



SPECIAL REPORT: JERUSALEM UNDER SIEGE

August 2017

INTRODUCTION

The following report highlights Israel's aggressions against Palestinians living under the belligerent occupation in the State of Palestine, during the period of July 14 - 28, 2017. The report focuses on the events that took place during the 14-day siege imposed on Al-Aqsa mosque compound. It also provides examples of violations of international law and international humanitarian law (IHL) committed by the occupation forces and settlers. These examples include the closure of Al Aqsa compound and the prevention of prayers for the first time since 1969. In addition, Israel imposed a military blockade over the Old city of Jerusalem, preventing Palestinians from accessing their residences and workplaces. The installation of metal detectors and special surveillance cameras, at the entry points of the compound, served to further exacerbate an already heated situation. In response, Palestinian worshippers resisted peacefully by taking out their prayer mats and praying in the streets, an action for which many were brutally attacked and detained.

It is worth noting that the recent attacks by Israel – the occupying power against the defenseless Palestinian population, are part of an escalation that includes several statements by Israeli officials calling to change the status-quo of Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound, a meeting of Israel's Cabinet chaired by Benjamin Netanyahu beneath Al Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound, and several religious arguments used by Israeli diplomats and politicians against initiatives to protect the sanctity of all Holy Places in Occupied East Jerusalem at UNESCO and other International Forums. The Palestinian leadership has constantly called upon Israel to stop its attempts at turning a solvable political conflict into a religious war.

Such policies have to be added to the regular, systematic and ongoing policies of the Israeli occupation, including restricting Palestinian access to their Christian and Muslim Holy Sites, home demolitions and evictions, expanding colonial-settlements and separation of Palestinian families among other policies aimed at changing the status-quo of the occupied Palestinian capital.

These attacks and violations continue to be committed while Israel, the occupying power, is granted impunity and protection from the international community. It is more vital than ever that the international community act responsibly and take swift measures to protect the defenseless Palestinian people and to hold Israel responsible for its crimes. The time for real international intervention, in order to end Israel's colonialism and disenfranchisement of the Palestinian people, is long overdue.

SUMMARY OF ISRAELI VIOLATIONS THROUGHOUT OCCUPIED PALESTINE BY TYPE AND NUMBER

Type Of Violation	West Bank Including Occupied East Jerusalem	Gaza Strip	Total
Killings	11	1	12
Withheld Victims' Bodies	12	-	12
Injuries ⁽¹⁾	1692	151	1843
Raids	284	3	287
Detentions ⁽²⁾	852	2	854
Temporary Detentions	144	0	144
Flying Checkpoints	260	-	260
Israeli Gunfire Attacks	197	30	227
Structures Demolished ⁽³⁾	6	-	6
Destruction/ Confiscation of Properties	24	-	24
Settler Terrorism/ Violence	39	-	39

Main Source: Palestinian Monitoring Group (PMG)

(1) Source: Palestinian Ministry of Health (Figures cover period between July 1 – July 31 2017)

(2) Palestinian Prisoners Club (Figures Cover period between July 1- July 31 2017)

(3) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

HIGHLIGHTING PALESTINIANS KILLED

During this reporting period, 12 Palestinians have been killed throughout Occupied Palestine, as a result of Israeli extrajudicial executions or settler terror attacks. Eight of these people were under the age of 25. The following are examples of Palestinians killed in acts of extrajudicial executions either by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) or by terrorist settlers in Occupied East Jerusalem – for a full list see annex.

- On July 21st 2017, an Israeli settler shot and killed Mohammad Sharaf, a 17 year-old boy in the Ras Al-Amud neighborhood of occupied East Jerusalem.
- On July 21st 2017, IOF positioned in the towns of Al-Ezariya and Abu Dis opened fire towards residents demonstrating against Israeli violations against Al-Aqsa mosque compound , killing 18-year old Mohammad Lafi from Al-Ezariya.
- On July 22nd 2017, IOF raided Al-Ezariya town and fired rubber coated steel bullets, sound bombs and tear gas canisters towards residents in the Ras Kabsa neighborhood, killing 21 year-old Yousef Kashur, who was shot in the chest.

WITHHOLDING PALESTINIAN VICTIMS' BODIES; A TOOL OF COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

The Government of Israel has publicly announced a number of collective punishments against Palestinian civilians. This includes withholding the bodies of Palestinians killed by Israel, whether by occupying forces or settlers, as a means to punish family members and whole communities. This constitutes a flagrant violation of IHL and international human rights law (IHRL). Under IHL, the Geneva Conventions require that human dignity of the deceased be respected and that they be "...honorably interred, if possible according to the rites of the religion to which they belonged...".¹ The illegal practice of withholding bodies of Palestinians killed by the Israeli occupation adds to the grief of the victims' families especially when Israel imposes conditions for releasing the bodies, such as limiting the number of people that may attend the funerals and imposing time limits on the funerals. The following are the bodies held by the Israeli Occupation Authorities are still holding of the following victims of the occupation, five of whom are from the occupied capital of Palestine.

Israeli Occupation Authorities are still holding the bodies of the following Palestinian Victims:

	Name	Age	Governorate (Place of Killing)	Date	Days
1.	Abdel Hamid Abu Srur	19	Bethlehem	18/4/2016	467
2.	Muhammad Tarayra	17	Hebron	30/6/2016	394
3.	Muhamamd Al-Faqih	29	Hebron	26/7/2016	368
4.	Rami Awartani	31	Nablus	31/7/2016	463
5.	Misbah Abu Sbeih	38	Jerusalem	9/10/2016	293
6.	Fadi Qanbar	28	Jerusalem	8/1/2017	202
7.	Bara' Saleh	18	Jerusalem	16/6/2017	43
8.	Adel Ankush	18	Jerusalem	16/6/2017	43
9.	Usama Ata	19	Jerusalem	16/6/2017	43
10.	Ammar Al-Tirawi	33	Ramallah	16/7/2017	13
11.	Rafat Al-Hirbawi	29	Hebron	18/7/2017	11
12.	Muhammad Tannuh	26	Bethlehem	20/7/2017	9

¹ Article 17 of the 1949 Geneva Convention, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v2_ru_rule115

PALESTINIANS INJURED

The escalation of violence by the IOF and settlers against Occupied East Jerusalem has led to the injury of dozens of Palestinians who flocked to the streets to protest the illegal closure of Al-Aqsa mosque compound.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, between July 1st 2017 and July 31st, at least **623** Palestinians were injured in occupied East Jerusalem, as a result of either being shot with live or rubber-coated bullets, or as a result of physical assault, burns or tear gas inhalation. Approximately **392** of those injured were treated in the field.

During this reporting period, attacks against journalists and media institutions has surged, becoming a systematic policy by Israel to cover up for their violations. According to the Palestinian Journalist Syndicate, at least **55** Journalists, of whom **50** were injured in Jerusalem. Attacks included physical assaults, threats of arrest, confiscation and destruction of their equipment, as well as targeting them with live bullets, stun and tear gas canisters. The Syndicate indicated that, among others, the following journalists and media outlets were attacked by Israeli soldiers in Occupied East Jerusalem: the crew of Palestine TV; the crew of Jerusalem Media Center, who were attacked while covering the Israeli raid against Al-Makassed Hospital; Sinan Abu Meizar, who works for Reuters who was brutally assaulted by Israeli soldiers at Dung Gate; and Afif Amireh, a photographer for Wafa who sustained wounds in the chest when Israeli soldiers fired towards Palestinians in the Ras Al-Amud neighborhood.

Below are further incidents of attacks against journalists and worshippers:

- On July 18th 2017, IOF positioned at Dung Gate fired rubber-coated steel-bullets, stun and tear gas canisters towards worshipers, injuring 14 (including one who sustained critical injuries). IOF also physically assaulted Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who sustained severe bruises.
- On July 20th 2017, IOF positioned at Dung Gate fired rubber-coated steel bullets, stun and tear gas canisters towards worshipers, and injuring 36 (including two who sustained critical injuries).
- On July 22nd 2017, IOF positioned at Dung Gate fired stun and tear gas canisters towards worshipers demonstrating nearby, physically assaulting them with metal sticks and spraying skunk water at them. As a result, several journalists who were covering Israeli aggression were injured, including Bayan Al-Ju'beh, Shireen Najib and Ahmad Gharableh.
- On July 28th 2017, IOF raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound and particularly Al-Qibli Chapel, in order to force worshipers out of the Chapel. The soldiers fired rubber-coated steel bullets, stun and tear gas canisters injuring 15. On the same day, IOF raided Al-Ezariya town and fired rubber-coated steel bullets, stun and tear gas canisters towards residents there, injuring 11 (including a journalist), and another 23 residents who suffocated from tear gas inhalation.

ASSAULTS AGAINST HOLY SITES

According to a report issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Waqf (Islamic trust) and Religious Affairs, the Israeli occupation authorities have committed more than **116** violations and assaults against Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound. The following are some examples of these violations: ²

- On July 16th 2017, IOF expelled Mr. Jadu Ghouli who works in the Fire Department in the Al-Aqsa mosque compound from the site for 4 months. On same day, IOF informed 8 guards of Al-Aqsa Mosque that they were not allowed to access the mosque until further notice. Those affected are: Samer Al-Qabani, Khalil Al-Tarhuni, Hamzeh Al-Nabali, Fadi Elayyan, Amer Al-Salfiti, Imad Abdeen, Majd Abdeen and Abdel Aziz Al-Halisi.
- On July 18th 2017, IOF handed an expulsion order for 20 days to a guard of Al-Aqsa named Hamzeh Al-Sharbaty, forcing him to pay bail in the amount of 10,000 NIS (almost 3000 USD) after being arrested.
- On July 28th 2017, an Israeli court decided to expel 37 Palestinians from Jerusalem and deprived them from accessing the site of Al-Aqsa compound for 15 days.

ASSAULTS AGAINST HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL TEAMS

During the period covered by this report, Israel has carried out deliberate attacks against Palestinian hospitals and medical teams in occupied East Jerusalem. According to the Head of Al-Makased Islamic Charitable Society Hospital which also operates a clinic near Al-Ghawanima Gate in the occupied old city of Jerusalem (one of the entrances to the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound), IOF's were deliberately preventing patients and medical teams from accessing the clinic. This clinic has been providing medical services to Old City residents including worshipers at Al-Aqsa since 1990s. ³

Below are further instances of Israel's targeting Palestinian hospitals and medics:

- On July 17th 2017, IOF's stormed several operating rooms in Al-Makased hospital, breaching sterile conditions and putting innocent people at risk of infection during surgery.
- On July 18th 2017, IOF positioned at Dung Gate fired stun canister towards a Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance, and also assaulted a member of medical staff who was inside another ambulance.
- On July 21st 2017, IOF again raided Al-Makased and fired stun and tear gas canisters inside various hospital departments in an attempt to arrest the injured Palestinians.

² Palestinian Monitoring Group (PMG)

³ Maan "Israeli forces obstruct wounded Palestinians from reaching Jerusalem clinic" <https://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=778205>

ISRAELI RAIDS AND ARRESTS

Israeli Occupation Forces have carried out around 14 raids in Occupied East Jerusalem during this reporting period. In addition, IOF have arrested at least 400 Palestinians from the city, most of them being later released under conditions of home arrest, expulsion from the site of Al-Aqsa mosque compound or from Jerusalem as a whole, or released upon paying a bail fee. ⁴

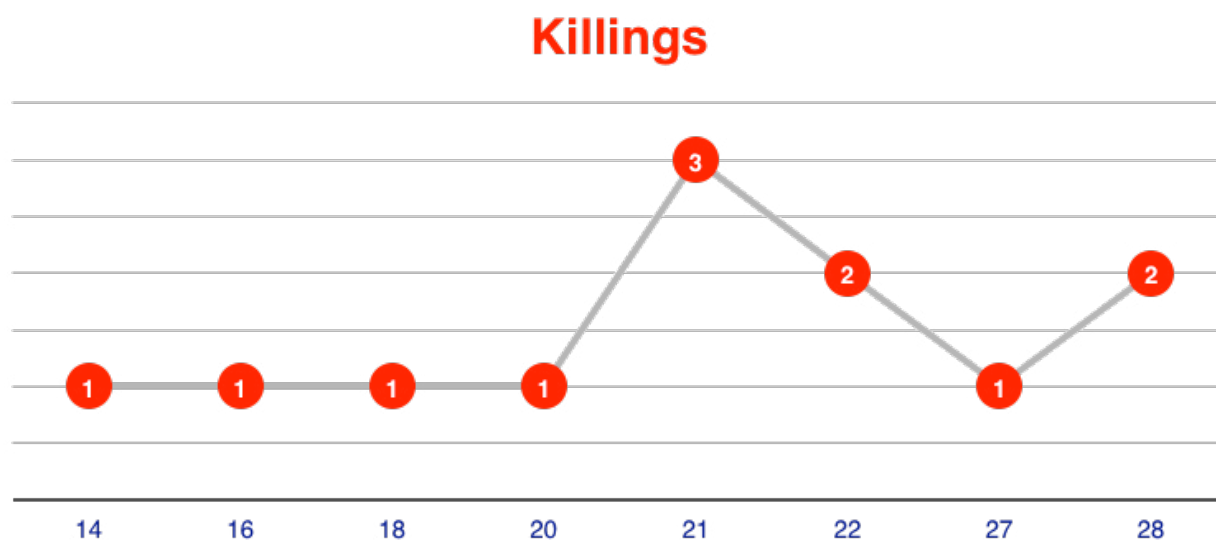
HOME DEMOLITIONS

IOF continued its daily raids of Palestinian neighborhoods, refugee camps and villages and carried out 6 demolitions of Palestinian homes and other structures throughout occupied Palestine within the short space of around two weeks, in addition to delivering military demolition orders for other homes and buildings. According to UNOCHA, 5 of these structures were demolished in the Jerusalem governorate in Al-Za'ayem, Beit Hanina, Al-Ram and Dahyet El-Barid and Wadi Sneysel affecting nearly 262 people.

⁴ Palestinian Prisoners Club

Chart

Palestinian Martyrs Killed throughout Occupied Palestine by month between July 14th 2017 – July 28th 2017



Source: Palestinian Monitoring Group (PMG)

ANNEX: The following are the Names of the Palestinian Victims killed between July 14th 2017 and July 28th 2017

July 2017

NO.	Name	Age	District (Place of Killing)	Date of Killing
1	Bara Hamamdeh	21	Bethlehem	14/6/2017
2	Ammar Al-Tirawi	33	Ramallah	16/7/2017
3	Ra'fat Al-Herbawi	29	Hebron	18/7/2017
4	Muhammad Tannuh	26	Bethlehem	20/7/2017
5	Muhammad Sharaf	17	Jerusalem	21/7/2017
6	Muhammad Lafi	18	Jerusalem	21/7/2017
7	Muhammad Abu Ghannam	20	Jerusalem	21/7/2017
8	Yousef Kashur	21	Jerusalem	22/7/2017
9	Odai Nawaja'h	17	Tubas	22/7/2017
10	Muhammad Kana'an	26	Jerusalem	27/7/2017
11	Abdul Rahman Abu Hamiseh	16	Middle Gaza	28/7/2017
12	Ali Taqatqa	24	Bethlehem	28/7/2017