

OVERVIEW

Since October 2023, Israel has been launching air and ground operations against Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, causing widespread destruction. As of 3 July, 539 Palestinians in the West Bank been killed, including 131 children; 5,420 people have been injured, including 830 children. by 03 July (OCHA 03/07/2024). Israel mounted the invasion in response to the Hamas attacks on 7 October 2023, which killed over 1,200 people in Israel and led to the abduction of over 250 hostages, of whom around 116 remain in Gaza, including at least 40 who had died as of 30 June (BBC 30/06/2024; Reuters 08/06/2024).

This conflict has also contributed to escalating violence, destruction, and associated humanitarian needs in the West Bank since 7 October 2023. Increased Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) operations, the militarisation of settlers, and Palestinian armed group activity have increased civilian casualties, home demolitions, and the displacement of Palestinians.

Heightened violence and displacement, along with increased movement restrictions, have also restricted Palestinian access to livelihoods and essential services across the West Bank. Israel has imposed additional economic and bureaucratic constraints on the Palestinian Authority (PA) and West Bank Palestinians, including a current ban on West Bank workers from entering Israel and the intermittent freezing of tax revenue, compounding livelihood losses. All of these trends have aggravated shelter, livelihood, WASH, protection, and other humanitarian needs, which an under-resourced humanitarian response is struggling to address.

In the coming months, there is a significant risk of large-scale conflict erupting in the West Bank as a result of economic deprivation and associated PA weakness; cycles of violence between Israeli forces, settlers, and Palestinian armed groups; and regional factors, including possible conflict between Israel and Lebanon.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim

This report provides an analysis of the humanitarian situation in the West Bank since 7 October 2023, with a particular focus on developments since the publication of ACAPS' *Israel/Palestine: Current Situation and Anticipated Impacts of the Crisis in the West Bank* on 24 November. This report examines recent key developments that drive humanitarian needs and their impact. It also explores the potential security, political, and economic outlook for the West Bank in the coming months.

For an in-depth examination of the humanitarian needs and developments in the West Bank before 7 October, see ACAPS' *Israel/Palestine: Current Situation and Anticipated Impacts of the Crisis in the West Bank* (published 24 November 2023) and *Palestine: Escalation of Violence in Jenin* (published 12 June 2023).

Methodology

This report is based on a secondary data review of public sources and information collected through key informant interviews with several NGOs working in the West Bank.

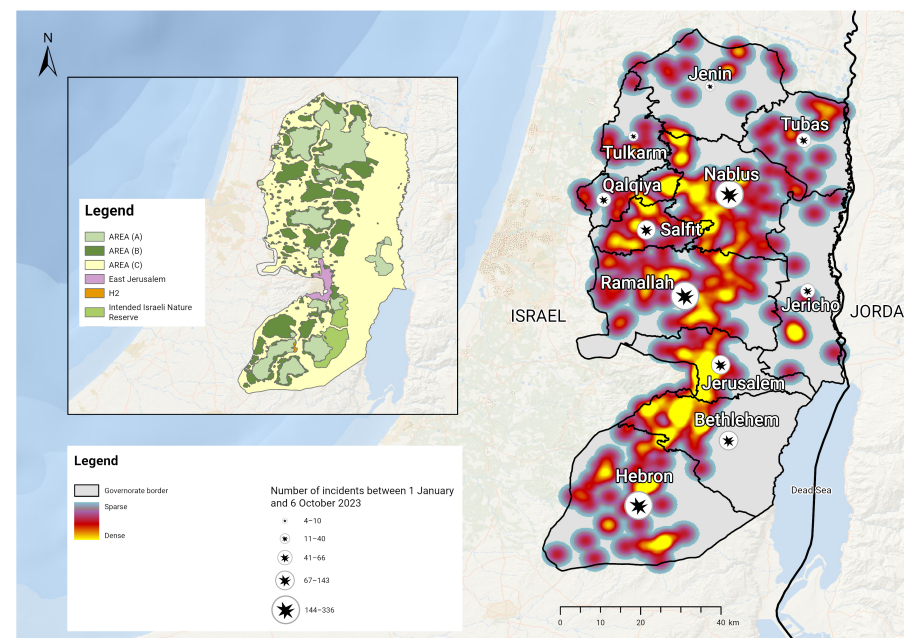
Terminology

- **Israeli security forces (ISF)** refer to both the IDF and Israeli police forces.
- **Settlers** refers to Israeli citizens living on private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, mostly in communities that the Israeli Government built.
- **Reservist** refers to a member of the Israeli army reserve.
- **Palestinian armed groups** include armed groups fighting occupation in both the West Bank and Gaza. Many Palestinian political parties have armed wings, including Hamas (ECFR accessed 21/06/2024).

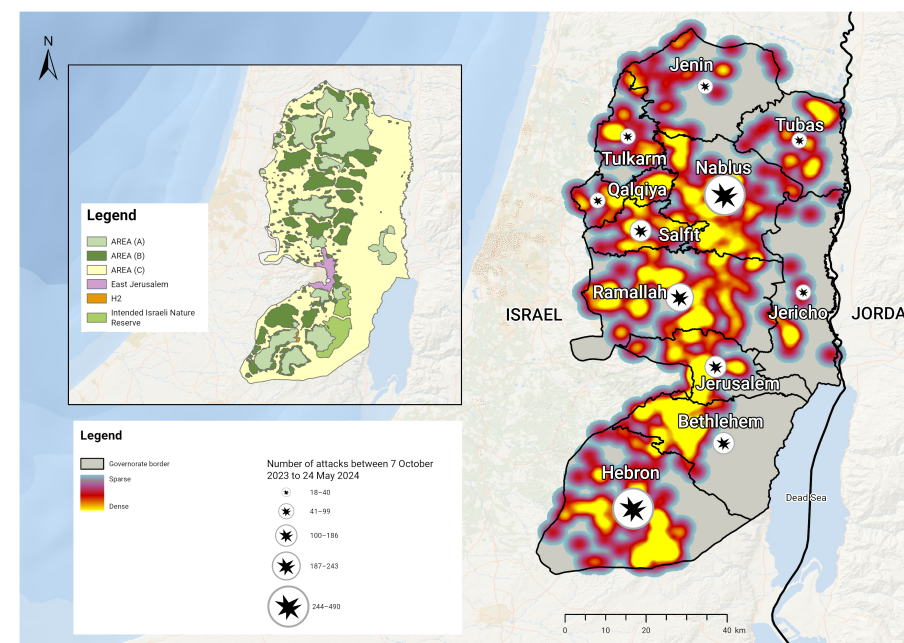
KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

- Since 7 October 2023, ISF violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank has increased significantly. ISF attacks in the West Bank have been deadlier on average compared with previous periods, **killing almost 200 Palestinians** from 1 January to 4 June 2024 – double the rate from the same period in 2023 and quadruple compared to the same period in 2022 (OHCHR 04/06/2024).
- There has been a **concurrent risk of violence** by increasingly militarised settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank, including attacks on civilians and civil property. Around 10% (107) of the 1,050 attacks by Israeli settlers attacks that OCHA documented between 7 October 2023 and 3 July 2024 caused Palestinian casualties and injuries (OCHA 03/07/2024).
- **Palestinian armed group activity has continued to escalate** after 7 October 2023, particularly in northern West Bank (ICG 24/11/2023; TWI 13/12/2023).
- Since 7 October, disputes over the Israeli transfer of tax revenue to the PA and the Israeli ban on Palestinian workers from entering Israel have significantly **affected West Bank economy and livelihoods** (TWI 31/05/2024; The Conversation 29/05/2024).
- Between 7 October 2023 and 03 July 2024, **Israel administratively detained 9,510 Palestinians in the West Bank**, including 660 children (CDA 03/07/2024).
- Between October 2023 and June 2024, **settlers took more than 37,000 acres of land** (150km² or around 3% of the West Bank) from Palestinians across the territory (NYT 01/06/2024).
- Between 7 October 2023 and 10 June 2024, the destruction and demolition of West Bank homes and other structures by Israeli authorities and forces **displaced 2,155 people**, including 1,036 children (OCHA 12/06/2024 and 05/06/2024).
- Raids on the West Bank have **disrupted electricity and water services** (MSF 13/06/2024). At the same time, water has become scarcer in the summer, and Israel has reduced water allocation to the southern West Bank cities of Hebron (Al-Khalil) and Bethlehem by approximately 35% (TRT World 27/06/2024; PC 26/06/2024). These affect livelihoods, hydration, and water supply for West Bank Palestinians.

Attacks in the West Bank between 1 January 2023 to 6 October 2023



Attacks in the West Bank between 7 October 2023 to 24 May 2024

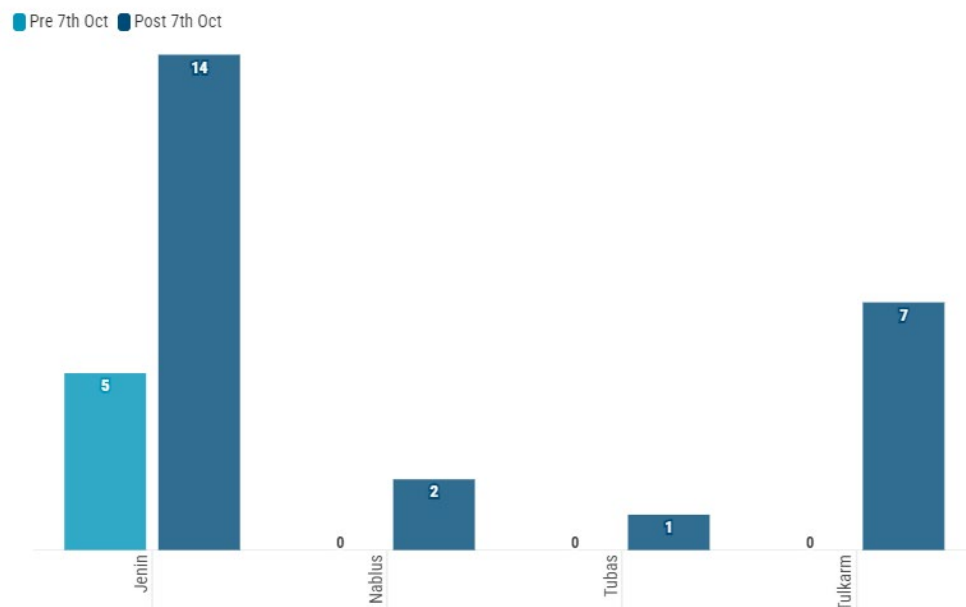


Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED.

DRIVERS OF INCREASING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS SINCE 7 OCTOBER 2023

Increased IDF operations

IDF air and drone strikes and shelling, artillery, and missile attacks in the West Bank by governorate, 1 Jan to 6 Oct 2023 and 7 Oct 23 to 24 May 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED.

ISF ground and air operations in the West Bank have significantly increased since 7 October.

In the six months from 7 October 2023 to 18 March 2024, the monthly average number of IDF operations in the West Bank (670) was around double the monthly average compared to the first nine months of 2023 (340) (OCHA 19/03/2024).

An increasing number of ISF operations involve violence against civilians. Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) identified a spike in such operations between October–November 2023. While ISF attacks on unarmed civilians decreased between December 2023 and May 2024 compared with October–November 2023, monthly averages during this period remained higher than from January–September 2023 (ACLED accessed 06/06/2024).

IDF operations since 7 October increasingly employ aerial attacks and armed drones. In June 2023, the IDF launched its first drone attack in the West Bank since 2006 (BBC 22/06/2023; FP 20/01/2023). At least 37 Israeli air strikes, drone strikes, and helicopter gunship attacks occurred in the territory between June 2023 and June 2024, particularly in the northern governorates of Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarem. The attacks have become more frequent since 7 October 2023 (TWP 13/11/2023; The Intercept 12/06/2024).

Increased settler militarisation and violence

The line between settlers and the IDF, already blurred prior to 7 October, has become more ambiguous in the months since as settlers have become increasingly militarised. Settlers are involved in or responsible for attacks on civilians as IDF reservists in regional defence battalions, in quasimilitary units known as settler emergency squads, or in their private capacity, often with direct or indirect IDF support, including accompaniment by IDF soldiers (B'Tselem 22/05/2024; ICG 24/11/2023).

As part of its mobilisation in the West Bank after 7 October, the IDF called up around 5,500 settlers as reservists and deployed them in regional defence battalions. These battalions, which fall under IDF command and control structures, are primarily intended to protect settlements. Anecdotal reports indicate that soldiers in regional defence battalions are more likely to engage in violence against Palestinians than soldiers in other IDF battalions, potentially because of their personal connection to the settlements that they perceive to be under threat (ACLED 10/06/2024; Haaretz 14/06/2024). Partly in response to growing settler-soldier violence, Israel decreased the number of regional defence battalion soldiers to 1,000 in May 2024 from 8,000 after 7 October 2023 (ICG 24/11/2023; ACLED 10/06/2024; Haaretz 01/05/2024).

Since 7 October, the IDF has also increasingly armed settlers in quasimilitary settlement emergency squads called *kitat konenut*. Settlements appoint the civilian members of these squads, which theoretically operate under the IDF Central Command. Since members of the squads often wear IDF or similar military fatigues and carry IDF weaponry, it can be difficult to distinguish whether a given squad is operating under military orders or acting independently while in uniform (B'Tselem 22/05/2024; ICG 24/11/2023; ACLED 10/06/2024; Magen Yehuda accessed 23/06/2024; The Ari Fuld Project accessed 23/06/2024).

A notable trend since 7 October is increased settler violence involving firearms. In mid-October 2023, lawmakers eased gun ownership regulations in Israel and West Bank settlements. Gun licences depend on a person's age, military or national service experience, profession, and place of residence, with some locations classified as more dangerous than others. The new regulations expanded the number of towns classified as dangerous, reduced the number of years of previous national service required to qualify for gun ownership, and

allowed more volunteer medics and first responders to access arms (ACLEDE 10/06/2024; NYT 15/12/2023). Israel's Minister of National Security announced the issuance of 100,000 new gun permits between 7 October and March 2024, although it is unclear how many were issued to West Bank settlers (ACLEDE 10/06/2024; FP 22/03/2024).

Increased Palestinian armed group activity

Palestinian armed group activity in the West Bank has also escalated since 7 October 2023, particularly in and around Jenin, Tulkarem, and other parts of northern West Bank (ICG 24/11/2023; TWI 13/12/2023). ACLEDE indicates a notable spike in armed clashes involving Palestinian armed groups and the IDF in the West Bank from October 2023 to January 2024. Average levels decreased from February–May 2024 but remained over double the averages for January–September 2023 (ACLEDE accessed 06/06/2024).

There are anecdotal reports that Israel's invasion of Gaza has inspired a rise in Palestinian armed group recruitment (AJ 12/12/2023). The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas both explicitly portray conflict in Gaza and the West Bank as fronts in the same struggle for Palestinian liberation (ACLEDE 14/12/2023; WI 13/12/2023).

Palestinian armed group activity and recruitment were already rising in the 12 months prior to 7 October, attributed to the PA's loss of legitimacy as a governing body and security provider and increased IDF and settler presence and violence (ACLEDE 14/12/2023). Localised armed groups proliferated, some (such as the Nablus-based Lion's Den) operating independently and others with support from Hamas, the PIJ, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. The PIJ supported and armed at least nine new armed groups in 2022–2023 alone; at least four of these operated in northern West Bank refugee camps (ACLEDE 2014/12/2023). These new groups have relatively young members who have attracted a large social media following.

Increased checkpoints, roadblocks, and curfews

Following 7 October, checkpoints, roadblocks, and other movement restrictions started increasing across the West Bank, particularly in areas close to Israeli settlements and around the Seam Zones¹ which lies east of the Green Line and west of the Separation Barrier (DIHLC 12/01/2024). On 3 June 2024, OCHA documented at least 790 obstacles to movement across the West Bank. This represents a 22% increase (145) from the 645 documented in August 2023 (OCHA 05/06/2024 and 25/08/2023). One researcher estimated that, since 7 October, the use of main roads, mostly by civilians, throughout the West Bank has fallen to only 15% of

what it used to be as a result of clashes, checkpoints, and other movement restrictions (The New Statesman 13/03/2024). The different types of obstacles include the following.

- New checkpoints or gates at the entrance (sometimes the only entrance) to dozens of villages and agricultural land, where the IDF conducts random checks, often create hours of traffic. Some gates and checkpoints only allow Palestinians to pass on foot (B'Tselem accessed 13/06/2024; B'Tselem 05/03/2024). In contrast, Israeli settler vehicles are often allowed passage or have access to dedicated roads that allow them to bypass checkpoints (France 24 09/02/2024; Machsom Watch 09/05/2024).
- Some settlers have installed mobile homes and an iron gate in Tuqu town, as well as gates in Birzeit town and al-Fawwar camp, preventing residents from accessing their lands, jobs, and schools (NYT 01/06/2024; MEE 10/01/2024; WAFA 06/01/2024; OCHA 12/04/2024).
- Cement blocks or dirt mounds and dykes fully block entrances to neighbourhoods or entire villages. The IDF occasionally staff the blockades, but these are often deserted and generally immovable, preventing vehicular and easy pedestrian access (Machsom Watch accessed 14/06/2024). B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, documented new dirt mounds in around 60 locations between 7 October 2023 and 5 June 2024 (B'Tselem accessed 13/06/2024).
- Some checkpoints and roadblocks that before 7 October were abandoned or staffed irregularly have become consistently staffed – for example, on roads leading from Tammun and Tubas municipalities in northern Jordan Valley (B'Tselem 17/03/2024).
- The closure of checkpoints blocks access between towns and villages (B'Tselem 20/03/2024). For example, Palestinian pedestrians and vehicles were unable to cross the Huwara checkpoint, which served as a gateway to Nablus prior to closure (B'Tselem 05/03/2024; Arab Center DC 26/01/2024). In Ramallah Palestinians were unable to cross two out of five closed checkpoints into Israeli-controlled territory or move through two out of nine checkpoints within Palestinian territory in March 2024 (B'Tselem 05/03/2024).

Israel has also restricted Palestinian movement in the West Bank through curfews, notably in the H2 area of Hebron, home to nearly 35,000 Palestinians and fewer than 1,000 settlers (UNRWA 11/2022). From 7–21 October, Israel imposed two weeks of complete curfew for Palestinians in the H2 area, who afterwards were only permitted to leave home on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays for one hour each morning and evening (DIHLC 12/01/2024; B'Tselem 09/11/2023). The curfew did not apply to Jewish residents of Hebron (ACRI 09/04/2024). There are reports that Israel partially removed the curfew in December 2023 after residents challenged it in court (El País 15/02/2024). In February 2024, the IDF denied that the area remained under a curfew, reporting that they only imposed traffic restrictions to reduce civilian harm (The Guardian 05/02/2024). In mid-May, however, residents reported an unofficial

¹ Seam zones are sections of Palestinian land that fall between the Israeli Annexation Wall and the 1949 Armistice Line (the Green Line), severing them from Palestine. Israel has designated these swathes of land as closed military areas (UN 24/08/2012). For further information, please read ACAPS' Palestine: Impact of Demolition Policies in the West Bank (published 1 October 2021).

curfew imposed during nights and on weekends, including the forced closure of some shops and a ban on non-H2 residents from entering the area (ACRI 09/04/2024; The%20New%20Arab%2029/05/2024; Haaretz 31/05/2024). Penalties for breaking the curfew were unclear, but people feared administrative detention or direct attacks from the ISF and settlers (Jewish Currents 13/12/2024; BBC 15/12/2023).

Israeli authorities also implement curfews in response to security incidents, stranding Palestinian residents in their homes or villages for varying periods. For example, in early April 2024, the IDF imposed a curfew on the entire town of Jayyus, claiming that a Palestinian gunman responsible for a recent nearby shooting was hiding there (MEE 11/04/2024).

Continued bureaucratic and economic constraints

Since 7 October 2023, it has been increasingly difficult for the PA to secure Israeli permits for infrastructure development aiming to ensure Palestinian access to essential services. Most Palestinian residents depend on the PA for electricity, water, waste management, and telecommunications, either directly or through its coordination with Israeli companies. Difficulties in obtaining Israeli permits significantly hinder this process (CFR accessed 28/06/2024; BT'Selem 10/02/2019; WB 21/10/2008). Reports indicate a 98.5% rejection rate from the Israeli Civil Administration for WASH infrastructure permits for Palestinians in Area C (61% of the West Bank) (Isaac and Hilal 06/2024). Since 2016, general construction permit approval for Palestinians has been at 1% (UNCTAD 28/11/2023).

Since 7 October, two tax-related crises in the West Bank have further constrained its economy and PA capacity to provide services, creating persistent fiscal instability. The first tax crisis, from October 2023 to February 2024, followed an Israeli decision to withhold a portion of taxes and duties, known as clearance revenue, that Israel collected on behalf of the PA based on a 1994 agreement. The PA used an estimated 30–50% of this tax to pay public servant salaries in Gaza. Israel announced it would suspend the transfer of revenue designated for these salaries, alleging that this revenue would fund Hamas. In response, the PA refused to accept any of the tax transfer, which normally comprised an estimated 65% of its revenue (TWI 31/05/2024; AJ 23/01/2024; Govt. Norway 29/02/2024; OHCHR 25/04/2024; Reuters 21/01/2024).

On 21 January 2024, Israel approved a bill to transfer the withheld portion of the monthly tax revenue to a Norwegian-based trust account, which can only release the money to the PA with Israel's permission (TOI 21/01/2024). This triggered payment of the remaining portion of taxes to the PA from the end of February, temporarily alleviating the tax crisis (Govt. Norway 29/02/2024).

The second tax crisis started in May 2024, when Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich again withheld tax revenue from the PA. Smotrich cited recognition of a Palestinian state from Ireland, Norway, and Spain, and the International Criminal Court arrest warrants for Israeli officials for the violence in Gaza since 8 October 2023, which he described as a product of the PA's political terrorism (TWI 31/05/2024; Axios 13/06/2024; OHCHR 25/04/2024). As a result, the PA was able to pay public servants only around 50% of their salary in May (MEMO 11/06/2024). In mid-June 2024, Smotrich announced that he had diverted USD 35 million of the withheld tax to Israeli victims and their families (MEMO 11/06/2024; TOI 16/06/2024).

Israel also threatened to not renew an indemnity waiver, due to expire on 1 July, that enables transactions between Israeli banks and Palestinian financial institutions. These banking channels are critical for processing transactions that enable almost USD 8 billion per year in PA imports from Israel, including electricity, water, fuel, and food, as well as facilitating almost USD 2 billion per year in exports crucial for Palestinian livelihoods (The National 23/05/2024; Reuters 23/05/2024). Without these waivers, the PA cannot purchase key utilities, including water and electricity, limiting the capacity of the humanitarian response to address the needs of people in Gaza and the West Bank (KII 14/06/2024; The National 23/05/2024; TOI 06/02/2024).

On 28 June, Smotrich announced unfreezing the withheld taxes and renewing the indemnity waiver for four months until 1 November, temporarily averting the potential economic collapse of the West Bank. In exchange for this concession, however, Israel's security cabinet agreed to sanction senior PA officials (including by restricting visas and mobility), legalise five new settlement areas and thousands of new settlement homes, and expand Israeli powers to control Palestinian construction in the West Bank (TOI 28/06/2024 a and 28/06/2024 b; NYT 28/06/2024)

Israel's ban on the entry of Palestinian workers from the West Bank has further weakened the economy, causing an estimated loss of USD 370 million (TWI 13/12/2023). The revocation of entry permits to Israel has prevented approximately 150,000–200,000 West Bank Palestinians from working, depriving them of their incomes and, at the same time, affecting Israel's construction, agriculture, and service sectors (TOI 22/06/2024; Reuters 22/03/2024).

Land rights violations

The Israeli authorities are also continuing their legal and bureaucratic efforts to annex the West Bank. On 22 May 2024, the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) passed a preliminary bill amending the Negev Development Authority Law (originally passed in 1991), which extends the benefits and investments earmarked for communities in Negev, an Israeli territory,

to settlements in the southern Hebron region of the West Bank. Opposition politicians argued that this equated to an attempt to extend Israeli civilian authority in the West Bank, contributing to annexation (Jpost 22/05/2024). Smotrich, who is also a minister in the Ministry of Defense, has transferred responsibility for dozens of by-laws at the Civil Administration – the Israeli body governing in the West Bank – from the military to Ministry of Defense officials under his leadership. This act contributes to Israeli annexation (The Guardian 24/06/2024).

The Israeli authorities have been increasingly implementing legal and bureaucratic measures constraining access to land, work, and services for West Bank Palestinians since 7 October 2023. Israel controls 61% of the West Bank (Area C) under Oslo accords, requiring Israel to guarantee the economic and social policies, as well as civil and human rights, in the area (UNCTAD 28/11/2023; AJ 14/09/2023). That said, functionally, West Bank Palestinians lack access to free movement, self-expression, and determination, and they exist under constrictive economic and legal realities in their everyday life. For example, since 7 October, several demonstrations in the West Bank in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza have been suppressed by Israeli forces. Israeli soldiers have also subjected the journalists of Palestinian media channels trying to cover these demonstrations to intimidation and physical assault (DIHLC 12/06/2024).

IMPACTS

Civilian casualties

Between 7 October 2023 and 24 June 2024, the conflict killed 536 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Among these, Israeli forces killed 519, settlers killed ten, and an unconfirmed perpetrator killed seven others. The proportion of civilians among these casualties is unknown, but 130 were children. The violence also injured over 5,370 Palestinians, including around 830 children. In the same period, Palestinians killed at least 12 Israelis (seven soldiers and five settlers) and injured at least 105, 70 of whom were soldiers (OCHA 26/06/2024).

Around one-third (164) of the 508 killings resulted from IDF operations involving armed drone and other aerial attacks and the shelling of refugee camps and dense urban areas (OHCHR 04/06/2024). Armed drones can be imprecise and misidentify civilians as militants, leading to a high risk of civilian casualties. Drones also have a significant psychological impact, causing fear of attack at any time in West Bank communities (TWP 13/11/2023; FP 20/01/2023; TOI 07/09/2022).

Around one-third of the ISF civilian killings between October 2023 and May 2024 occurred in or around refugee camps in Jenin and Tulkarem (MSF 15/05/2024). Israel often targets refugee camps because of the alleged presence of armed group members. Recent attacks include the Israeli operations in Jenin refugee camp from 21–23 May, which killed 12 Palestinians (including four children) with live ammunition and injured 21 others (OCHA 29/05/2024; BBC 22/05/2024; UNRWA 29/05/2024). On 11 June, the IDF killed six Palestinians near Jenin, two of whom were not armed militants (Reuters 11/06/2024).

Israeli forces often delay or deny medical assistance for military operation casualties. For example, on 12 June, medical teams faced a 30-minute delay when seeking to access a 12-year-old boy whom Israeli forces shot during a search-and-arrest operation. The boy died from his injuries on 22 June. On the same day, Israeli forces shot and injured four Palestinians while conducting a search-and-arrest operation in Jenin city. They also tied one injured man to the bonnet of a car and drove him around for 200m before releasing him for medical treatment (BBC 30/06/2024; OCHA 26/06/2024).

Arrest, detention, and associated protection violations

Arrest and administrative detention of civilians

Between 7 October 2023 and 25 June 2024, the ISF detained around 9,400 Palestinians in the West Bank. The ISF are still holding the bodies of 16 of the 18 killed detainees. These statistics include detainees still under arrest and liberated; there is no clear figure on how many remain detained and how many have been released (MEE 03/06/2024; CDA 25/06/2024). Until 20 June, the Israeli authorities continued to suspend ICRC detention visits, which had come to a halt on 7 October 2023 (TNA 20/06/2024; ICRC 07/02/2024). The grounds for detentions are often unknown; some Palestinians have been arrested after attacking Israeli armoured vehicles, but many, including minors, have been deliberately arrested during Israeli raids (AJ 27/06/2024; The World 21/06/2024; TNA 18/06/2024).

On 30 October 2023, Israeli authorities extended until mid-January 2024 a state of emergency in prisons (originally imposed on 18 October) prohibiting lawyers and family members from visiting sentenced prisoners. It also allowed the holding of detainees in overcrowded cells, denying them outdoor exercise, and cruel collective punishment measures, such as cutting off water and electricity for long hours (TOI 31/12/2023AI 08/11/2023; Hareetz 18/10/2024). By the end of June 2024, the status of this state of emergency was unclear.

Israeli law allows the military to detain people for 45 days without an arrest warrant, after which the military must transfer them to Israel's formal prison system (CNN 10/05/2024). Palestinians in the West Bank also often experience administrative detention. Administrative

detention is when the Israeli Government detains people without legal proceedings and the right to a trial, by order of the regional military commander, based on classified evidence that is not revealed to them (B'Tselem accessed 21/06/2024). As this measure is supposed to be preventive, it has no time limit. Most detentions continue for three to six months, although some last years, with one case reported of an eight-year administrative detention without charge (AP 01/08/2023; Addameer 07/2017).

This form of detention allows the Israeli Government to detain people who have not committed an offence under the justification that they plan to break the law in the future (B'Tselem accessed 21/06/2024). Since 7 October 2023, an estimated 6,600 (new and renewed) orders of administrative detention have been issued, including orders against women and children (CDA 10/06/2024). There are also reports of people with disabilities being arrested under administrative detention (MEMO 28/05/2024).

Prior to October 2023, approximately 5,000 Palestinians (from both Gaza and the West Bank) were already in detention, including those convicted, detained on security charges and awaiting trial, or held in administrative detention without charge or trial (OHCHR 01/12/2023). The number of people detained has likely increased, as Israel has repeatedly refused requests to disclose the number of detainees held at facilities or reveal the whereabouts of Palestinian prisoners (CNN 10/05/2024). The location of people detained in the West Bank may not always be confirmed, with some possibly held in detention facilities within the West Bank or prisons located in Israel (Reuters 15/04/2024). Regular detainees in Israel are allowed family visits that take place once every two weeks for 45 minutes (Addameer 07/2017).

Torture and cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment

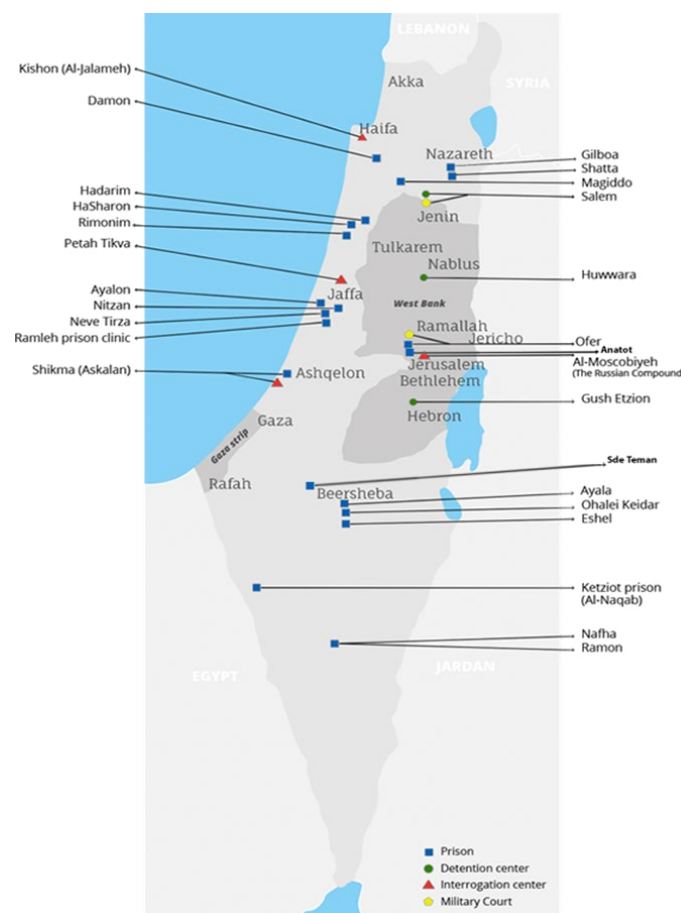
Since 7 October 2023, Palestinians in prisons and new detainees have been the subject of torture and degrading treatment. Reports of torture have emerged from various facilities in the region. On 10 May 2024, three Israeli whistleblowers from the Sde Teiman facility in the Negev Desert reported that around 70 Palestinian detainees were being kept under extreme physical restraint, including constant handcuffing and blindfolding. They also disclosed the existence of a field hospital in the facility, where injured detainees are strapped to their beds, forced to wear diapers, and eat through straws (CNN 10/05/2024).

There are reports of detainees facing food and water deprivation for long periods and being ordered to raise their arms above their heads for up to an hour as a punishment for speaking. Other reports include the zip-tying of prisoners' hands over long periods, in some cases resulting in amputations because of injuries sustained from constant zip-tying. People have also been beaten for disobedience (CNN 10/05/2024; EMM 09/03/2024).

People arrested have also been the subject of abuse by detention guards, with reports of both male and female detainees facing the threat of rape in retaliation for the 7 October attacks (OHCHR 01/12/2023). Both detained men and women have reported threats and incidents amounting to sexual violence and harassment by the IDF while in detention. Male victims reported beatings to their genitals, and one detainee reported being made to sit on an electrical probe (UNRWA 16/04/2024; OHCHR 16/12/2023).

After reports and condemnation in international media, on 23 June, Israel's High Court of Justice ordered the State to provide details of the conditions under which Palestinian prisoners are held in the Sde Teiman detention centre in southern Israel (TOI 23/06/2024; Haaretz 23/06/2024). As of 2 July there are no reports of the current conditions of detention centres.

Registered detention centres and prisons in Israel and Palestine



Source: Addameer (accessed 07/06/2024)

Demolitions and destruction

Between 7 October 2023 and 24 June 2024, Israeli authorities and security forces demolished, confiscated, or ordered the owners to demolish over 1,010 Palestinian structures in Area C and East Jerusalem. Nearly 40% (377) of these were homes, and around 25% (212) were agricultural structures. Many were demolished during Israeli military operations, particularly in refugee camps and near Tulkarem and Jenin, while others were demolished because the owners did not have building permits (OCHA 26/06/2024 and 05/06/2024; OCHA accessed 24/06/2024). Some were punitive demolitions, which often target Palestinians or neighbours and relatives of Palestinians accused or suspected of carrying out attacks against Israelis (Wafa 31/05/2024; B'Tselem 11/11/2017).

In a recent large-scale incident, the demolition of three homes, a community shelter, and a building for the community's generator in Umm al-Kheir displaced 38 people, mostly children. 20 other homes and buildings in the community are subject to demolition orders. Following the demolitions, the Israeli Government declared the area a closed military zone (OCHA 26/06/2024). Some Palestinians have been forced to demolish their houses because of a lack of building permits. If they do not demolish the houses themselves, Israeli authorities charge them for demolition services (OCHA 12/06/2024; MEMO 17/07/2023).

Settlers have also been implicated in home demolitions and property destruction. Over 90% of the around 1,000 settler attacks OCHA documented between 7 October 2023 and 24 June 2024 involved damage to Palestinian property, including damage to or the destruction of close to 44,300 trees or saplings (OCHA 26/06/2024).

Displacement and associated humanitarian needs

Settler and IDF violence, fear of violence, and the destruction of property and essential infrastructure displace Palestinians across the West Bank. Many IDF attacks are concentrated in refugee camps, leading to high displacement rates among camp inhabitants. Nearly 95% (850) of the 900 Palestinians, including 370 children, displaced by the Israeli destruction of homes between 7 October and 18 March 2024 were residents of Jenin, Nur Shams, and Tulkarem refugee camps (OCHA 19/03/2024).

Between 7 October 2023 and 13 June 2024, Israeli settlers also displaced between 14–18 entire communities, or a total of around 1,100 people (NRC 13/06/2024; B'Tselem 19/10/2023). In some cases, the settlers were wearing military uniforms or were accompanied by IDF soldiers or Israeli police, who contributed to or watched the violence without intervening or even arrested Palestinians. The settlers deployed methods including physical violence; threats; the obstruction of roads to the communities; the destruction of homes, lands, crops,

schools, and critical infrastructure, including power and water sources; and theft (B'Tselem 19/10/2023; NRC 13/06/2024).

There is a lack of recent detailed information on the destination and shelter conditions of displaced families and communities. OCHA reported that many of the around 1,200 Palestinians displaced between 7 October and 31 December 2023, primarily in Hebron, Nablus, and Ramallah, moved to towns or other rural areas (OCHA 21/02/2024). The type, cost, and condition of their shelter in these host communities are not reported. Some communities displaced since 7 October have been forced to camp in open areas with no access to WASH infrastructure, schools, and other services. Violence, threats, and destruction prevent many households from taking shelter materials, food, agricultural equipment, and other essential NFIs with them. This leaves them with high shelter, food, NFI, and livelihood needs (B'Tselem 19/10/2023; EC 16/04/2024). In March 2024, the Shelter Cluster reported a shortage of NFIs available to meet these needs (Shelter Cluster 12/03/2024).

Eviction also causes displacement, particularly in East Jerusalem. Until 3 June, settlers filed most of the eviction cases against around 220 Palestinian families in East Jerusalem, displacing around 970 people, including 425 children (OCHA 05/06/2024).

Restricted movement and access to services

Restricted movement

Since 7 October 2023, increased movement restrictions, including new roadblocks and new or closed checkpoints, have affected the food and medicine supply, access to health facilities, and education access, requiring schools and universities to interrupt education or return to remote learning (France 24 09/02/2024). Waiting for hours at the checkpoints, which often are crowded and lack toilets and other basic amenities, can be particularly difficult for people with disabilities and illnesses and women. Many need medical attention for pregnancy or chronic diseases, and the poor sanitation conditions have increased urinary tract infections for women, redoubling their need to use toilets (KII 15/04/2024; Wafa 11/02/2024; Jerusalem Story 03/12/2023).

Checkpoints on roads leading to agricultural land operate at limited hours, preventing farmers from effectively tending their land, as they cannot pass unstaffed checkpoints (Machsom Watch accessed 14/06/2024). Cities and villages in Areas A and B are often cut off from one another, requiring Palestinians living there to travel through Israeli-controlled territory, and several checkpoints, to access work, education, and essential services (CNN 11/11/2023).

Settler reservists recruited after 7 October often staff new checkpoints. There are anecdotal reports that this subset of soldiers is more likely to engage in harassment and violence

against Palestinians (ACLED 10/06/2024). Some checkpoints are only staffed erratically for short periods and are otherwise closed, preventing the predictable delivery of supplies or access to workplaces, schools, and services (B'Tselem 17/03/2024).

Water access

IDF operations frequently cause damage to infrastructure, including WASH infrastructure, affecting Palestinian access to water. For example, IDF operations in Jenin refugee camp from 21–23 May 2024 destroyed two houses and damaged around 1,300m of water and sewage networks, leaving 23,600 people (80% of camp inhabitants) without water and power until 26 May. Nearly 12,000 (40%) did not have water until 29 May (OCHA 29/05/2024; BBC 22/05/2024; UNRWA 29/05/2024). Water has been scarce across the West Bank but is still available; however, as a result of Israeli forces bulldozing road sections damage resulted in water cut-off that lasted over ten hours. The cut-off affected drinking water access for about 30% of the population of Kafr Dan (7,500 persons) within Jenin governorate (WAFA 13/06/2024; OCHA 12/06/2024). On 18 June, Israeli settlers vandalised a water well in the West Bank, cutting off irrigation pipes (OCHA 26/06/2024). There are no recent updates on the current state of water and sanitation systems, although they are likely to be disrupted or have irregular operating hours.

According to some farmers, the pipeline supplying water has recently been operational only for one day every two weeks. Usually, during the summer months, this further decreases to once every month or two (WAFA 05/06/2024; The World 12/04/2024).

The loss of tax revenue has also affected water availability because Palestinians rely on water extracted by an Israeli company that distributes the resource to the PA. This arrangement forces Palestinians to purchase water from the Israeli national water company, Mekorot, which often implements frequent cuts to ensure adequate water supply only for Israeli settlers (WAFA 05/06/2024; B'Tselem 31/05/2023; AI 29/11/2017).

Inadequate water supply in the West Bank is not new, but the extra **scarcity affects hygiene and sanitation, crops, and livestock. It also contributes to soil degradation and desertification. At the same time, people are likely to become dehydrated because of the lack of water during heatwaves** (Haaretz 13/06/2024; B'Tselem 31/05/2023). On 03 July, temperatures reached 33° C, mostly in Jericho and the Jordan Valley. Temperatures are likely to increase further in the coming days (WAFA 02/07/2024PMD accessed 28/06/2024; WAFA 27/06/2024).

Restricted healthcare access

Healthcare access, which was already limited in the West Bank, has worsened since 7 October 2023 because of movement restrictions, violence, and bureaucratic constraints. Since 7 October, medical and paramedical staff have repeatedly faced attacks and harassment, and armoured vehicles or cement and dirt mounds have blocked roads, hindering access to ambulances. Khalil Suleiman hospital in Jenin camp and Thabet hospital in Tulkarem are sometimes inaccessible because of roadblocks, checkpoints, and other obstacles, forcing many injured and sick people to stay home rather than seek care. Fighting has also damaged or destroyed healthcare facilities (MSF 13/06/2024). For example, during military operations on 21 May 2024, the IDF entered, used, and damaged a UNRWA health facility in Jenin camp (UNRWA 29/05/2024).

Electricity cut-offs

Electricity in the West Bank is inconsistent. IDF raids have caused structural damage, resulting in outages in several areas. Although power has been restored in some areas, others, including Al Fara refugee camp, still lack services because of Israeli forces damaging electricity networks and water systems during raids (Tasmin News 10/06/2024; AA 10/06/2024). There is no information on electricity outages in rural areas, but service is also likely disrupted.

Livelihood losses

Violence and insecurity, property destruction and demolitions, and movement restrictions increasingly impede Palestinian access to livelihoods. Examples of different livelihood disruptions from across the West Bank are as follows.

- Since 7 October 2023, Israeli forces and settlers have escalated efforts to displace herding communities in northern Jordan Valley, northeast of the West Bank. The Jordan Valley Regional Council, supported by settlers and Israeli forces, has also increased its practice of confiscating Palestinian livestock on the false basis that they are stray animals violating a grazing by-law. They also arrest some livestock owners and force them to pay for the transport and care of their confiscated animals (B'Tselem 17/03/2024).
- Thousands of West Bank Palestinians have been denied access to their crops and lands, especially in the Seam zones despite holding valid Israeli military permits to cultivate in the area (Hamoked 23/05/2024). The Seam Zone is in Area C, where most of the agricultural land is located (JV accessed 24/06/2024; OCHA 05/03/2014).

- In a week-long reporting period at the beginning of June 2024, OCHA documented settler vandalism on around 280 olive trees and 580 fig trees in seven West Bank communities (OCHA 05/06/2024). As of 3 July over 45,600 Palestinian owned trees and saplings were destroyed by people known or believed to be Israeli settlers (OCHA 03/07/2024).
- On 30 May, Israeli forces caused a large fire in the main vegetable market in Ramallah and Al-Bireh by throwing tear gas canisters and sound bombs during a search-and-arrest operation. The fire destroyed dozens of shops and goods (OCHA 05/06/2024).

By 28 June, the Israeli ban on West Bank Palestinians from entering Israel for work remained in effect, with significant impacts on Palestinian economy and livelihoods (Aurora 28/06/2024; TOI 27/06/2024; NYT 02/02/2024).

OUTLOOK

The international community has expressed concerns about an explosion of conflict in the West Bank because of escalating spirals of violence (AP 26/05/2024). New violent incidents generally encourage reprisals and conflict intensification rather than efforts to de-escalate. For example, following an exchange of fire between three armed Palestinian men and Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint on 22 February 2024, Israel's far-right defence and finance ministers called for increased checkpoints and movement restrictions, the distribution of guns to settlers, and new settlements, all of which would further empower the ISF and settlers to engage in violence against Palestinians (TOI 22/02/2024; MEMO 22/02/2024).

The expansion of settlement activity will only aggravate cycles of violence, including by increasing the activities of Palestinian armed groups, many local brigades of which have emerged in response to new settlement activity. In May 2024, the Israeli Defense Minister lifted a ban on Israelis from entering three northern West Bank settlements (Ganim, Kadim, and Sa-Nur), which were evacuated, partially demolished, and legally closed to Israeli citizens in 2005 when Israel disengaged from these parts of the West Bank. The lifting of the ban followed the May 2023 lifting of another ban on entry to Homesh, the largest of the four settlements in this cluster. While, under Israeli law, the creation of new settlements in these areas requires the approval of the Israeli Government, which can take years, the lifting may spur the creation of unauthorised settlements in the coming months. West Bank settlements without official authorisation of the Israeli Ministry of Interior often still receive state support and assistance (TOI 22/05/2024; Jpost 22/05/2024; B'Tselem 11/11/2017; AJ 01/06/2023).

Further, on 27 June 2024, Israel's security cabinet approved five existing unauthorised settlement outposts – Evyatar in northern West Bank, Sde Efraim and Givat Asaf in central West Bank, and Heletz and Adorayim in the south of the territory. The cabinet also approved the construction of thousands of new settlement homes throughout the West Bank and transferred enforcement powers in a nature reserve in Area B from the PA to Israel (TOI

28/06/2024; Al Mayadeen 28/06/2024; MEE 28/06/2024). While the timeline for the completion of the authorisation process is unclear, this decision may embolden the settlers already living in these outposts to escalate violence against surrounding Palestinian communities and spark resistance in these communities.

On 29 May, Finance Minister Smotrich initiated the transfer of legal powers in the West Bank from the IDF to pro-settler civil servants under his authority in the Ministry of Defense, which observers fear will fuel settlement expansion. The transfer included by-laws covering building regulation, land registration, and the administration of agriculture, parks, and other public and private land; these fall under the Civil Administration, which is primarily responsible for construction in Area C (The Guardian 20/06/2024). The transfer will enable the pro-settlement civil servants to rapidly expand settlement construction (TOI 23/06/2024).

Increasing international efforts to recognise and promote Palestinian statehood may foment belligerent Israeli rhetoric and associated West Bank violence. In early May, Smotrich met with mayors from major West Bank settlements, cautioning that the creation of a Palestinian state was imminent and urging immediate action to prevent it (TOI 09/05/2024). When Smotrich authorised five settlement outposts on 27 June, he claimed that the number of approved outposts corresponded with the number of countries that have recognised Palestine in recent weeks (TOI 28/06/2024; Al Mayadeen 28/06/2024).

Developments in Gaza and tensions with Lebanon in the coming months may also deteriorate security in the West Bank. On 23 June, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Israel's offensive on Rafah was about to end and would be its last major operation in the enclave, although fighting against Hamas in Gaza would continue until Israel destroyed the militant group. The need to relocate Israeli troops to Israel's northern border with Lebanon partly justifies this prospective drawdown in Gaza (BBC 24/06/2024). There are increasing concerns that almost daily exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah, a Shiite political party and militant group with significant influence in Lebanon, since 7 October 2023 will escalate into full-scale conflict in the coming weeks. In early June 2024, Netanyahu announced preparations for an "intense operation in the north." Israeli and Hezbollah leaders have continued to threaten war in the weeks since, despite UN, US, and other international efforts to de-escalate. An escalation of conflict or war with Hezbollah, which is larger and better-equipped than Hamas, will put significant strain on Israel's resources (AJ 05/06/2024 and 27/06/2024; TWI 25/06/2024; CFR accessed 27/06/2024). This may affect its capacity to operate in the West Bank, potentially allowing Palestinian armed groups to increase their activities and influence (NYT 04/03/2024; ICG 24/11/2023). Palestinian armed groups based around Jenin, Tulkarem, and other West Bank locations close to the Green Line may also increasingly target communities in Israel proper, which has been occurring sporadically in recent months (KII 14/06/2024).

There is a constant risk that Israel will refuse to renew the indemnity waiver when it expires in four months and will again withhold taxes from the PA in response to international and domestic developments. These potential decisions, combined with the continuing denial of work permits for West Bank Palestinians in Israel, will continue to weaken the PA and may contribute to eventual economic collapse in the West Bank (FT 22/05/2024; OHCHR 25/04/2024). In the short term, the West Bank's GDP will continue to contract, and people's income and livelihoods will continue to be disrupted (PCBS/ILO 07/06/2024). The PA's current capacity to handle this crisis is limited, as they have exhausted their resources and have been forced to borrow from banks and other lending institutions, which is not sustainable in the longer term (KII 18/06/2024; KII 13/06/2024). The lack of resources impedes access to food, medicine, hygiene items, and NFIs; these constraints are anticipated to worsen, forcing individuals to increasingly depend on humanitarian aid as a result of constrained work and income opportunities. Restricted livelihood access will aggravate food insecurity across the territory, where an estimated 600,000 people were already vulnerable to food insecurity in December 2023 (FSC 14/12/2023).

Displacement is likely to keep increasing in the coming months as a result of violence and the deterioration of livelihoods. There is no information on new IDP shelters or destinations, but they are likely to seek shelter in refugee camps or with relatives.

Self-imposed lockdowns and confinement as a coping mechanism may increase among West Bank Palestinians because of insecurity and fear of IDF raids, administrative detention, and settler violence.

Economic collapse and escalating insecurity could drive people to join Palestinian resistance movements. The PA has given up a significant amount of space to armed groups in cities despite not officially recognising these groups and objecting to them (KII 14/06/2024). Hunger and unmet humanitarian needs may compel people to join resistance groups for lack of income and livelihood alternatives and the urge to defend the community (KII 14/06/2024; AJ 02/06/2024). The hostilities in Gaza, persisting for over eight months since October 2023, have reverberated into the West Bank, aggravating humanitarian needs and frustration (KII 18/06/2024). The proliferation of armed groups in the territory could represent a difficulty for the weakened PA in governing the region and hinder any international efforts to restore the PA's jurisdiction (ACLEDA 14/12/2023).

RESPONSE AND FUNDING

Increased movement restrictions in the West Bank affect humanitarian responders along with communities, forcing some to suspend or delay projects and cancel field visits or switch to online delivery methods, such as virtual cash transfers. Several organisations have formally petitioned Israeli authorities to challenge new checkpoints and roadblocks (NRC 26/03/2024; MDM 05/11/2023).

Some resources and humanitarian personnel previously focused on the West Bank have shifted or redirected their focus to Gaza to provide assistance, resulting in the further depletion of resources in the West Bank. The main challenge for the humanitarian response in the West Bank is that Israel denies visas to international workers and refuses re-entry to those with valid ones. The insecurity in Gaza and the West Bank has also increased remote work, limiting the effectiveness of response efforts (KII 14/06/2024).

14% of the around USD 79 million in Palestine's Humanitarian Fund is dedicated to projects in the West Bank, with the remaining 86% dedicated to Gaza (OCHA 26/06/2024).

By 8 June 2024, there were 34 health humanitarian organisations in the West Bank (Health Cluster 08/06/2024).