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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel – January to June 2023

30 June 2023

02 January 2023

West Bank: 2022 records the highest death toll since 2005

On 22.12.22, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man during clashes that erupted between the military and gunmen near the city of Nablus. The clashes occurred as the military escorted Jewish worshippers to a pilgrimage site. Five other persons were wounded. The militant group Hamas announced shortly afterwards that the man killed had been one of its fighters.

More than 150 Palestinian individuals were killed by the Israeli army in the West Bank in 2022. This is the highest death toll since the UN began systematically recording casualties in 2005. According to Israeli authorities, a large number of those killed were members of militias and armed groups. Twenty-nine Israelis were killed by Palestinian gunmen during the same period, including both military personnel and civilians.

In the early hours of 02.01.23, two Palestinians were shot dead during clashes with Israeli forces in Kafr Dan locality, near Jenin city in the north of the West Bank. According to a statement issued by the military, the servicemen were in the locality to carry out the demolition of the family homes of two residents who had killed an Israeli soldier in September 2022. The military personnel encountered armed individuals at the site. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades announced that one of the individuals killed had been one of its members.

Israel/West Bank: charges brought against two soldiers

According to media reports issued on 29.12.22, Israeli forces brought charges against two of three soldiers who attacked a Palestinian residence with an explosive device in November 2022. It is believed to be an act of retaliation directed against Palestinian militia members' kidnapping of the body of an Israeli teenager from a Palestinian hospital. The prosecution of the third soldier involved was to follow, official sources say. International observers welcomed the move. Prosecutions within the Israeli military rarely take place, they said. Just one week earlier, an Israeli human rights organisation published a report claiming that Israeli military officers accused of harming Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza Strip in 1,260 cases over the past five years had been prosecuted in less than 1% of cases. Human rights organisations have for years criticized the perceived impunity with which Israeli forces can act.

Israel: three police officers injured in ramming attack

On 23.12.22, police officers shot and killed an Israeli Arab as he rammed his vehicle at security forces, injuring three police officers.

09 January 2023

West Bank: one person killed in clash with Israeli forces

On 03.01.22, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man in the town of Bethlehem, in the southern part of the West Bank. According to the military, firing was opened after Palestinians threw stones, explosive and incendiary devices at military personnel.

16 January 2023

West Bank: several persons killed in attacks, clashes with the military

At least eight Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces between 11.01.23 and 15.01.23. The incidents occurred during arrests or raids at refugee camps, an altercation at a checkpoint and a knife attack on a settler. Some of those killed are believed to be members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the Cave of Lions group or Islamic Jihad.

23 January 2023

West Bank: several persons killed by members of the armed forces

At least five Palestinians were killed by Israeli armed forces between 16.01.23 and 21.01.23. The incidents occurred mainly during arrests or raids carried out at refugee camps, with one incident involving the stabbing of a settler. Three of those killed were reportedly members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades or Islamic Jihad. In addition, a soldier of the Israeli military was lightly wounded. It is not known whether the soldier was male or female. One of those killed was a 14-year-old boy who was shot dead at a refugee camp near Bethlehem. The Israeli soldiers were pelted with stones and incendiary devices when they entered the camp and responded with live ammunition.

Israel: cabinet member dismissed after Supreme Court ruling

The Israeli Supreme Court on 18.01.23 ordered the dismissal of Aryeh Deri, who had been appointed Interior and Health Minister when the government was formed in late December 2022. The court ruled that he could no longer remain in office following his conviction for tax offences last year.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government announced shortly beforehand that one of their greatest priorities was to reform the Israeli judiciary, claiming judges and government legal advisors have too much influence on legislation and the executive. Critical voices fear that this could undermine Israeli democracy in the long run. Thousands of Israelis have therefore taken to the streets in recent weeks to protest against the announced changes.

In December 2022, the government amended a law prohibiting a person convicted in criminal proceedings from assuming duties as a cabinet member, allowing Deri to take up his post. The Supreme Court challenged this decision and has now delivered its verdict.

Deri had already been sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 2000 for bribery, fraud and embezzlement during his time as Interior Minister in the 1990s.

30 January 2023

West Bank: several persons killed in military operations

On 25.01.23, Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinians during an altercation with several people throwing stones.

On 26.01.23, a military operation at a refugee camp triggered a gunfire exchange between Israeli troops and armed gunmen. Nine Palestinians were killed, seven of whom belonged to one of the militant groups Hamas or Islamic Jihad, according to information provided by the groups. The army announced it will be launching an inquiry into the killing of a 61-year-old woman. Medical rescue workers complained that they had been denied access to the wounded during the military operation. According to the organisation B'Tselem, this is the deadliest military raid to be carried out in two decades. A few hours later, another Palestinian was shot dead north of Jerusalem during protests against the previous raid. Since the beginning of 2023, a total of 34 Palestinians have been killed, among them numerous members of militant groups and civilians.

Gaza Strip: work permits revoked, missiles from the Gaza Strip and Israeli airstrikes

On 25.01.23, the Israeli domestic intelligence service Shin Bet announced that Israel would be revoking approximately 230 Israeli work permits for family members of Hamas members living in the Gaza Strip. According to a statement issued by the intelligence service, they were suspected of recruiting Palestinians from the West Bank for the militant group during their work stays in Israel. The recruited persons were frequently unaware of what their work actually involved, such as transporting money, and did not know which group was in the background.

On 27.01.23, several missiles were fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel in response to the military raid carried out in the West Bank that left seven dead (see above). Three of the missiles were intercepted, one had already hit the ground in the Gaza Strip, and another fell into open territory. The Israeli forces say they were responding by carrying out airstrikes on an underground missile production facility, which was also being used as a Hamas training site.

East Jerusalem: seven Jewish worshipers killed near synagogue

On 27.01.23, a Palestinian gunman killed seven civilians and wounded three others near a synagogue in East Jerusalem before he was shot dead by the police. This is the deadliest attack to be carried out since 2008. The attack took place in the Neve Yaakov area, a Jewish settlement inside East Jerusalem. Israeli forces arrested 42 of family members and neighbours of the gunman who is from the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of at-Tur, and sealed off the home of the assailant's family.

On 28.01.23, a 13-year-old Palestinian boy attacked a group of Jewish civilians with a firearm in the Silwan neighbourhood, wounding two of them. He was overpowered by armed bystanders and was subsequently taken into custody by the police. On the same day, the Israeli Prime Minister announced further punitive measures to punish such attacks. In future, he said the families of assailants will no longer receive social benefits, it will be made easier for Israelis to have weapons licensed, and the crackdown on illegal weapons possession will be stepped up. Concrete regulations are to follow.

UNRWA: ongoing financial crisis

On 24.01.23, the head of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, launched an appeal for USD 1.6 billion for 2023. UNRWA runs education, health and other support services for Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

According to him, UNRWA is ending its fourth consecutive year with a deficit of about USD 70 million, while the majority of refugees needing services are now living below the poverty line (81.5% of the population in Gaza) and a growing number are dependent on UNRWA support. Accordingly, last year UNRWA only managed to USD 1.2 billion of the USD 1.6 billion it had appealed for.

Shortly before, around 3,700 aid workers in the West Bank joined a unionised strike in support of the demand for salary increases. The aim was to increase salaries by JOD 200 (approx. USD 281.81) per month. Various parts of UNRWA's services have been affected, including schools, healthcare facilities, rubbish collection systems and others.

06 February 2023

West Bank: several killed in military operations

Between 30.01.23 and 06.02.23, seven Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli troops and at least six people were wounded in various incidents. On two occasions, according to military sources, Palestinians attempted to attack military personnel at checkpoints.

According to military sources, at least five persons were killed and six were wounded in several raids carried out at the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp near Jericho. Israeli troops had been searching for suspects who had unsuccessfully tried to shoot people dining at a restaurant in a settlement near Jericho on 28.01.23. At least two of those killed were said to be members of Hamas.

Gaza Strip / Israel: mutual fire

On 02.02.23, Israeli Air Force warplanes carried out airstrikes destroying a rocket production facility in the Gaza Strip in response to a rocket attack that had been launched against Israel from the Gaza Strip. The latter was intercepted by the Israeli air defence system.

13 February 2023

East Jerusalem: three Israelis killed

On 10.02.23, a Palestinian rammed his car into a group of pedestrians standing at a bus stop in the Jewish settlement of Ramot. A total of three Israelis, including two children, were killed. The assailant was shot dead on the spot by a police officer. The Palestinian's family said he had been suffering from a psychiatric illness and had been released from hospital just two days before the attack.

Just two days after the attack, the family home of the assailant was sealed by the Israeli authorities and prepared for demolition. Human rights organisations criticise this action by the Israeli authorities and accuse them of collectively punishing the families of assailants.

West Bank: three Palestinians killed; legalisation of new outposts

On 09.02.23 and 12.02.23, two Palestinians were killed in clashes that erupted with Israeli troops. One Palestinian allegedly tried to stab military personnel with a knife. A 14-year-old was shot dead during a military raid.

On 11.02.23, a Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli settlers in the village of Salfit. The settlers allegedly entered the village where a settler opened fire on bystanders.

On 12.02.23, the Israeli government announced the legalisation of nine settlement outposts in the West Bank, which until then had been considered unauthorised. The government announced that this was a direct response to recent violence perpetrated by Palestinians and that further legalisations will follow.

Gaza Strip / Israel: exchange of fire

In the early morning hours of 13.02.23, the Israeli army carried out several airstrikes on targets in the Gaza Strip. According to military sources, they targeted Hamas rocket production facilities. Two days earlier, a rocket had been fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel, which was intercepted by the military. None of the known groups in the Gaza Strip have claimed responsibility for the attempted attack.

27 February 2023

East Jerusalem: Israeli policeman killed

On 13.02.23, an Israeli policeman was shot dead in the line of duty in East Jerusalem. A Palestinian pulled out a knife and stabbed the policeman as he was conducting a security check. A security guard then opened fire, but accidentally hit the policeman, who later succumbed to his injuries. The Palestinian assailant was arrested.

West Bank: many people killed in clashes, attacks by settlers

Between 13.02.23 and 22.02.23, at least 12 Palestinians were killed in raids carried out by Israeli forces. Among them were reportedly at least two minors. Ten of those killed died on 22.02.23 in a daytime Israeli military operation carried out in a busy part of the city of Nablus, where there was an exchange of fire with armed Palestinians. Ten Palestinians, aged between 16 and 72, were reportedly killed and more than 100 people were wounded. The Israeli army announced that it would launch investigations into several cases.

On 13.01.23, Issa Amro, a prominent Palestinian activist, was physically assaulted by an Israeli soldier during an interview in Hebron. The soldier subsequently spent ten days in a military prison and is to be barred from active combat service in the future. The military stated that he had not adhered to the given guidelines of conduct. Human rights organisations have repeatedly criticised the fact that military personnel rarely have to face consequences for misdemeanours.

On 25.02.23, two Palestinians were seriously injured by Israeli settlers' gunfire at a location in the north of the West Bank. According to Palestinian authorities, a group of settlers entered the village where one opened fire on the residents.

On 26.02.23, a Palestinian shot and killed two Israelis on a street in the south of Nablus. Settler organisations then organised several demonstrations near the crime scene, which turned into violent riots against Palestinian people and their property. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, one Palestinian was killed by gunfire and several dozen were reportedly injured. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appealed to Israelis in the West Bank not to take the law into their own hands, but to let the security forces do their job and track down the Palestinian assassin.

The incidents overshadowed a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian representatives in Aqaba, Jordan, held on the same day, aimed at finding a way out of the current spiral of violence.

Israel: Law on the Revocation of the Nationality of Arab Offenders

On 15.02.23, the Israeli parliament approved a law to strip Arabs convicted of nationalistic attacks of their Israeli citizenship or residency and deport them if they have accepted stipends from the Palestinian Authority. The internationally recognised Palestinian Authority has long provided stipends, inter alia, to the families of Palestinians killed or imprisoned in connection with the fight against Israel. The Palestinian Authority considers these payments to be a form of welfare to needy families, but Israel says they reward violence and serve as an incentive for others to carry out attacks against Jews.

According to the new bill, the authorities have the right to deport these persons to the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. Arab politicians in the Knesset have criticised the law, calling it racist.

06 March 2023

Israel: mass protests over planned judicial reform

On 01.03.23, police in Tel Aviv used water cannons and stun grenades to disperse several thousand demonstrators who had called for a nationwide "day of disruption" to protest against a government bill that could severely limit the control function of the judiciary in Israel's democratic system. Government representatives have branded the protesters anarchists.

As part of the government's plan, the Knesset is expected to vote in the coming weeks on, inter alia, a law that would allow parliament to overturn Supreme Court decisions with a simple majority. The executive branch in Israel's political system is already considered to be very powerful as in the parliamentary system it usually also has a majority in parliament. In addition, parliament consists of only one chamber. The Supreme Court therefore plays an essential role in the separation of powers as it can still block legislative projects if they conflict with the Basic Laws. The Basic Laws are a constitution-like catalogue of laws. Israel, like the former colonial power Great Britain, does not have a written constitution.

The government's current plan to overhaul the political system has led to one of the largest protest movements in the country's history. At the same time, more Palestinians have died in clashes with Israeli security forces in the West Bank since the beginning of the year than at any time since 2000.

Israel: government coalition paves the way for new rules for the death penalty

On 01.03.23, the Knesset passed in a first reading a bill from the ruling coalition to reinstate the death penalty for persons guilty of causing the death of an Israeli citizen of Israel from a nationalist motive. The legislative process still provides for deliberation on the bill in a committee before it comes to a final vote in the Knesset and can actually be passed as law.

In Israel's 75-year history, the death penalty has only been imposed twice for other reasons: in 1948 against Meir Tobianski, an officer (wrongly) convicted of treason during the War of Independence, and in 1962 against Adolf Eichmann.

West Bank: Israeli American killed in attack; Palestinian killed in arrest raid

On 28.02.23, a person who held both Israeli and American citizenship was killed by armed Palestinians near the city of Jericho. Three suspects were arrested during an arrest raid carried out a day later. Another Palestinian was shot and died shortly afterwards.

13 March 2023

West Bank: 14 Palestinians killed; unrest at funeral procession

Between 07.03.23 and 12.03.23, a total of 12 Palestinians were killed in several violent clashes that erupted between armed Palestinians and the Israeli army. In two of the three incidents, military raids had triggered the escalations. However, according to the military, the incidents in which three of those killed had attacked Israeli military personnel at a checkpoint were not directly preceded by a military raid. The violence escalated in Nablus, Jenin and Jaba, a town south of Jenin. At least half of those killed were members of the armed groups Islamic Jihad, the Lion's

Den or the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. More than two dozen other Palestinians and three Israeli military personnel were wounded. On 09.03.23, an underage Palestinian died after being wounded by the Israeli military when he was part of a group of young Palestinians throwing stones at military personnel.

On 07.03.23, a Palestinian was wounded by Israeli settlers in the village of Huwara, near the town of Jenin. On 09.03.23, a Palestinian man was killed by a settler when he entered a settlement in the West Bank armed with explosive devices and knives.

On 08.03.23, riots broke out between Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces and participants at the funeral of a Palestinian assailant killed the day before in Nablus. Participants chanted slogans against the Palestinian Authority. After Hamas tried to turn the funeral into a protest against the PA and a brief commotion broke out near the body of the deceased, the PA security forces said they intervened. Security forces used tear gas to disperse the crowds as the body was returned to the ambulance.

Israel: three persons wounded in attack in Tel Aviv

On the evening of 09.03.23, a gun-wielding Palestinian opened fire on passers-by on a busy street in Tel Aviv. Three people were wounded, with one of the injured initially in critical condition. The gunman was stopped by Israeli police and was killed while trying to flee.

27 March 2023

West Bank: several people killed and wounded in raids and armed attacks

On 16.03.23, four Palestinians were killed in Jenin, including two members of the Islamic Jihad armed group and one child. On 23.03.23, the co-founder of a new local armed group was killed during a military raid carried out in Tulkarem. He was suspected of being involved in several attacks carried out against Israelis.

An Israeli civilian was wounded by shots fired at his car in Huwara on 19.03.23. The assailant was arrested by military personnel. The attack overshadowed a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian representatives in Egypt, where concessions were made by both sides in a bid to contribute to a de-escalation and calming of the security situation. Israel promised a temporary halt to further settlement planning for the West Bank, but this came to an end on 24.03.23 when Israeli authorities approved a further thousand settlement units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

On 25.03.23, two Israeli military personnel were wounded in a drive-by shooting, also near the village of Huwara. The armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Israel: response to explosive device

On 13.03.23, Israeli forces killed a person who had previously planted an explosive device on a road in northern Israel. The explosive device seriously wounded one person when it detonated. Due to the nature of the explosive device, Israeli authorities suspect that the man infiltrated from Lebanon and may have been linked to Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group.

17 April 2023

West Bank: Teachers on strike; tensions rise with several dead and wounded

Teachers in the West Bank have been on strike since 05.02.23 demanding from the Palestinian Authority (PA) a pay rise and an independent, democratically elected union. The latest strike was triggered in January 2023 when the teachers did not receive the 15 percent pay rise along with back pay which had already been promised in May 2022. Last March, the Ministry of Education published a list of teachers who were threatened with dismissal if they continued their strike. The strikers remained opposed to offers by the cash-strapped PA to compensate teachers over an unspecified period of time.

On 01.04.23, a Palestinian assailant drove his car into a group of Israeli military personnel south of Bethlehem, injuring one soldier lightly, one moderately and another one seriously. On 05.04.23, an Israeli soldier was shot dead during clashes with Palestinians near the city of Hebron. The shooter initially managed to escape.

On 09.04.23, Israeli military personnel shot dead a Palestinian man when opening fire on a group of stone throwers near the village of Azzun. On 10.04.23, another Palestinian minor was shot dead.

The Lion's Den armed group, which operates mainly in Nablus, stated on 08.04.23 that it killed a spy who had revealed to the Israeli authorities information about the group and its locations. The killing could not be confirmed at first.

Three British women were shot dead in an attack on 10.04.23 near a settlement in the West Bank. The Israeli government called in additional reserve forces from 09.04.23 to assist the Israeli border police.

Increased attacks on Christian believers and their property

According to media reports, recent weeks have seen an increase in attacks and vandalism against Christian property in Jerusalem and Israel. These include graffiti inciting violence against Christian believers, damage to cemeteries and restaurants, and a physical attack on Christian priests in southern Israel. Spokespersons for the Christian denominations have criticised the inadequate response of the security forces.

East Jerusalem: Palestinian killed; riots at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound

On 31.03.23 a Palestinian man was killed who, according to the military, attacked two border police officers with their own weapon. However, witnesses said that he was unarmed and did not pose a threat. The family of the victim denounced that no video footage was made available, despite the fact that there is extensive surveillance camera coverage in this part of East Jerusalem and that members of the border police are equipped with body cameras. These statements were confirmed by former high-ranking police members.

On 05.04.23, Israeli security forces used stun grenades to storm the Al-Aqsa Mosque where, according to the military, Palestinian youths had barricaded themselves and set off fireworks. The youths were dispersed from the mosque with batons. The square in front of the mosque was cleared with stun grenades and rubber bullets. More than 50 people were reportedly injured, among them a member of the military. Over 400 Palestinians were arrested. In the evenings of the following days, people continued to barricade themselves in the mosque in order to pray there at night. Muslim worshippers are only allowed to do this during the last ten days of Ramadan, when visits by Jewish worshippers are suspended. They were removed by force by the Israeli military. At least six other people were injured.

Israel: Rocket fire from Syria, Lebanon and Gaza; one dead, several injured in attacks in Israel

On 02.04.23, the Israeli military stated to have shot down a drone from Syria that had entered Israeli airspace following Israeli airstrikes against targets in Syria. The drone was reportedly an Iranian model. On 08.04. and 09.04.23, more rockets were launched from Syria, to which the Israeli military responded with artillery fire and further air strikes.

Between 05.04. and 07.04.23 militias from Gaza fired rockets into Israel after security forces entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque (see above). The Israeli military responded with air strikes on Hamas positions in Gaza.

On 06.04.23, some three dozen rockets from Lebanon injured two people in Israel and damaged buildings. The following day, the Israeli military fired several rockets at Hamas targets in southern Lebanon.

On 04.04.23, a Palestinian man attacked and wounded two Israelis with a knife close to a military base near Tel Aviv.

On 07.04.23, a Palestinian assailant drove his car into a group of passers-by in Tel Aviv. An Italian tourist was killed and five other foreigners were lightly to moderately injured. The driver of the car was shot dead by Israeli security forces.

24 April 2023

Gaza: Six people convicted of collaborating with Israel

Media report that on 03.04.23 six people were sentenced by a military court in Gaza for 'collaboration' with Israel. Two of the convicts are facing the death penalty, with one sentence to be carried out by firing squad and the other by hanging. The other four convicts were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. The last time that death sentences were carried out in Gaza was in September 2022 with five people executed, two of them for the offence of collaborating with Israel. No details have been released on the cases of the most recent sentences.

West Bank: Knife attack; several wounded in military operation

On 17.04.23, a Palestinian woman attacked and wounded an Israeli with a knife near an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. She was then shot by Israeli forces and later treated in a Jerusalem hospital. No further information was provided on her condition.

In a violent escalation involving armed Palestinians during an Israeli military operation in the northern West Bank town of Jenin on 18.04.23, eight people were wounded, among them an elderly woman and a member of the paramedic rescue team.

East Jerusalem: Two wounded by assailants

On 18.04.23, two Jewish worshippers were wounded by a Palestinian assailant with a makeshift firearm as they were travelling in their car to a pilgrimage site in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Israeli security forces then carried out a large-scale search operation in the area. The following day, an underage Palestinian from Nablus suspected of the crime was arrested by the military.

Israel: Smuggled weapons confiscated; Jordanian lawmaker arrested

On the night of 19.04.23, Israeli security forces arrested a Bedouin suspected of smuggling weapons from Jordan into Israel. A total of 63 handguns were confiscated. On 23.04.23, the Jordanian Foreign Ministry reported that Israeli border authorities had detained a member of the Jordanian parliament at the West Bank border crossing for attempting to smuggle more than 200 handguns and gold into the Palestinian territories in his car. Israeli media were muzzled by the authorities, largely prohibiting them from reporting on the case.

08 May 2023**Jerusalem: Seven injured**

On 24.04.23, seven people were injured when a Palestinian man drove his car into a group of passers-by. The driver was shot dead by a bystander. According to the Israeli ambulance service Magen David Adom, he was probably suffering from mental illness.

West Bank: Several dead and injured

The Israeli military continues to conduct military operations and arrest raids in the West Bank almost every night, in what it says is an attempt to counter growing militancy. As a result, the number of Palestinians held in Israeli administrative detention has reached a new high for the past two decades. In clashes between the military and armed Palestinians, seven Palestinians were killed in raids between 24.04. and 06.05.23, among them a minor and the suspects in the murder of three Israeli-British women (cf. BN of 17.04. 23). Five of those killed were reportedly members of the armed wing of Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.

On 25.04.23, gunmen opened fire on a group of Israelis who were walking near a settlement in the West Bank, leaving one individual wounded. On 03.05.23, a Palestinian man was seriously wounded by military gunfire after refusing to cooperate at a checkpoint and attempting to attack an army soldier, according to the military. On 04.05.23, the Israeli military shot dead a Palestinian woman at a checkpoint near the village of Huwara after she attacked a soldier with a knife, the military said.

Palestinian dies after hunger strike in Israeli custody

After almost three months on hunger strike, Khader Adnan, a senior member of the Islamic Jihad militant group, died in Israeli custody on 02.05.23. His death sparked a general strike, protests and clashes between civilians and the Israeli military, as well as rocket fire from Gaza (see below). Adnan had already been imprisoned and held under administrative detention a dozen times in the past and was a symbol of resistance against the Israeli occupation for many Palestinians. Several times he organised hunger strikes to demand his release. Administrative detention allows the Israeli authorities to detain people without formal charges for extended periods of time, which can range from months to years. The Israeli authorities justify the use of administrative detention on the grounds that it allows them to detain suspects without having to reveal sensitive intelligence information. Human rights groups criticise that this concept denies individuals access to due process.

Gaza / Israel: Rocket fire

Following the death of a Palestinian detainee (see above), militant groups from Gaza fired rockets and mortar shells at populated areas in southern Israel, with many projectiles landing inside Gaza. On Israeli territory, at least three people were wounded, one of them seriously. The Israeli military responded by directing jets and tanks at targets of the militant groups such as military posts, tunnels and weapons depots. One uninvolved Palestinian was killed when shrapnel hit his house. Five others were wounded. The exchange of fire was ended by a ceasefire in the early morning of 03.05.23.

WFP: Significant reduction in aid to Palestinians from June

On 07.05.23, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) announced that it will no longer be able to provide food aid and monthly food vouchers to more than 200,000 Palestinians from June 2023 due to a lack of funding. While 140,000 people will continue to receive food, the cut will amount to 60 percent of previous assistance, WFP said. Families will be hardest hit in Gaza, where food insecurity and poverty are widespread, and 80 percent of the inhabitants are dependent on international aid. WFP Country Director Abdeljaber also announced a complete cut-off of aid in August 2023 if the UN agency does not receive further funding.

15 May 2023

Escalating violence between Israeli military and armed group in Gaza

On 09.05.23, the Israeli military killed three senior members of the armed group Islamic Jihad in Palestine (PIJ) in air strikes on Gaza. Ten civilians were also killed, among them relatives of the militants, but also a neighbouring family. The air strikes marked the beginning of five days of intense mutual shelling by the Israeli military and PIJ. A ceasefire was not reached until 13.05.23.

Six senior PIJ members have reportedly been killed by Israeli air strikes. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has recorded a total of 34 people killed (including 13 civilians), six members of an armed group, and 15 people whose status has yet to be determined. Israeli sources reported more than 1,400 rockets fired from Gaza towards Israel, with one-fifth of them hitting the ground inside Gaza. According to a Palestinian human rights organisation, these misfires left at least three people dead, among them two children. In Israel, the rockets have killed two people.

More than 948 people have fled their homes, OCHA stated. The responsible ministry inside Gaza said that more than 940 housing units were damaged, 51 destroyed, and 49 others severely damaged and uninhabitable. The military claims that only the PIJ was targeted, but that its members often hide in residential buildings. The military further said that it tries to warn civilians living in these areas of air strikes on such targets but that civilian casualties still continue to occur. Crossings into Israel for people and goods remained closed for five days. As a result, people from Gaza were unable to receive medical treatment in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Hamas, which runs Gaza, has kept a low profile in this latest escalation, but welcomed the PIJ's action.

West Bank: Three killed in clashes with the Israeli military

According to media reports on 14.05.23, the Israeli military killed two Palestinians in an armed confrontation during a raid on the Balata refugee camp. In addition, a Palestinian was shot dead near the town of Jenin after border police said he had threatened security forces with a knife.

22 May 2023

West Bank: Three killed in military operation

The Palestinian Ministry of Health has stated that on 22.05.23, three Palestinians were shot dead by the Israeli military during an escalation of violence in a military operation in the Balata refugee camp near the city of Nablus. According to the armed wing of Fatah, the three were members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. Six other people were reportedly wounded, one of them was in critical condition. The Israeli military said it had received intelligence about a depot of weapons and explosives that was destroyed during the operation. At the site, explosive devices and stones were thrown at military personnel who responded with firearms, the military said.

05 June 2023

Egypt / Israel: Members of the Israeli defence force and Egyptian security officials killed in gun battle at border

The Israeli military has informed that on 03.06.23, two members of their forces were shot dead by an Egyptian security officer who apparently crossed the border fence. In a subsequent exchange of fire between the Egyptian official and other Israeli security forces, another member of the Israeli military was killed. On the same day, the Egyptian military stated that the incident was related to an operation to thwart drug smuggling on the Egypt-Israel border. Both countries have assured to jointly investigate the incident.

West Bank: Several dead after attacks and military raids

On 26.05.23, a Palestinian was shot dead by an armed civilian in the Israeli settlement of Tene Omarim. Earlier, the deceased had entered the settlement and attacked a person with a knife. At the same time, Israeli settlers reportedly attacked Palestinian farmers and their vehicles in al-Mughayyir near Ramallah. Apparently, five Palestinians were injured in the incident.

On 29.05.23, the Israeli military shot dead an armed Palestinian during a military raid in Jenin. On 30.05.23, Palestinian gunmen shot dead an Israeli civilian at the entrance to the Hormesh settlement in the northern West Bank. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades armed group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 02.06.23, two civilians, among them a three-year-old boy, were wounded by Israeli military fire at their car. The military said that Palestinian gunmen opened fire at the entrance to the Neve Tzug settlement, prompting military personnel stationed there to return the fire. The boy was airlifted to an Israeli hospital where he was initially in critical condition. The Israeli military announced an investigation into the incident.

19 June 2023

Israel: Rising violence in Palestinian communities

On 08.06.23, five Palestinians died in a shooting attack near the town of Nazareth, in northern Israel. Police said the attack was linked to a dispute between two families.

Shortly afterwards, another man and a three-year-old child were seriously injured in a nearby village.

Media report that Palestinian communities in Israel suffer particularly from poverty, discrimination, high crime rates and government neglect. More than 100 people have been killed in violent crimes in Palestinian communities since the beginning of the year, which is a threefold increase on the same period last year. The murder rate is also three times higher than in Jewish communities, although Palestinians make up only one-fifth of the population. Human rights organisations accuse the government of failing to adequately prosecute and punish crimes in Palestinian communities inside Israel. In addition, systemic grievances and widespread poverty are increasingly forcing people into crime, while the government fails to act.

West Bank: Several dead and injured

On 09.06.23, a Palestinian was shot dead by the Israeli military at a checkpoint in the West Bank. According to the military, he was stopped in a stolen car and tried to take a soldier's gun during an exchange of words. Another soldier then shot him. One soldier was lightly wounded.

On 13.06.23, the Israeli military shot and killed a Palestinian in armed clashes that broke out during a military raid in the city of Nablus. According to the military, a fleeing armed man was shot at, as well as others who threw explosive devices and stones at the military. Two minors were wounded during the raid. Both incidents are reportedly under investigation.

Near the village of Jenin, fire was opened at an Israeli car from a passing vehicle. Four passengers were wounded. The attackers could not be apprehended at first and fled in their vehicle.

26 June 2023

West Bank: 16 Palestinians and four Israelis killed

On 19.06.23, seven Palestinians, including a 15-year-old girl, were killed in Jenin during a military raid that lasted about eleven hours. More than 90 Palestinians were also wounded, as well as eight Israeli soldiers. The evacuation

of the armed Israeli soldiers involved Israeli military helicopters, which were also fired upon. According to media reports, this was the first such air support operation since around 2005.

On 20.06.23, armed Hamas gunmen killed several Israelis, including a 17-year-old, in an attack near the settlement of Eli. The two assailants were shot dead. Hundreds of Israeli settlers then stormed the Palestinian village of Turmus Ayya, setting fire to cars and buildings. The mayor of the village said that more than 30 houses and 60 cars were partially or completely destroyed. Six Palestinians were wounded. Palestinian emergency services confirmed the death of one Palestinian. A few days later, Israeli security forces arrested three settlers on suspicion of involvement in mass disturbances in Palestinian villages.

A few hours after the clashes in Turmus Ayya, three Palestinians were killed in the first Israeli drone strike on a West Bank target since 2006. The military said it had identified several militants in a car who had previously been suspected of carrying out several attacks against Israelis. The armed group Islamic Jihad in Palestine said that two of those killed were its members, while the third apparently belonged to the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of Fatah.

On 23.06.23, a Palestinian died from injuries sustained in clashes with the Israeli military in Nablus.

On 24.06.23, a Palestinian opened fire at the Israeli Qalandiya checkpoint near Jerusalem. The military personnel present shot and killed him. At the same time, there were again mass movements of Israeli settlers in several Palestinian localities, who threw stones, set fire to houses and also used firearms.

Israel: LGBTIQ person killed

On 09.06.23, an 18-year-old woman from a majority Druze community in northern Israel was shot dead. According to media reports, her death is believed to be related to her family's reaction to her sexual identity. She had previously received several death threats from her brothers and filed a police report against two of them in 2020. After her brothers spent several months in prison and an official process of reconciliation was initiated with her family, she fled again and went into a shelter. She later moved in with her sister, where she filed a final police report against her brothers; shortly afterwards, she was murdered. No suspects have been officially named so far. According to media reports, the murdered woman is the 99th victim of violence in Arab communities in Israel, which is a relatively high number compared to Jewish communities (cf. BN of 19.06.23).