacles, including earth embankments or mounds, roadblocks, and iron gates—commonly installed at the entrances of villages—fragmenting and isolating communities from one another. Alongside arbitrary security measures such as curfews or complete closure of village gates in some locations confining people inside. As highlighted by many respondents, most of these restrictions did not exist prior to 7 October 2023.

During the first half of 2025, the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC) monitored the establishment of 916 Israeli checkpoints and military gates of various types in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. These checkpoints were either permanent or temporary as well as iron gates, earth mounds, cement blocks, and other forms of barriers.²⁸ Of these, 146 iron gates have been installed since October 7, 2023, with the highest concentration in Ramallah and El-bireh governorates followed by Nablus.²⁹

“The iron gate has been at the entrance of the village for two years. There is an alternate route through Jureish, and today, that has also been closed with an iron gate.” (Female respondent, Nablus)

“There are also military checkpoints, earth mounds, and iron gates. The military checkpoints are not fixed in number or time. There are more than five earth mounds and four gates. The checkpoints within the community are temporary and appear suddenly, but illegal settler gangs are always present. We do not receive prior information about them.” (Male respondent, Hebron).

RISKS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and girls are particularly at risk. Respondents described harassment, intimidation, strip searches, and in some cases sexual harassment by soldiers at checkpoints. Phones of women and girls are frequently checked, with social media accounts accessed in violation of privacy.

A woman from Nablus explained:

“At checkpoints, women and girls are subjected to humiliating treatment and inappropriate searches in front of soldiers and passengers. They also have their phones searched, and as Muslims, any girl forced to be photographed without her hijab loses her privacy. It is a very humiliating act.”

Others described degrading treatment:

“They stop women, make them get out of cars, and interrogate them in the sun. They throw their bags on the ground and laugh at them.” (Female respondent, Qalqilya)

“We fear we will be sexually assaulted and beaten, especially at checkpoints and during incursions.” (Female respondent, Tulkarem)

Although testimonies did not always explicitly mention sexual abuse, reluctance to disclose may reflect socio-cultural sensitivities. UN and Palestinian organisations have documented increased risks of sexual violence against women and girls detained at checkpoints or during raids.³⁰

Safety audits conducted by the GBV Sub Cluster, have also detailed secondary risks, relating to the stigma surrounding Palestinian women abused or detained by the Israeli military, with survivors struggling to regain social standing due to assumptions that their reputation has been compromised.³¹

Impacts



Credit: DRC, West Bank, Oct 2025

These extensive and widespread violations of and restrictions on the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank are not only unlawful but also deeply damaging, with compounding and intersecting effects that undermine every aspect of daily life, from access to healthcare and education to livelihoods, family unity, and community well-being. In particular:

DESTRUCTION, SEIZURE AND CONFISCATION OF LAND:

Evidence shows Palestinians continue to face systematic land dispossession through state-backed settler incursions and military measures. Settlers occupy farmland, graze animals on Palestinian fields, uproot trees, burn crops, and block access roads—often under military protection. Farmers reported being cut off from irrigation systems or having wells seized.

“Illegal settlers, under the protection of the military, have cut off the roads that connect people to their lands. People have been kept away from their properties since October 7th... Illegal settlers have also cut down and burned trees, especially olive trees.” (Male respondent, Ramallah and al-Bireh)

The Israeli military compounds these violations by confiscating land and declaring large areas “security zones,” causing crop loss and financial devastation.

“The water pumps for my farm were damaged, and my water supply was cut off. I suffered thousands of shekels in losses, but I cannot leave because of my connection to my land and livelihood.” (Male respondent, Jericho)

Farmers receive no compensation for these losses, while crops rot when fields are inaccessible or transport is delayed at checkpoints, undermining capacity to restore their livelihoods, further eroding their economic stability and long-term self-reliance. For women—particularly single women relying on small-scale farming, dairy production, and food processing—these losses are devastating. Unlike male farmers, who may have wider networks and alternative sources of income, cultural and social constraints further limit women’s ability to seek alternative work, deepening vulnerability.^{32/33/34}

DISRUPTION OF HERDING:

Bedouin herders report being denied access to pastures and constantly under surveillance. Arrests for “trespassing” while grazing are common.

“A young man was arrested while grazing sheep on his own land.” (Male respondent, Hebron)

Settlers regularly attack herders, steal or kill livestock, and file false claims.

“I was attacked, beaten until my leg was broken, and 50 heads of livestock were stolen by settlers with military protection.” (Male respondent, Jericho)

DENIAL OF EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS:

Checkpoints, roadblocks, and settler violence severely restrict wage employment and self-owned businesses. Respondents reported harassment, beatings, and humiliation while commuting, forcing some to miss work or lose jobs. Teachers were blocked from schools, taxi drivers stranded, and shopkeepers saw their businesses demolished.

“Three times the military pulled me from my car, beat me severely, and humiliated me in front of others. Now I avoid work if I hear checkpoints are crowded.” (Male respondent, Qalqilya)

Survey results show 68% of respondents experienced a “major decrease” in income, 23% lost all income, and only 9% saw minor reductions. Rising unemployment pushes youth to consider emigration, while women shoulder heavier burdens of income generation and caregiving. Injuries caused by military or settler assaults often result in permanent disability and loss of income. It has been long documented that many Palestinians have little to no options but to seek employment in Israeli settlement and settlement farms, which involves significant negative socio-economic and protection risks.³⁵ Working in illegal settlements presents a deep dilemma: on the one hand, Palestinians must secure an income to provide for their families, on the other, it means contributing to the settlement enterprise, which goes against international law and compounds the occupation and violations of Palestinians’ rights.

DENIED ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES:

Movement restrictions obstruct health care, markets, and education. 85 percent of respondents reported new barriers in accessing essential services since 7 October 2023, mostly due to checkpoints (63%) and fear of travel (13%). Numerous accounts have detailed of critical delays in movement preventing individuals from reaching emergency medical services on time: ***“To get to any hospital, we have to pass several checkpoints. If it is an emergency, the person could die on the way.” (Male respondent, Nablus)***

Medical emergencies are also obstructed. Pregnant women and other urgent cases have been denied passage, placing lives at risk. A man from Nablus shared: ***“A woman was forced to give birth at the checkpoint because she was not allowed to pass.”***

Some testimonies describe soldiers deliberately blocking life-saving care:

“We were on our way to the doctor because my son’s infant daughter had a very high fever. I went with my husband, my daughter, my son’s wife, and her baby. On the way, the Israeli military blocked the road in the middle of town and ordered us to stop. We did not stop immediately, as my husband was worried about our granddaughter’s condition. The soldiers then began shooting at us directly and hysterically. My son’s wife started screaming, and I thought she was the only one injured. When we rushed to the hospital, I discovered my daughter unconscious in the car. She had been shot directly in the head—she fainted the moment the bullet struck her. We had not realised she was injured until then. She required extremely dangerous surgeries and came very close to losing her life.” (Female respondent, Nablus)

Education access has also been disrupted, with children displaced from Masafer Yatta unable to reach schools in Yatta. Closures force women and girls to wait on main roads, where settlers regularly harass them.

“Settlers frighten and beat women and girls, leading to psychological issues and preventing them from reaching universities.” (Male respondent, Hebron)

DETERIORATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

Restrictions on basic rights are taking a severe psychological toll. Nearly all respondents (97%) reported worsening mental health over the past month, marked by acute anxiety, hopelessness, persistent sadness, feeling trapped, and heightened anger or irritability. Many also experienced physical symptoms such as sleep disturbances, migraines, weight changes, and fatigue.

“Sadness, fear, terror, anxiety, and muddled thoughts. I have headaches and nightmares, and I cry myself to sleep out of fear and anxiety that they will enter our home at night, break things, and arrest my son or my husband.” (Female respondent, Qalqilya)

Direct trauma from attacks is widespread and deeply damaging. ***“One of my sons lost his hearing after being beaten by settlers. My daughter developed a psychological condition from witnessing it.” (Female respondent, Jericho)***

These pressures strain family life. Half of respondents reported heightened tensions at home, including spousal conflict and irritability toward children. Children exhibited stress responses such as nightmares, aggression, and bedwetting. At the community level, restrictions have eroded social ties, leaving 88% of respondents feeling more isolated and nearly 70% reporting weaker social networks. Travel limitations curtail weddings, funerals, and holidays, deepening isolation. ***“I haven’t seen my siblings since February. I last saw my mother during Eid.” (Male respondent, Qalqilya)***

Declining social activities and avoidance of gatherings due to safety fears are fragmenting communities, undermining cohesion and resilience in the long term.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Since the attacks of 7 October 2023 and following military operations across the oPt, Palestinians leaving in the West Bank have witnessed an unprecedented deterioration of their safety and security and overall wellbeing, with a protection environment constantly degrading. The frequency and severity of violence from both the Israeli military and illegal settlers as well as land confiscations and demolitions have intensified exponentially and reached alarming levels. This has further undermined Palestinians' ability to exercise self-protection, rendering them increasingly vulnerable to harm while being denied effective avenues for justice and legal redress, as guaranteed under international human rights and humanitarian law. The ICJ determined in July 2024 that the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory is unlawful under international law, including the presence of Israeli settlements.³⁶ The conclusions of the advisory opinion were reiterated by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of September 2024 calling Israel to end its illegal occupation. In light of the findings from the present report and other evidence of IHL violations, it is critical that these events are not overshadowed by the absolute humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza. Both contexts must be addressed with equal urgency as interconnected parts of the same crisis.

Donors and aid actors should:

- Scale up dedicated funding and resources for programming in the West Bank. In a coercive environment that aims at dividing and fragmenting previously tightly knit communities, programming that seeks to empower communities, including CSOs, CBOs and grassroots organisations, and mitigate threats, strengthen social cohesion build resilience to cope with an increasingly restrictive and coercive environment should be prioritized. This includes for example:
- Activities to sustain community-based initiatives, such as community-based MHPSS programming, that seek to restore a sense of purpose and belonging among isolated groups.
- Behavioral change and violence prevention programming that seeks to reduce stigma and support the reintegration of ostracized groups such as GBV survivors of Israeli military abuses- to promote healing, recovery, and strengthen social cohesion.
- Innovative ways to build capacities of community groups to lead on these initiatives when access is constrained.
- Continue strengthening linkages between Protection interventions and legal aid programmes, particularly related to rights violations, including HLP rights for Palestinians. Closely link protection, protection monitoring and legal analyses to generate actionable evidence that can inform legal assistance and challenges in national and international for a, including on property rights and drive actions towards effective justice and protection of Palestinian communities.
- Continue to support and expand documentation of all violations across the West Bank under International Law and human rights violations, to enable effective programming and evidence-based advocacy for the protection of affected communities. Prioritize monitoring of how unlawful violence by Israeli military forces and settlers impacts different population groups, including vulnerable profiles such as women, children, farmers, Bedouins/herders and displaced families. Ensure comprehensive coverage of violations across all territorial designations (Areas A, B, and C).

To international policy makers/duty bearers

- Protective presence interventions led by communities and national or international grassroots organisations seeking to deter and mitigate settler violence must receive stronger and more consistent international backing to have meaningful impact. Since October 7th, the sharp escalation in settler violence, carried out under the protection and complicity of the Israeli military, has rendered existing community-led protection approaches largely ineffective, as such initiatives are systematically met with military reprisals. In this increasingly coercive and hostile environment, more decisive international action is urgently required.

- Further, apply pressure on the Israeli government to prevent the forcible displacement of Palestinians as well as land confiscation, demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure and unlawful violence committed by settlers and Israeli forces against Palestinian communities.
- Strengthen diplomatic pressure and policy engagement to demand the immediate removal of arbitrary checkpoints, gates, and movement restrictions that undermine Palestinians' access to health care, education, and livelihoods.
- In line with the ICJ ruling of July 2024, take commensurate actions to end the illegal occupation of the oPt, including stopping settlement expansion as well as related actions that are depriving Palestinians from their basic rights. As per the ICJ ruling (paragraph 278), trade dealing that would entrench illegal occupation should be avoided.
- While diplomatic or political pressure has been applied by third state parties in regard to Gaza, UN member states must not disregard the deteriorating conditions in the West Bank, particularly the daily IHL and human rights abuses that similarly necessitate immediate action and accountability, as both Gaza and the West Bank are part of the same crisis. Sustained pressure on duty-bearers must be used to end impunity of perpetrators of violations and uphold international humanitarian and human rights law.



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