



## Jerusalem Human Rights Consortium (JHRC) situation briefing on the West Bank including East Jerusalem, April 2026

### Introduction

The Jerusalem Human Rights Consortium (JHRC), including the Society of Saint Yves, the Jerusalem Legal Aid Centre (JLAC), the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning (ACAP) and the EuroMed Rights Network (EMR), are gravely concerned and urge immediate action to address the rapidly deteriorating situation for Palestinians the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

As highlighted by the [recent thematic report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR) on Israel's discriminatory administration of the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, since the outset of Israel's war on Gaza – where the [ceasefire is clearly failing](#) – the human rights and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian population has [continued to deteriorate](#), marked by rising casualties, intensified settler violence, and more displacement. Such deterioration has increasingly accelerated at the beginning of this year, and even more with the start of the Israeli-US war on Iran and Israeli war on Lebanon. The recent approval of the [discriminatory death penalty law](#) by the Israeli parliament, which would apply the capital punishment only against Palestinians convicted of terrorism – in a context characterized by the [systematic use of torture](#) by Israeli authorities – is just the latest example of the escalation of Israeli's apartheid system targeting the Palestinian population. Such measure shall be seen within an overall context where every aspect of the lives and rights of Palestinians is deeply affected, as illustrated in this briefing.

In this briefing, we are highlighting particularly the rapidly deteriorating situation in **East Jerusalem**, where **extrajudicial killings, large-scale demolitions and forced displacement** have escalated. **Checkpoints and closures** are severing the city from its Palestinian hinterland, **isolating communities** from their social, cultural, economic and religious life and undermining their rights to self-determination and development. **Punitive policing and systematic interference with freedom of worship are designed to coerce Palestinians to leave.** [As stressed by UN experts](#), these measures are components of a systematic project of demographic engineering and domination to entrench exclusive Jewish control. **These policies are undermining ongoing international efforts aimed at stabilization and the advancement of peace in the region:** as stressed by UN experts, [peace cannot coexist with annexation and oppression](#).

1. Demolitions, forced evictions and displacements, revocation of residency and dispossession of land against Palestinians

There has been a further escalation of demolitions, forced evictions, displacements and land dispossessions against Palestinians in the West Bank including East Jerusalem since the start of this year. Only in the first six weeks of 2026, [312 Palestinian facilities](#) have been demolished, affecting approximately 21,000 people: the vast majority of demolitions are carried out under the pretext of “building without a permit,” within a discriminatory planning regime that severely restricts Palestinian construction while enabling the expansion of Israeli settlements, considered illegal under international law.

As of March, [displacement of Palestinians has already reached about 95 per cent of the total recorded in the whole of 2025](#), with more than 1,500 Palestinians from 29 communities having been displaced due to demolitions and settlers attacks, with over 260 people displaced since the start of the regional escalation.

Forced evictions of Palestinian households have continued unabated: just in March, Israeli authorities have [evicted 15 households](#) from their homes in Batn Al Hawa in the area of Silwan, East Jerusalem, forcibly displacing dozens of children and adults, and handing over the properties to settlers. In the [neighbourhood of Al-Bustan](#), also located in Silwan, other 11 families – around 80 people, including children – had been forcibly evicted on 25 March. This eviction marks the beginning of a [massive displacement wave](#): approximately 2,200 people in Silwan are facing an imminent threat of forced displacement – 150 families (1,500 individuals) in [al-Bustan](#) and 90 families (700 individuals) in Batn al-Hawa – due to Israeli planning and zoning laws and policies that are applied unlawfully and are discriminatory against Palestinians, and which support the efforts by Israeli settlers to take control of this strategic area that surrounds Jerusalem’s Old City.

Evictions have grave physical, social, economic and emotional impact on Palestinian families concerned. In addition to depriving the family of a home – its main asset and source of physical and economic security – evictions frequently result in disruption in livelihoods, increased poverty and a reduced standard of living. The impact on children can be particularly devastating, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and diminished academic achievement. Moreover, the establishment and continued presence of settlement compounds within Palestinian areas have significantly affected the daily lives of Palestinian residents, contributing to an increasingly coercive environment that may place additional pressure on them to leave.

International humanitarian law prohibits Israel as the occupying power from imposing its own laws in occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, which includes the [use of Israeli](#)

[discriminatory laws](#) to evict Palestinians from their homes. In addition to violating the right of Palestinians to adequate housing, home demolitions not made absolutely necessary by military operations are prohibited, with the destruction of property violating Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This may amount to the war crime of wanton destruction of property.

These evictions are part of a broader pattern of forcible transfer across East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The unlawful deportation or transfer of a population living under occupation is a war crime, and under specific circumstances, may constitute a crime against humanity, as recently denounced again by [OHCHR](#), the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) and over 200 international and local humanitarian aid NGOs.

This increase in forced evictions and demolitions goes hand in hand with an [acceleration of the establishment of Israeli settlements](#), particularly through the [E1 project](#), planning [over 3,000 settlement units](#) in the area between three of the most significant Palestinian urban centres, i.e. East Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem. Coupled with the recent Israeli government's decisions to [take control of land and strip powers from the Palestinian authority](#) and to [register all East Jerusalem land by 2029](#), these developments clearly show a will by Israeli authorities to accelerate their plans to annex further Palestinian land and push Palestinians away from there, breaching further international law and undermining ongoing international efforts aimed at stabilization and the advancement of peaceful efforts in the region. This has also being [acknowledged by the European Commission](#), in reaction to the Israeli Security Cabinet's amendments to the land registration and property acquisitions procedures.

Since 2018, the land registration process, formally known as settlement of land title (SOLT), has become one of the state's primary new tools for seizing Palestinian land and expanding Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem. The major decision adopted by the Israeli government in January to complete land registration in East Jerusalem by 2029 places **Palestinians at an unprecedented risk of dispossession and displacement**, as highlighted by the [Israeli NGO Ir Amim](#), which pointed that so far, only 1% of the land that went through the SOLT procedure has been allocated to Palestinian landowners.

For example, the process was advanced or finalized in areas where eight new settlements with around 20,500 housing units are planned or already under construction, including [Atarot](#), [Givat Hamatos](#), [Givat Shaked](#), the [Menachem Begin Complex](#) and [Nahalat Shimon](#) in Sheikh Jarrah, and [Nof Zahav](#), [Nofei Rachel](#), and [Umm Lison](#). In other cases, the process was underhandedly advanced on built-up and inhabited Palestinian lands, where residents were unaware that SOLT procedures were underway and now face the

threat of mass eviction and property confiscation. This is the case in [Umm Tuba](#) and in the [Umm Haroun](#) neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah where the state is advancing the Nahalat Shimon settlement, together placing a total of some 80 families – approximately 300 people under threat of displacement and dispossession. More broadly, SOLT has been advanced in many additional areas where there is a heightened risk of large-scale confiscation of Palestinian land, including in the Hinnom Valley (Wadi Rababa), Beit Hanina, the village of [Nu'man](#) on the southern tip of East Jerusalem, and the American Road corridor along the eastern parts of Jabal al-Mukabber among others.

These processes must be halted to prevent the mass expulsion and dispossession of entire communities across East Jerusalem. As confirmed by the 2024 [ICJ Advisory Opinion](#), Israel's implementation of SOLT in East Jerusalem violates international law, as permanent processes are prohibited for an occupying power. This violation is further compounded when SOLT operates as part of a system designed to facilitate the seizure of lands, establishment of settlements and the forcible transfer of populations, which themselves constitute grave breaches of those legal principles.

In the meantime, discrimination against Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem continues on grounds of citizenship and residency, as highlighted by the recent [UN thematic report](#) on Israel's discriminatory administration of the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem who do not have Israeli citizenship are effectively unable to participate in Palestinian parliamentary or general elections and to fully exercise their rights, including to freedom of movement and residence, and are vulnerable to the arbitrary revocation of residency status by Israeli authorities, which would deny them health and welfare benefits.

## 2. [Violence against Palestinian communities](#)

Israel's control over the local population of the unlawfully occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is enforced through constant discriminatory violence, with use of unnecessary and disproportionate force routinely leading to deaths and instilling fear in the local population. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has consistently [documented patterns of unlawful killings](#) of Palestinians, including apparent extra-judicial executions by the Israeli Security Forces (ISF). After 7 October 2023, there has been a dramatic escalation in the use of lethal force by the ISF in the West Bank, resulting in an unprecedented number of killings of Palestinians.

According to OHCHR records, between 7 October 2023 and 5 February 2026, [1054 Palestinians were killed by the ISF and settlers in the West Bank](#), with [almost a quarter of the victims being children](#). Rising violence by Israeli settlers and armed forces is accompanied and fuelled by impunity. Most of these fatalities occurred in the context of

[ISF operations in the absence of armed clashes or alleged Palestinian attacks](#). In many cases documented by OHCHR in this period, ISF shot at Palestinians, including children, who did not appear to pose any imminent threat to life or serious injury. In 25 percent of all cases monitored by OHCHR, ISF obstructed or delayed the provision of medical assistance to those injured. The use of force causing the death of persons not posing a threat to life or serious injury constitutes a violation of the right to life. In context of an occupation, these may also amount to willful killings, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is a war crime. Furthermore, since October 2023, Israeli authorities have [continued to withhold the bodies of Palestinian victims](#), reportedly seeking to accumulate them for use as bargaining chips. According to JLAC, a total of 785 bodies have been withheld since the 1970s, including 378 bodies since October 2023 alone – among them 57 children’s bodies – denying families their right to dignity and to burial in accordance with their religious rites.

There is a [continuum of state violence and settler violence](#), as the latter is often committed with the acquiescence and support of ISF. This is a long-term concern in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and has been one of the elements that has forced Palestinian communities to leave their homes, leading to forcible transfer. Since 7 October 2023, violent acts and other abuses perpetrated by settlers against Palestinians reached a new peak in scale and severity, causing deaths, destruction of Palestinian property and livelihoods, forcible displacement, and the dismemberment of Palestinian communities.

This was enabled by the policy of the Government of Israel to draft thousands of settlers into “regional defense battalions” of the Israeli army, empowering so-called “settlements defense squads” with human resources and weapons, and distributing thousands of weapons to settlers, including in outposts illegal under Israeli law. This has resulted in further attacks by settlers with impunity and actions such as blocking Palestinian roads and paving new roads for settlers. Between 7 October 2023 and September 2025, the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA) recorded 3,088 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians, with a daily average of four incidents, leading to the killings of 32 and injuring of 1,603 Palestinians. Since 1 January 2026, over 1,500 Palestinians have been displaced due to Israeli settler attacks and access restrictions.

Under cover of the war with Iran, the level of violence by Israeli settlers has reached an unacceptable level, as also pointed out by the [European External Action Service](#). Two thirds of all Palestinians killed by Israeli forces or settlers recorded in 2026 – 22 out of 33, including seven children – occurred since the onset of the regional escalation on 28 February. Since the start of 2026, [OCHA has documented more than 211 settler attacks](#), resulting in casualties or property damage in over 100 communities, with an average of

six attacks and roughly four communities affected every day. Six of the eight Palestinians killed by Israeli settlers during settler attacks in 2026 were reported in March alone, marking the second-highest monthly number of such fatalities since OCHA began systematically recording casualties in 2005, after October 2023.

We fear that this spiral of violence can only intensify, as Itmar Ben-Gvir, Israeli Minister of Security, cleared an [additional 41 Jerusalem neighbourhoods for personal firearms licences](#), extending in practice blanket eligibility for a gun license to almost all Jewish residents of Jerusalem, regardless of whether they are, or have been, a member of Israel's security forces.

### 3. Restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement, civic space, freedom of religion, and negative impact on Palestinians' economic, social and cultural rights

The state of emergency declared by Israeli authorities following the joint Israel-US military attack on Iran is providing them the opportunity to further crackdown on Palestinian civil society space, restrict Palestinians' freedom of movement and negatively affect their economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), as the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has [further deteriorated](#) following the escalation of the conflict with Iran.

Since 7 October 2023, Israeli authorities [extended and intensified existing discriminatory restrictions on the movement](#) of Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, that affect almost every aspect of Palestinian life. [According to the International Court of Justice](#), the entire régime of restrictions on the movement of Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory has a discriminatory effect on their enjoyment of the right to work, to health, to education and to an adequate standard of living, as well as to the right to be protected from arbitrary or unlawful interference with family life. Within this discriminatory system of restrictions, Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, live in more than 160 disconnected enclaves, while settlers enjoy full freedom of movement within the unlawfully occupied West Bank, and between the occupied West Bank and Israel. Restrictions appeared to unlawfully pursue two main aims: further fragmenting Palestinian territory and society for easier control by the Israeli army and creating and expanding areas for ISF and settlers' access only, including roads, to guarantee "security" for settlers.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) assessed that restrictions to movement imposed by Israeli authorities had caused a loss of 306,000 jobs in the West Bank as of 31 January 2024, including most of the 171,000 jobs held by Palestinian workers previously employed in Israel and the settlements and approximately 144,000 jobs lost

in the private sector, with unemployment rates in the West Bank rising to 31.7 per cent for men and 33.7 per cent for women by the first quarter of 2025.

According to the Global Education Cluster, increased movement restrictions and ISF operations and settler violence caused an 85 per cent reduction of traffic across the West Bank, [affecting at least 782,000 students](#) since October 2023 to August 2024, and causing cancellation of classes and reliance on remote learning, which is not accessible to all. Women and girls were affected disproportionately, as families stopped sending girls to school, particularly at times of intensified violence, fearing extensive searches which involved gender-based violence and humiliation at checkpoints. Palestinian children's access to education has deteriorated following legislation obstructing the work of UNRWA and violation of its premises, [including in East Jerusalem](#). This exacerbated the [decades-long situation](#) under which Palestinian students have faced significant challenges in accessing quality and safe education. In East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities have also been targeting Palestinian private schools that still teach the Palestinian matriculation curriculum, [Tawjihi](#), which includes lessons about Palestinian history and identity and is accepted at Palestinian and Arab universities. Since the beginning of 2026, Israeli authorities are trying to prevent these private schools – most of them being Christian schools – from hiring teachers from outside of Jerusalem by denying travel permits to them. On 10 March 2026, the Israeli Ministry of Education issued a directive to 17 private schools in Jerusalem [prohibiting the employment of teachers from the West Bank](#) for the 2026-2027 school year. This measure targets 230 teachers and is expected to trigger a serious educational crisis, as approximately 28% of the teaching workforce depends on such staff, with as many as 10 out of 11 high school teachers in some schools holding Palestinian IDs. Historically, Jerusalem's education sector has relied heavily on qualified educators from Bethlehem and Ramallah, and this restriction is likely to significantly undermine the quality of education, particularly in long-established institutions dating back to the late 19th century. Though Israeli authorities [partially backtracked this measure](#) following a strike by the targeted schools, the new travel permits are invalid on Fridays and Sundays, the schools' usual weekend, therefore preventing any school activity on such days.

Israeli authorities completely prevented access of Palestinians in the West Bank to East Jerusalem for at least two weeks after 7 October 2023, claiming that there were insufficient forces to staff the checkpoints, and restrictions remained pervasive until the end of January 2024. These restrictions also applied to Jerusalem residents living on the West Bank side of the Wall to whom access remained extensively restricted until February 2024.

In parallel, Israeli authorities intensified movement restrictions in Jerusalem's Old City to limit Palestinians' access to Al Aqsa Mosque compound, especially on Fridays. Since March 2024, new requirements were introduced for Palestinians from the rest of the occupied West Bank to enter East Jerusalem during Ramadan and hold Friday prayers at the compound, including increased age restrictions, the requirement of a specific magnetic card and permit, and an obligation to leave East Jerusalem by 1700 hours. Frequent militarised incursions, coupled with expanding settler presence, have resulted in harassment, arrests and sweeping restrictions on Palestinian access to holy sites. 73,871 settler incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound were reported in 2025 alone. Coupled with extensive movement restrictions across the entire West Bank, these additional restrictions resulted in a sharp reduction in the number of Palestinians accessing Al Aqsa Mosque.

Only days prior to the holy month of Ramadan, [access restrictions were intensified across the Old City](#), including limitations on entry to Al-Aqsa Mosque, increased arrests of Waqf employees, and heightened military presence. For the first time since 1967, [the Al-Aqsa Mosque was closed at Eid](#). Christian communities have also faced assaults and restrictions, particularly during religious observances, which culminated with Israeli police [barring the Latin Patriarch from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Palm Sunday](#) this year. Though later a [mutual agreement](#) was reached for the rest of the Easter celebrations, this entailed the celebration of the Easter Mass behind closed doors, with the [Israeli police barring entry to Christian devotees](#). Such measures, coupled with restrictions on communal and religious practices, infringe on Palestinian Muslims' freedom of religion, and further exacerbate an already coercive environment imposed on Palestinians.

This pattern shall be viewed as part of Israeli broader policies that **risk irreversibly altering the demographic and cultural character of Jerusalem**, as [recently denounced by UN experts](#), including through pressures that weaken and displace established Palestinian community structures and through Palestinian land take-over.

The UN OHCHR has dramatically [highlighted the systematic nature of Israeli discriminatory policies](#) and their impact on the rights of the Palestinian population, in violation of international human rights law, including Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (ICERD) which prohibits racial segregation and apartheid.

One recent example of such discriminatory policies is the [closure of the Burj Al-Luqluq Social Center Society](#) in the Old City of Jerusalem, which provided critical services and protection mechanisms to vulnerable groups, particularly people with disabilities,

children, and women. This social center was ordered to be closed for a period of six months, following an order by the Israeli Minister of Security, under the law for the Implementation of the Interim Agreement regarding the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Restriction of Activities), in a false claim that the Center is affiliated with or operating on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. This measure constitutes a violation of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law. As an occupying power, Israel is bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits collective punishment and obliges it to ensure the welfare of the occupied population. The closure of a social center providing vital services to vulnerable groups of the population cannot be justified under military necessity and may amount to unlawful collective punishment.

The closure of the Burj Al-LuqLuq Social Center forms part of a broader, systematic and discriminatory pattern targeting Palestinian civic space and facilities in occupied East Jerusalem – showcased by other recent cases such as the Israeli police’s [raid against the Yablous Cultural Center](#), the one [against the El-Hakawati theatre](#), and the [closure of Palestinian shops and restaurants](#) in the Old City, with closure rates reaching approximately 91 percent, affecting around 1,250 shops. This has led to a severe economic downturn and created a discouraging and unwelcoming environment for commercial activity, reducing residents’ willingness to shop in the Old City. It is also worth noting that shops in the Jewish Quarter remained open and operated normally.

This discriminatory targeting pattern concerns more broadly the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as testified by the criminalisation of Palestinian NGOs such as [Defense for Children International-Palestine](#), to constrict the humanitarian space, undermine human rights protection, and erode the institutional capacity through which Palestinians exercise agency and pursue self-determination.