

FACT SHEET

GENERAL INFORMATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	This paper aims to shed the light on settler violence and the compulsory displacement of Palestinians.
INDICATIVE TARGET AREA	Hebron Governorate
TIME PERIOD	Between October 7 th until the end of November 2023.
PREPARED BY	MA'AN Development Center

BRIEF HISTORY

Since 1967, Israeli governments have worked hard to build and expand settlements in the West Bank, both in terms of expanding their area and increasing their population. As a result of this policy, today about 380,000 Israeli settlers, who hold Israeli citizenship, live in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The establishment of settlements in the West Bank is a violation of international humanitarian law, and a violation of human rights recognized under international law. International humanitarian law prevents the occupying state from transferring its citizens to the areas it has occupied (Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention).

Despite this, and the fact that the settlements are illegal and illegitimate under international humanitarian law and affect the rights of the Palestinians, it does not affect the status of the settlers who live in them, as they are considered civilian residents entitled to the necessary protection.

Therefore, Israel created in the occupied territories a system of separation based on discrimination, as it established in the same region two separate judicial bodies in which human rights are determined according to individual's national affiliation. This system is the only one of its kind in the world and reminds us of existing systems from the past, such as the apartheid system that prevailed in South Africa.

Under this regime, the displacement of Palestinians continued, and thousands of acres of land were stolen from the Palestinians. These stolen lands were used to build dozens of settlements in the West Bank and settle hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens there. Israel prevents all Palestinians from entering and using these lands and exploits the presence of these settlements to give legitimacy to a series of continued violations carried out against the rights of Palestinians, including the right to housing, the right to live, and the right to freedom of movement. The extreme change made by Israel to the map of the West Bank, dividing the West Bank lands according to the Oslo Accords into three areas: **Areas A** are under Palestinian administrative and police control. It constitutes 18% of the West Bank. **Areas B** in which the Palestinian Authority exercises administrative control but shares security control with Israeli Authorities – Joint Control. It constitutes 22% of the West Bank. And **Areas C**, which Israel administrates, covers over 60% of the West Bank. All this change and division prevents any real possibility of establishing an independent Palestinian state within the right of self-determination.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Since the outbreak of war on the Gaza Strip on October 7th, the events and repercussions have affected the West Bank, especially the residents of areas classified in Areas C in the south of the West Bank. Under the slogan of “all means available”, settlers were given the green light to seize new lands, attack the residing civilians in these lands, and displace them their lands. The occupation seeks to cleanse and erase any Palestinian presence in these areas using illegal and racist means, most notably the confiscation of

Palestinian lands, the expulsion of their residents, and the systematic daily attacks carried out by settlers with the protection and full support of the occupation army, which seeks to equip individual settlers with the optimum power to settle in these areas.

In addition to the occupation's use of harsh means of expulsion which has been practiced for decades against the residents of these areas, which consists of creating a difficult coercive environment that forces them to leave, such as deprivation of basic services, especially drinking water, electricity, construction and transportation roads, and the demolition, sabotage, and burning of property and agricultural facilities, and the bombing and demolition of water wells, or even polluting its waters, and defining grazing areas by declaring these lands as natural reserves or closed military zones and that grazing in these areas are prohibited. This in turn, exposes the Palestinians, who mainly depend on grazing as a living, to the confiscation of their livestock and subjected to beatings and arrest if they exist in these areas, which, as a result, leaves them with no option except to leave and abandon their lands.

Recently, specifically after the outbreak of the war, the severity of these attacks increased until they reached forced displacement under the threat of weapons and fire, and many other practices and attacks on children and women, including beatings, intimidation, spraying of gas, and the demolition of homes and burning them on top of their residents. In addition to persecuting and confiscating humanitarian aid provided by any donors or human rights institutions. Yes, practices and methods differed, but the result is the same, which is the forced displacement of the residents of these areas, and this is a grave violation of the duties of the occupying power towards the people under occupation.

The paper exhibited that since the seventh of last October, the following has been observed in areas C communities in the southern West Bank, specifically in Bethlehem and Hebron governorates:

- A noticeable increase in daily attacks by settlers on residents of more than 80 communities and settlements.
- Nine communities were displaced and depopulated, their homes were demolished, and their property was confiscated and burned.
- The estimated cost of the losses suffered by these communities amounted to approximately one million three hundred thousand US dollars.
- 76 families were subjected to forced displacement, under gunpoint, and in the most difficult circumstances.
- The number of members of these families reached 519 people, 52% of whom were children, as the number of children reached 270 and the number of women was 78 women.
- 90% of these families were unable to reach their lands and harvest olive trees, and the area of land they were prevented from accessing was estimated at 300 acres of land planted with olives, which they relied on as a source of food and a source of income.
- More than 280 heads of sheep were confiscated by settlers.
- Based on the data and information provided to us by the representatives of the communities and the residents of these communities, the enumeration of grazing areas exceeded 80% of the total grazing areas, and this is one of the reasons that increases the burden on sheep breeders, as they will resort to buying fodder and the rise in its prices threatens their continuation of raising sheep, as in most of the time, Breeders resort to selling their sheep, in whole or in part, and this threatens the national economy.

This paper also monitored the suffering of these families who were forcibly displaced, and in the winter season, which sheep breeders and farmers consider the most difficult and challenging season, as part of the families, especially the families of the southern region, which is located near the Sa'ir Wilderness, were left without being able to take anything with them, says Hajj Muhammad Shalalda; one of the residents of this area.

"My family has lived in this area for a long time ago. I was born here and spent almost 75 years of my life in this land. I was forced to leave without being able to take my Aqal with me."

*Aqal: It is a piece of Palestinian traditional clothing that a man wears over his head.

And, to the residents of the Al-Radeem area, which is in the Samu' wilderness, Hajj Issa Abu Kabbash says, "For 70 years, I have worked hard to reach where I am now. And now, I lost everything in the blink of an eye."

Enclosed below are the most important identified needs of displaced families, which are considered very urgent, particularly now, during winter season:

- Providing shelter covers and tents for housing.
- Providing sheds for sheep.
- Providing water tanks.
- Providing fodder for sheep.
- Providing a source of electricity, whether it is electricity generating motors or providing them with solar energy units.
- Basic food supplies.
- The most important elements of protection are: first aid, extinguishers, heating elements, flashlights, fences, and others.

And many other numerous needs, especially since these families contain 270 children and 78 women, and these groups are considered the most fragile and most affected.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

This report, emanated from the necessity of realizing the harmful effects of compulsory displacement and settlers' attacks and violations practiced against Palestinian residents in Hebron Governorate in addition to the losses incurred in the form of damaged properties, confiscated lands, seized income source, and what potential means of humanitarian support can be provided to these displaced residents.

To demonstrate, a pool of 10 communities have been considered to provide an overview regarding the number of displaced families within these communities, identified lost and stolen items, their immediate needs, as well as requested protection needs (please refer to Annex A – Facts & Figures for further details); in addition to the estimated costs of losses (please refer to Annex B – Estimated Costs of Losses Incurred for further details).

#	Affected Communities	Number Of Displaced Families	Number Of Displaced Children
1	Al-Ghanoub	12	31
2	Barreyet Taqoo'	17	45
3	Kisan	3	6
4	Khirbet Al-Ratheem	5	31
5	Mantiqet Shib Al-Butum	2	13
6	Al-Samu'	1	2
7	Al-Buweib	1	28
8	Khirbet Zanuta	32	95
9	Widady	3	19
10	Um Tuba	3 families are under threat of displacement	
Total Number		76	270

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper showed that these families who have steadfast during these years to protect this land have the right to full support and protection, and this is the sole and premium responsibility of the State of Palestine towards it in accordance with the Basic Law and in accordance with international human rights conventions, which is represented in enabling all its citizens without discrimination to enjoy all their rights and freedoms, whether civil and political rights, such as voting and participation in political representation and in making national policies and decisions, or economic, social, and cultural rights, related to the provision of health, work, education, housing, and others.

These families who struggled and are still struggling were unable to withstand the brutality of the settlers and the occupation army that protects them and assists them in carrying out their aggressive attacks against these families. The ways in which the settlers attacked the Palestinian residents varied from daily harassment of children, women, and sheep shepherds, where they were beaten and sprayed with tear gas, and burning of properties and shelter tents of residents at night, to attacking residents with bulldozers and four-wheel-drive vehicles, seizing sheep and confiscating them from pastures, uprooting trees, plowing crops, demolishing barracks and wells, and mixing sheep fodder with dirt; in addition to giving the residents an evacuation notice of no more than 24 hours to leave their lands. Here, human rights and legal institutions and bodies must be directed towards monitoring and documenting this attack and taking the necessary legal measures.

Now that families have lost the fodder and firewood they prepared and stored for winter, and after being kicked out of their homes and lands, leaving them with their sheep in open spaces, confronting the rain and the cold of winter, they are in urgent need of immediate and momentary support. Therefore, we recommend unifying efforts and allocating the necessary financial resources from donors, official and human rights institutions, to develop a rapid intervention plan that supports their steadfastness and addresses their basic needs, with the participation of representatives from these communities that work towards providing a decent living for the abandoned and displaced.

Part of the areas classified as "B" must also be included in resilience support programs, as most of the farmers residing in these areas are also exposed to settlers' harassments, especially with the expansion of the settlements and their proximity to these areas.

Finally, in order not to lose more lands, and before more families are displaced, an intervention plan must be developed to support the remaining communities withstand these attacks and to confront any displacement attempts to preserve our land and grazing lands, which are considered part of the Palestinian national heritage. As each day passes, the chance of displacement of a new Palestinian family increase considering the continuation of all these attacks.

ANNEX A – FACTS & FIGURES

- Affected communities.
- Number of displaced family members.
- Number of displaced children.
- Current location.
- Immediate needs.
- Protection needs.
- Lost & stolen items.

ANNEX B – ESTIMATED COSTS OF INCURRED LOSSES

- Identified lost items.
- Number of units confiscated/vandalized.
- Total estimated cost.