

Document #1406878

HRW – Human Rights Watch

Israel: Jerusalem Palestinians Stripped of Status

(Jerusalem) – Israel's (<https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/israel/palestine>) revocations of the residency status of thousands of Palestinians from East Jerusalem over the years illustrates the two-tiered system Israel maintains in the city, Human Rights Watch said today. The residency system imposes onerous requirements on Palestinians to maintain their status, with significant consequences for those who don't.

Between the start of Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 and the end of 2016, Israel revoked the status of at least 14,595 Palestinians from East Jerusalem, according to the Interior Ministry. Authorities have justified most revocations based on a failure to prove a “center of life” in Jerusalem but, in recent years, they have also revoked status to punish Palestinians accused of attacking Israelis and as collective punishment against relatives of suspected assailants. The discriminatory system pushes many Palestinians to leave their home city in what amounts to forcible transfers, a serious violation of international law.

“Israel claims to treat Jerusalem as a unified city, but the reality is effectively one set of rules for Jews and another for Palestinians,” said Sarah Leah Whitson (<https://www.hrw.org/about/people/sarah-leah-whitson>), Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “Entrenched discrimination against Palestinians in Jerusalem, including residency policies that imperil their legal status, feeds the alienation of the city's residents.”

Human Rights Watch interviewed eight families in Jerusalem whose residency has been revoked between March and July 2017, reviewed status revocation letters, court decisions, and other official documents, in addition to speaking to their lawyers. The identity of several interviewees has been concealed to protect their privacy and prevent possible reprisals from authorities.

One man whose residency Israel had cancelled said he had to scale Israel's separation barrier to attend a family wedding in another part of the West Bank. Another said Israeli authorities refused to issue birth certificates to his five children, all born in Jerusalem. Other Jerusalem residents without residency status interviewed described being unable to legally work; obtain social welfare benefits; attend weddings and funerals; or visit gravely ill relatives abroad, for fear Israeli authorities would refuse to allow them to return home.

Residency revocations are part of a range of policies that include unlawful settlement expansion, home demolitions, and restrictions on building in the city that have shifted the demographics in East Jerusalem. This outcome reflects the Israeli government's goal of “maintaining a solid Jewish majority in the city,” as stated in the Jerusalem municipality's master plan (“Jerusalem Outline Plan 2000”), and limiting the number of Palestinian residents. Originally setting a target “ratio of 70% Jews and 30% Arab,” planners later acknowledged that “this goal is not attainable” in light of “the demographic trend” and adjusted to a 60-40 target. Palestinians constituted 37 percent of Jerusalem's population in 2015, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

After occupying East Jerusalem in 1967, Israel annexed and began applying its domestic law to the area. It applied the 1952 Law of Entry (http://www.hamoked.org/files/2011/2240_eng.pdf) to Palestinians from East Jerusalem and offered them permanent residency, the same status afforded to a foreigner who wants to live in Israel. Permanent residents may live, work, and receive benefits in Israel, but that status derives from their presence, which can be withdrawn if one settles outside of Israel. It does not automatically pass to one's children or non-resident spouse and can be revoked at the Interior Ministry's discretion.

A path to citizenship exists for Palestinian Jerusalemite permanent residents, but the vast majority chose not to pursue it, as it involves pledging allegiance to Israel, the occupying power. And not all of those who apply are granted citizenship. Since 2003, only about 15,000 of Jerusalem's 330,000 Palestinians have applied for citizenship; Israeli authorities have approved fewer than 6,000 (<http://cdn.timesofisrael.com/uploads/2016/09/East-Jerusalem-citizenship-requests-.pdf>) of them.

For decades, Israeli authorities revoked residency when Palestinian Jerusalemites settled outside Israel for seven or more years without renewing their exit permits or obtained permanent residency or citizenship in another country. Most revocations, though, have taken place since 1995, after the Interior Ministry reinterpreted the 1952 Law of Entry to permit revocations of residency for those who did not actively maintain a “center of life” in Jerusalem. Under the new interpretation, Israeli authorities began to also revoke residency when Palestinian Jerusalemites lived in other parts of Palestine outside Jerusalem's municipal borders or studied or worked abroad for extended periods of time.

Jerusalemites who are Israeli citizens do not have to prove that they maintain a “center of life” in the city in order to safeguard their legal status.

Israeli authorities have also in recent years revoked the status of Palestinians in East Jerusalem under the Law of Entry for violating their “minimal obligation of loyalty (http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/State/Law/Pages/Removal_Jerusalem_residency_Hamas_representatives_28-Jun-2010.aspx) to the state of Israel.” First used against four Hamas members elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2006, authorities have, following an October 2015 government decree (<http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2015/pages/security-cabinet-approves-anti-terror-measures-13-oct-2015.aspx>), invoked this justification against individuals accused of physically attacking Israelis and against the suspects' families.

Residency revocations often effectively force Palestinians from East Jerusalem, who are protected by virtue of Israel's occupation under the Fourth Geneva Convention, to leave the territory they live in. This constitutes forcible transfers when causing displacement to other parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and deportations when displacement takes place outside the country. The convention allows such measures only on a temporary basis for “imperative military reasons.” Failing to maintain a “center of life” in Jerusalem does not meet the convention's restrictive standard.

Deportation or forced transfers of any part of the population of an occupied territory could amount to war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The prohibition on forcible transfer extends beyond cases in which a military force directly relocates a population under its control, to cases in which the military force makes life so difficult that people are essentially forced to leave. Human rights law also protects the right to freely leave and return to one's own country.

International humanitarian law also expressly forbids an occupying power from compelling people under occupation to pledge loyalty or allegiance to it.

In a March 2017 decision, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that Palestinians from East Jerusalem enjoy “special status” as “native-born” residents that authorities should account for in determining their status. Consistent with the strict international law prohibition on forcible displacement or deportation, Israeli authorities should grant Jerusalem residents the right of residency that they are entitled to as the population of an occupied territory as well as under international human rights law. Palestinians should not have to pursue citizenship while under occupation to secure their status and rights.

“As part of its quest to solidify a Jewish majority in Jerusalem, Israeli authorities force Palestinian Jerusalemites to live as foreigners in their own homes,” Whitson said. “The status of Palestinians only remains secure so long as they do not exercise their right to travel abroad to study or work, move to the wrong neighborhood or obtain status in another country.”

Israeli Policy in Jerusalem

After seizing the West Bank in 1967, Israel unilaterally annexed 72 square kilometers, including the eastern part of Jerusalem and 28 surrounding West Bank villages, to the Jerusalem municipality. This area, commonly called East Jerusalem, had 66,000 Palestinian residents, 24 percent of the new municipality's population. Whereas Israeli military orders apply to the rest of the West Bank, Israel applies its own civil laws to East Jerusalem. Human Rights Watch is not aware of any other country that recognizes Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, which remains occupied territory under international law.

Israel has since transferred thousands of its own Jewish citizens to East Jerusalem, a war crime under international law, while refusing to approve most zoning plans in Palestinian neighborhoods that would allow expansion. Left with no choice but to build and expand their homes without permits, Palestinians live under threat of home demolitions. Since January 2012, 617 structures, including residences, have been demolished for lack of a permit, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA.

In addition, the government discriminates in budget allocation. According to the Israeli rights organization Ir Amim, only 10.1 percent of the 2013 municipal budget was allocated for projects and spending in Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, though Palestinians are 37 percent of the population. As a result, most Palestinian neighborhoods have poor infrastructure and inadequate health, recreation, and educational services, compared with Israeli neighborhoods, which have well-paved roads, numerous parks and playgrounds, adequate refuse collection, and sufficient places for children in schools. Seventy-six percent of East Jerusalem Palestinians live below (<http://www.acri.org.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Facts-and-Figures-2017.pdf>) the poverty line, according to the Israeli organization Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

“Center of Life” Revocations

Nearly 80 percent of permanent residency revocations during Israel's 50-year-occupation according to Israeli government figures have taken place since 1995 when the Interior Ministry, based on a 1988 High Court of Justice decision (http://www.hamoked.org/files/2010/1430_eng.pdf), began requiring Palestinians to show that their “center of life” is in East Jerusalem in order to maintain their residency.

Losing that status forces Palestinians either to leave Jerusalem or to remain in violation of Israeli domestic law. The Law of Entry authorizes arrest and deportation for those found without legal status. Without legal status, Palestinians cannot formally work, move freely, renew driver's licenses, or obtain birth certificates for children, needed to register them in school. They could also lose benefits under Israel's national insurance program, which provides social welfare benefits such as health care,

unemployment benefits, and support payments for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Palestinians from East Jerusalem said that the fear of losing this status weighs on their daily life, determining where families live and blocking educational and professional opportunities.

Those who lose their residency may challenge the revocation as unlawful or petition the Interior Ministry to recover their status, during which time they can obtain a temporary status to remain in Jerusalem. Some Palestinians have succeeded in reinstating their status, but often after protracted legal and administrative processes that many cannot afford.

“Ramy,” Shuafat

“Ramy,” whose family moved to Jerusalem in 1948 after being displaced from their village in what became Israel, grew up in the Shuafat neighborhood of East Jerusalem and obtained his permanent resident card, as is customary, when he turned 16 in 1987. As a result of closures at his high school during the first Intifada in the late 1980’s, he spent time in the United States and relocated to California in 1989, traveling on an Israeli *laissez-passer*, or permit, he told Human Rights Watch. He stayed for six years, finishing his studies and working, and obtaining US citizenship in 1993, documents Human Rights Watch reviewed show.

Ramy moved back to Jerusalem in July 1995. Officials at Ben Gurion Airport gave him a three-month tourist visa instead of allowing him entry as a Jerusalem resident, but the Interior Ministry apologized for a “mistake” and reissued his Jerusalem identification days later, he said.

But Ramy says he has faced repeated challenges since. Israeli authorities refused to issue birth certificates for his five children, all born in Jerusalem between 1997 and 2006, saying he did not have status. In 2002, he sought to re-establish his residency with the Interior Ministry, but officials told him that he could not since his center of life was in parts of the West Bank outside Jerusalem. After he showed evidence that he maintained his center of life in Jerusalem, officials said the rejection stemmed from living abroad and having status in the US, he said. Unable to register his children at school without birth certificates, Ramy ultimately obtained West Bank and American birth certificates for them, based on his wife’s West Bank ID and his American citizenship.

Ramy said that in 2007, he retained a lawyer to help him recover his permanent residency, but the Interior Ministry told him his American citizenship made him ineligible. In 2011, the Israeli National Insurance Institute refused to reinstate his social security, health insurance, and other social welfare benefits, saying he lacked legal status, which he needed to resolve with the Interior Ministry, according to documents Human Rights Watch reviewed. Ramy said that his modest salary as a laborer in Israel and having to pay for his children’s education made it virtually impossible for him to finance a costly and protracted legal challenge to his revocation.

Having only an expired ID from July 1995, Ramy said, he sometimes faced difficulties crossing checkpoints between Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. In May 2016, a soldier at a checkpoint confiscated his driver’s license and told him only the Interior Ministry could reinstate it. There, they told him that his name was not in the system and that his residency had been revoked in 2007. He applied to recover his Jerusalem residency then and sought to obtain a three-month visa in the interim, but the Interior Ministry denied it on the grounds that his illegal stay in Israel had made him ineligible.

Ramy today lives in limbo, not legally able to work, regain his social welfare benefits, or move or travel freely while he remains in Jerusalem without status.

“Ibrahim,” Ras al-Amoud

“Ibrahim,” a 43-year-old from the Ras al-Amoud neighborhood of East Jerusalem, left home in 1990 to join family in Finland, where his father had sought political asylum. Possessing only Jerusalem residency, he traveled on an Israeli *laissez-passer*. He worked in Finland as a chef, married in 1996, and had a son in 1999. He said that he opted not to obtain Finnish citizenship for fear of losing his status in Jerusalem. Instead, he visited Jerusalem about once a year on Israeli or Finnish *laissez-passers*, obtaining three-month visas upon returning to Finland.

In 2004, however, the Israeli Embassy in Finland told him that it would not renew his *laissez-passer*, saying “this is what’s available – go apply for Finnish passport and visit on a tourist visa.” In reaction, he said he reapplied for Finnish *laissez-passers* and obtained a permanent resident visa.

In 2006, Ibrahim flew into Ben Gurion Airport with his wife and 7-year-old son, both Brazilian nationals. He said that airport officials told him he needed a visa to enter, confiscated his Jerusalem ID, and asked him what proof he had that he was from Jerusalem. Airport authorities detained him for two days after permitting his wife and son entry, then deported him to Finland, where police awaited him at the airport. He managed to obtain an Israeli entry visa the next year, after his brother signed a commitment at the Interior Ministry that he would not stay more than a week. Ibrahim was able to enter Israel shortly thereafter, and filed papers to recover his Jerusalem residency. The arduous process involved submitting comprehensive paperwork, including a certificate of good behavior from Finnish police, renouncing Finnish residency and all rights there, and legal action lasting eight years, until Israeli authorities restored his residency in 2015.

From 2007 to 2015, the only identification Ibrahim had was an expired *laissez-passer*; whenever asked for ID, he had to explain that he was awaiting Interior Ministry renewal. During this period, Ibrahim could only work informally and never left Jerusalem, except once, to attend a family wedding in the West Bank city of Abu Dis. To return, he scaled Israel’s Separation Barrier, fearing he would be turned back at an Israeli checkpoint.

“Abu Yahya,” Beit Hanina

“Abu Yahya,” a Palestinian permanent resident and US national from the Beit Hanina neighborhood of East Jerusalem, left Jerusalem after high school in 1994 to attend college in the US. Although he visited Jerusalem without incident in 1995, he said that when he visited again in 1996, Ben Gurion Airport officials gave him a three-month tourist visa, instead of allowing him entry as a Jerusalem resident. A few days later, Interior Ministry officials told him that he could not concurrently hold Jerusalem residency and US citizenship, although the law permits Israelis to have dual citizenship or residency. During periodic visits between 1996 and 2012, airport authorities permitted him entry each time, though at times on a time-limited visitor visa.

After moving permanently back to Jerusalem in 2012, he sought to restore his social security, health insurance, and other social welfare benefits with Israel’s National Insurance Institution, but they told him that he did not appear in their system as a citizen or resident. Later that year, an Interior Ministry official told him, when he requested a birth certificate for his daughter, that he is not a resident, but like “a Thai or a tourist,” and issued his daughter a birth certificate without an ID number. He said it felt “absurd” to be “born and raised here and have someone come tell you that you don’t belong.”

In 2014, Abu Yahya filed paperwork, including an FBI background check, to regain his status. After he obtained a conditional temporary ID, which he renewed several times, and stayed in Jerusalem for two years, the Interior Ministry informed him in July 2017 that his application for permanent residency had been approved and that he would receive his ID within 20 days. His daughters, though, remain without legal status, so he anticipates the administrative process will continue.

Abu Yahya estimates that he has spent over 100 hours dealing with his ID status during this time and, despite having pro-bono counsel, has paid over 5,000 NIS (US\$1,400) in legal and administrative fees. Over the last three-and-a-half years, while his status remained uncertain, he did not travel and had to forego the funeral of a close friend outside the country and other important events.

“Bassema,” Shuafat

“Bassema,” a Palestinian whose parents come from the Shuafat neighborhood in East Jerusalem, was born and raised in the US and thereby held no status in Israel or Palestine growing up. She moved to Jerusalem in 1992 to marry a Palestinian permanent resident, through whom she obtained temporary residency in 1994 via a family reunification petition.

In 2003, she moved back to the US to obtain a graduate degree and obtain medical treatment for her son, who had hearing and speech impairments, she said. She ended up getting a divorce and staying in the US for a decade.

Bassema arrived at Ben Gurion Airport in 2013, intending to move back to Jerusalem. Airport officials gave her a three-month visa after briefly questioning her and her two sons, both born in Jerusalem, and requiring her to sign a document in Hebrew that they had told her said she needed to go to the Interior Ministry to recover her Jerusalem status. She hired a lawyer to pursue reinstating her and her sons’ statuses.

Since then, her and her sons have gone long stretches without any status, making it impossible, she said, to “maintain any kind of normal life.” Her sons re-obtained their residency in 2016; while she remains on a visitor’s visa, which she has renewed seven times since March 2016 – having to go to court the last two times after initial refusals. She estimates that the administrative process has cost her over 10,000 NIS (US\$2,800), in addition to stress and anxiety.

During this time, she said, she has not wanted to risk her status by leaving the country, leaving her unable to attend her brother’s wedding or to visit a sick relative outside the country.

Wael Kawamleh, Kufr Aqab

Wael Kawamleh, born in 1962, obtained residency shortly after Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967. He moved to Abu Dhabi after graduating from high school in 1980 to work for a petroleum company. He married there and had four children, periodically visiting Jerusalem.

He said that in 1999, he decided to move back to Jerusalem to “protect my status and to start the family reunification process for my family,” afraid that his time away and ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations might jeopardize his status.

Kawamleh now lives with his family to Kufr Aqab, an overcrowded neighborhood within Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries but east of Israel’s Separation Barrier. Palestinian Jerusalemites often choose to live there (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126000690>) since it allows them to maintain a “center of life” in Jerusalem, while living with family members who have West Bank or no residency status.

While Kawamleh has maintained his own residency status, the Interior Ministry rejected residency applications for his two eldest children, Fayez and Khulood, in 2003 and 2004. When he pressed for an explanation, they offered various reasons, including that they lived in the West Bank. In 2012, though, the Interior Ministry granted his two youngest children Jerusalem residency.

Fayez and Khulood, now 31 and 29 respectively, have no status anywhere. Kawamleh sought West Bank residency for them from the Palestinian Authority, but failed. They are effectively stateless, confined to small pockets of the West Bank, where they do not need to pass a checkpoint where they could be stopped and subjected to criminal charges or deportation. Kawamleh’s wife Faheema al-Saedi, a Jordanian national, initially obtained an entry visa from Israeli authorities, but that lapsed and she has not been able to obtain status by applying on the grounds of family reunification.

Kawamleh says he regrets moving back: “I left everything to hold onto my ID and what did we get back? No IDs for two of my kids and no visa for my wife, meaning they can’t work or move freely.”

Punitive Revocations

Abed Dawiat, Sur Baher

On January 19, 2016, Israeli authorities revoked the residency of then 18-year-old Abed Dawiat, from the Palestinian neighborhood of Sur Baher in East Jerusalem, for his alleged involvement in a stone-throwing incident several months earlier that led to the death of an Israeli citizen, Alex Leblovitch. In a letter (http://www.hamoked.org/files/2016/1160035_eng.pdf) to Dawiat’s lawyer, Interior Minister Aryeh Deri said that the revocation stemmed from “the murderous terror attack” in which Dawiat “deliberately threw stones” at cars on a Jerusalem road, leading to Leblovitch’s death and the serious injury of another Israeli. Deri further said that “the residency status requires basic commitment and loyalty,” including the obligation “not to act against the [Israeli] state or take action which undermines its existence,” for which Dawiat’s actions constituted a “brazen and severe violation.”

The Dawiat family have lived in Jerusalem since well before 1967, said Abed’s mother, Sarah Dawiat. She said that she first heard of the revocation of her son’s residency in the media, several months before she received the formal Interior Ministry letter. In addition to revoking his residency, Israeli forces sealed off the family’s home with metal sheets, making it unusable and displacing the family.

Dawiat accepted a plea bargain for a 100,000 NIS fine (US\$2800) and an 18-year jail sentence, which he is serving in Nafha Prison. He has challenged his residency revocation in front of the High Court of Justice; if that petition fails, he will not be permitted to live with his family in Jerusalem when he finishes serving his sentence.

Abu Rajab Family, al-Issawiya

In 1992, Maysa Herbawi, a Jerusalem resident, married Kassaf Abu Rajab, a West Bank ID holder, and they lived in the West Bank outside of Jerusalem because of Abu Rajab’s status. Abu Rajab’s family is from Jerusalem’s Old City, but they had been outside Jerusalem when Israeli authorities conducted the census in 1967 that served as the basis for granting residency. Abu Rajab was born in 1969 and raised in Anata, a town four kilometers east of the Old City. In 2013, though, Herbawi and Abu Rajab entered East Jerusalem with their seven children at the time – Abu Rajab without a permit – and applied for family reunification under Herbawi’s residency. They spent the next two and-a-half years pursuing their application.

That all changed on March 8, 2016, when their son Fuad opened fire on Israeli forces in East Jerusalem, wounding two officers before dying in the resulting firefight. In the aftermath, Israeli Public Security Ministry Gilad Erdan instructed police to investigate the legal status of the Abu Rajab family, declaring, “My instructions to the police were clear: whoever is here illegally will be deported.”

The day of the attack, Herbawi said, police raided the family home in al-Issawiya, turning it upside down and telling them, “if you remain at the house, we will expel you to Syria or Gaza.” They also detained Abu Rajab for 11 days – initially accusing him of buying weapons for his son, then pointing to his illegal stay in Jerusalem – and interrogated all members of the family. Herbawi said the police compelled them all to sign a document written in Hebrew, which she said she did not understand, and which she later learned prohibited everyone but her – a Jerusalem permanent resident – and her two youngest children, 2-year-old twins born in Jerusalem, from being in Jerusalem. Police then dropped her and the rest of the family – except for Abu Rajab, who was detained for several more days – at the Qalandia checkpoint, which separates Jerusalem from Ramallah.

The family of 10 now lives in a two-bedroom apartment belonging to Abu Rajab’s mother, in the West Bank village of al-Judeira. Only Herbawi has visited Jerusalem since. Abu Rajab told Human Rights Watch that, “my children are not happy here, they refuse to accept our current situation, don’t feel they belong here and want to go back to Jerusalem.” Two have dropped out of school and another is coping with depression, he said.

Qunbar Family, Jabal al-Mukabar

On January 8, 2017, Fadi Qunbar, a 28-year-old from the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal al-Mukabar, drove a truck into a group of Israeli soldiers, killing four before he was killed. Within days, the Interior Ministry sent letters to 13 members of the Qunbar family, notifying them of its intention to revoke their Jerusalem statuses.

A January 10 letter to Diaa Qunbar, Fadi’s nephew, reviewed by Human Rights Watch, bases the revocation on “information suggesting a number of people of your extended family are suspected of having a connection to ISIS and involvement in terrorist activity,” making “your continued presence in Israel” a “security concern.” HaMoked, an Israeli nongovernmental organization that represents several Qunbar family members, said that the Interior Ministry sent identical letters to 11 other relatives. The letter to Minwa Qunbar, Fadi’s mother, also grounded the revocation on the claim that she had falsely stated 30 years earlier that her marriage was not an act of bigamy, when in fact her husband had still been married to another woman.

Several days later, the Interior Ministry interviewed all those who had received a letter and, on January 25, announced <https://m.facebook.com/Pibalsrael/photos/a.124166880960646.9854.122865837757417/1315595825151073/?type=3> that it had formally revoked the status of 13 members of the Qunbar family: Minwa (permanent residency), Mohamad (temporary residency), Salah (temporary residency), Ahmed (temporary residency), Diaa (stay permit), Manal (stay permit), Riyadh (stay permit), Hassan (stay permit), Bassam (stay permit), Younis (stay permit), Zakariya (stay permit), child (stay permit), and child (stay permit).

Lawyers for members of the Qunbar family appealed the next day to the Appeals Tribunal, which issued temporary orders the same day to suspend the Interior Ministry’s decision. The legal challenge remains pending in the courts and the relatives each have a document saying they can remain in Jerusalem in the interim.

Israel’s security-based justification belies statements made by Interior Minister Aryeh Deri. On January 9, the day after the attack, he declared a “new era against terror and terrorists with a status that they exploit to carry out terrible attacks against civilians,” citing the Qunbar attack and saying (<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.764202>), “from now on, anyone who plots, plans or considers carrying out an attack will know that his family will pay a heavy price for his deed.” Deri added in the official January 25 ministry announcement, that “only immediate and practical acts will deter assailants. I am convinced that the revocation of family members’ status will serve as a warning for others.”

Minwa Qunbar said that, although her husband had been concurrently married to her and his previous wife for a time, he divorced his previous wife before registering her marriage and that she has been in Jerusalem for over three decades without Israeli authorities raising this as a concern.

In addition to revoking their residency, Israeli authorities sealed Fadi Qunbar’s home with concrete, which Human Rights Watch observed, leading his wife and four children, the youngest of whom is a year old, to move in with Minwa Qunbar. Home demolitions imposed as a collective punishment in occupied territory, which accompanied residency revocations in two of the cases Human Rights Watch documented, are war crimes (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/21/israel-stop-punitive-home-demolitions>). Israeli authorities also brought a civil suit (<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.798857>) against the family for damages and Minwa Qunbar said that Israeli authorities cut her national insurance benefits in March.

Hind Qunbar, Fadi’s half-sister and mother of Diaa Qunbar, whose status was revoked after the January attack, said that the revocations undermined years of her efforts, including family reunification applications to obtain status for her sons, submission of documents to the Interior Ministry, and home visit inspections every two years by National Insurance Institute, which oversees social welfare benefits, to safeguard her family’s status in Jerusalem. Israeli authorities revoked the status of her other son, Bahaa, in 2015 after arresting him with a knife in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal al-Mubakar and accusing him of planning to attack Israelis. She said that the uncertainty surrounding Diaa Qunbar’s Jerusalem status has made it difficult for him to find work and imperiled the family’s economic situation.

Other Discriminatory Residency Revocations

Israel also effectively controls (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/02/05/israel-end-restrictions-palestinian-residency>) the Palestinian population registry in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority issues identification documents to Palestinians in these territories, but can only do so in coordination with Israel, which has cancelled or refused registration, residency, and family unification requests for more than 230,000 Palestinians (http://www.hamoked.org/files/2011/114221_eng.pdf) since 1967, many on grounds of remaining outside the West Bank and Gaza for too long.

ecoi.net summary:

Israeli authorities use discriminatory revocations of the residency status of Palestinians from East Jerusalem as means of collective punishment; Palestinians forced to leave their homes



Countries:

Israel, Occupied Palestinian Territory

Source:

[HRW – Human Rights Watch](#) (</en/source/11207.html>)

Original link:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/08/israel-jerusalem-palestinians-stripped-status> (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/08/israel-jerusalem-palestinians-stripped-status>)

Document type:

Appeal or News Release

Language:

English

Published:

8 August 2017

Document ID:

1406878 (former ID [344915 \(/en/document/344915\)\)](/en/document/344915))

Austrian Red Cross

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien

T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583

F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589

info@ecoi.net

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

