

**Fact Sheet**  
**Violations documented by Palestinian Youth Human Rights Defenders in**  
**Hebron and Jerusalem**  
**2020-2021**

This fact sheet highlights the main violations monitored and documented by youth human rights defenders in Jerusalem and Hebron in the 2020-2021 period. It includes facts and figures that point to a general systematic Israeli policy to intentionally violate religious freedoms, right to worship, right to education, housing rights, and freedom of movement, in both Jerusalem and Hebron.

Young human rights defenders monitored and documented hundreds of violations committed in Jerusalem and Hebron in 2020-2021.

This paper summarizes the main findings of this documentation through comprehensive data, facts and figures of the perpetrated violations in the areas of operation.

**Violation of educational, religious, and housing rights in East Jerusalem  
and the Old City of Hebron**

**Right to Education**

The right to education is one of the most important rights guaranteed by international conventions and is a common denominator among several United Nations declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Patterns of Violations against the Right to Education in East Jerusalem and  
the Old City of Hebron:**

In the course of preparing its analytical report, MIFTAH documented several patterns of violations committed by Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian right to education. Examples include attacks on schools by Israeli



forces and settlers, preventing students from reaching their schools due to closures and checkpoints, rise in school dropouts as a result of Israeli measures, and the Israelization of education in Jerusalem.

### **Attacks on Schools by Israeli Occupation Forces and Settlers in the Old City of Hebron**

International humanitarian law is based on a set of fundamental principles put in place to protect civilians, including the protection of civilian venues such as schools. In the “H2” area in the Old City of Hebron, teargas is regularly used by Israeli occupation forces around Palestinian schools, as well as carrying out humiliating inspections of Palestinian students and teachers and exposing them to violence. More than 53 such violations were documented there in 2020, leading to students’ suffering of 263 physical damages and 3,623 psychological damages. It should also be noted that this relative decline in violations compared to previous years was due to the disruption of schools for several months as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Israeli violations in the 2019-2020 period were categorized as follows:-

Violati on  Year	Stopping pupils at checkpoi nts and searchin g them intensive ly	Thro wing tearg as and stun grenades	Haras sing pupil s	Run ning over or tryin g to run over pupil s	Raidi ng scho ols	Denyi ng the passa ge of pupil s or teach ers/ work ers	Phys ical harm	Nuisan ce without direct contact	Inj ury	Arr est	Mater ial/ finan cial dama ges
<b>2019</b>	66	96	23	8	14	18	20	20	4	13	4
<b>2020</b>	19	5	7	2	3	3	4	10	2	6	0

- The lack of safe access to education has serious implications for children, such as lowering their level of school attendance, increasing school dropout rates,



displacement of families, separation of family members as they search for solutions that guarantee their children's access to school in other locations, etc.

Such practices, especially those which directly target students, constitute a grave violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the State of Israel. For example, Article (2) of this convention explicitly notes that states parties shall refrain from practicing discrimination of any kind against children, irrespective of their parents' religion, national origin, political opinion, etc.

- The various practices of Israeli occupation authorities in the Old City of Hebron are an attack on human dignity. For example, the degrading isolation of Hebron's Old City neighborhoods from adjacent areas, and surrounding them with checkpoints and security gates, made Hebron a large prison for its residents, who live in a state of permanent siege. Moreover, the daily searching of Old City residents at military checkpoints in an inhumane manner - especially children on their way to or from school - is a fierce blow to their human dignity.
- These humiliating practices, which greatly affect the dignity of "H2" residents [in Hebron], constitute a flagrant violation of Article (3)(1)(c) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits all attacks on people's personal dignity "*at any time and in any place, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment*".

### **Israelization of Educational Curricula in Jerusalem:**

In 2018, the Israeli government allocated 2 billion Shekels to implement a five-year plan to enhance its control and domination over East Jerusalem. The bulk of this amount was allocated to Israelize the Palestinian educational system and curricula, based on a plan that pressures Palestinian schools to move from the Palestinian educational curriculum to the Israeli one.

The Israeli government allocated approximately 68.7 million Shekels for supporting schools that teach the Israeli curriculum, in addition to 57.4 million Shekels for developing and maintaining schools that chose this curriculum. Moreover, 67 million Shekels were allocated for renting buildings for these schools, as well as 15 million Shekels for teaching Hebrew. The Israeli government also focused on building new schools dedicated solely for teaching the Israeli curriculum. This was done in light of the great shortage of classrooms



and the dire need for new schools to accommodate the growing Palestinian population in East Jerusalem.

Among the methods used by Israeli authorities to Israelize the educational sector is their changing of the approved curriculums. This took place especially after 2015, when they started obliging Jerusalemite schools to use the curriculums issued by the Israeli Ministry of Education. The Israeli government also distributed the new curriculum books to several “private” schools in Jerusalem. They also threatened that, if any schools do not comply with this decision, they will be closed down and have their teachers terminated. Statistical information in 2019-2020 shows that, in East Jerusalem, there are 50 schools that teach the Israeli curriculum fully or partially or which were established by Israel to adopt the Israeli education system. These 50 schools include about 8,300 students.<sup>1</sup>

The table below shows the number of Israeli distortions and falsifications of the Palestinian curriculum in Jerusalem:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Books</b>	<b>Number of Falsifications</b>
Islamic Studies	8	35
Arabic	12	221
Social Studies	6	235
Socialization (Social Upbringing)	4	90
National and Life Education	4	32
Science and Life	10	26

<sup>1</sup> Note: Currently, there are 12 schools established recently by Israel in East Jerusalem and which completely apply the Israeli educational system, as stated in reports issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Education. However, a fact sheet published by the Jerusalem Education Forum mentioned that there are 50 schools in East Jerusalem that apply the “*Bagrut*” system fully or partially. Therefore, 12 of them use the Bagrut system fully, whereas the rest (38) use it partially (such as opening special classrooms for the “*Bagrut*”, while the rest of classrooms would use the Palestinian curriculum).



## **Right to Freedom of Movement**

International human rights covenants are keen on protecting people's right to movement, as seen in the provisions of protection in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In Hebron:

- About 30% of Palestinians in the “H2” area controlled by the Israeli occupation (approximately 12,000 Palestinians) live in neighborhoods adjacent to settlement blocs and suffer from severe restrictions that limit their ability to access this area.
- Currently, there are more 100 physical barriers in this area, including 20 “full-time” checkpoints and 14 partial checkpoints separating settlement areas from the rest of the city. There are also several roads in this area which are designated solely and exclusively for settlers' use, while prohibiting Palestinian vehicles from traveling in them. There are also streets where Palestinian pedestrians are not allowed to walk on.
- As a result of these heavy restrictions and measures, the residents of one-third of houses in the access-restricted area, totaling 1,105 residential units, have abandoned their houses. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation authorities closed down approximately 500 establishments in this area through military orders, and at least 1,100 other establishments were closed by their owners due to the imposed restrictions.
- Israeli occupation measures constitute a blatant violation of Article (13) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Article (12) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, the restrictions on people's freedom of movement seriously affect Palestinian lives and amount to collective punishment, in contravention of Article (33) of the Fourth Geneva Convention.



### **Right to Housing:**

- From 1967 until the end of June 2021, Israeli occupation authorities demolished approximately 2,350 residential establishments, leading to the displacement of 10,085 individuals, including numerous children.
- According to B'Tselem organization, the year 2020 witnessed the demolition of 121 homes in Jerusalem within the Annexation and Expansion Wall, thus displacing 610 persons, including 311 minors. It is also worth noting that Israel destroyed 83 homes in the first half of 2021, leading to the displacement of 232 persons, including 117 minors.
- The Israeli policy of house demolitions in East Jerusalem is a clear violation of international law, especially Article (147) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article (17) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article (11) of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights.

### **Freedom to Access Holy Sites:**

The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property called upon the High Contracting Parties “*to respect cultural property situated within their own territory as well as within the territory of other High Contracting Parties, by refraining from any use of the property and its immediate surroundings or of the appliances in use for its protection for purposes which are likely to expose it to destruction or damage*”. International jurisprudence also condemned the desecration of houses of worship and their destruction, sabotage, closure, or any other behavior that damages such sites under occupation. It also obligates the occupying power to respect the religious rights and beliefs of occupied civilians, and to refrain from destroying or plundering houses of worship or disrupting religious rites and rituals therein.

### **Attacks against Al-Aqsa Mosque and Muslim Worshipers:**

Violent attacks usually take place during the frequent incursions on Al-Aqsa Mosque, with the presence of several Israeli government ministers, Knesset

members (“MPs”), Israeli officials, soldiers, intelligence officers, settlers, Jewish extremist groups, and so-called Temple organizations. Sieges and restrictions on worshipers are also imposed in Al-Aqsa Mosque. This includes preventing Muslims from entering their mosque; conducting brutal attacks, arrests, and investigations; and issuing bans on hundreds of Palestinians from Jerusalem and 1948 areas.

The following table includes figures about these violations, especially bans, bearing in mind that bans against Palestinians usually range from one week to six months:

Year	Numbers of settlers breaking into Al-Aqsa Mosque	Number of Waqf employees banned from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque	Number of Jerusalemites banned from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque	Number of persons barred from entry to Jerusalem	Number of persons barred from entry to the Old City
<b>2019</b>	29,610	60	355	10	44
<b>First half of 2020</b>	6,701	7	206	6	24

One of the worst violations against Al-Aqsa Mosque was the Israeli court order (issued on July 13, 2020) to close down the Bab al-Rahma prayer site. During that period, and following the ensuing events, the number of persons banned from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque reached approximately 150 guards and *mourabitoun* [defenders of holy sites].

In the first half of 2021, a total of 257 [Israeli] decisions were issued to ban Palestinian residents and Waqf employees from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque. Also, the months of May and June 2021 saw seven raids on Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli authorities. For example, May 2021 witnessed consecutive incursions on Al-Aqsa Mosque during the *Isha* and *Taraweeh* prayers [at night] and after the *Fajr* prayer [at dawn]. Attacks were carried out on Muslim worshipers “with teargas canisters,





stun grenades and rubber bullets, as well as pushing them around and beating them with batons”. During that period, Israeli forces evacuated most of the worshipers by force within a few days, leading to hundreds of injuries, including serious ones. For example, there was the witnessing of several heavy injuries in the eyes, head, and face.

### **Attacks against Palestinian Christians during Christian Holidays:**

- Assaults by Israeli Police personnel and settlers against Christian clergy and worshipers have become quite common in Jerusalem. This includes beatings, spitting, insults and cursing at churches and in different streets in Jerusalem. These violations often take place during Christian holidays, such as the Easter Light Ceremony (“Holy Saturday”), when the Israeli occupation forces close down the Holy Sepulcher Church and perpetrate countless attacks against Christian worshipers. The most recent of these violations was the Israeli Police’s violent attacks on dozens of local Christians during the Holy Saturday prayers in May 2021.

### **Violations of the Freedom of Worship at the Ibrahimi Mosque:**

- The Ibrahimi Mosque is surrounded by 12 Israeli military checkpoints and two stations for the Police and Border Guard (“*Magav*”). In 2020, Israeli occupation authorities prevented the call to prayer (“*adhan*”) from Ibrahimi Mosque minarets 602 times, not to mention the repeated incursions by the Israeli Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and settlers, as well as conducting military drills inside the Ibrahim Mosque compound. Other serious violations were also committed there.
- Among the most severe contraventions perpetrated by Israeli authorities at the Ibrahimi Mosque is obstructing the passage of Palestinians on their way to the Friday prayer due to the countless military checkpoints at the entrance of Hebron’s Old City. This greatly disrupts their entry into the mosque in different periods of time, under weak security pretexts.
- The aforementioned practices constitute a flagrant violation of the freedom of worship and right to practice religious rituals, which were guaranteed by





international laws and conventions. For example, the Israeli measures are inconsistent with Article (27) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which obliges the occupying power to respect the occupied people's right to practice their religious rituals. These actions also contradict with Article (53) of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Convention (1977), which prohibits the committing of any acts of hostility against places of worship that constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples.

### **Forced Displacement in Jerusalem**

- The Judaization of Jerusalem is one of the main strategic priorities of Israeli occupation authorities. In fact, “Judaization” is the most decisive factor in Israel’s war for the elimination of Arab-Islamic presence in Jerusalem. In order to achieve this objective, Israel is using all available means to change the geographic, historic, demographic, and cultural character of Jerusalem. Among the most dangerous methods used by the occupation is the “forcible displacement” of Palestinians in Jerusalem.
- Israeli authorities utilise their different agencies and institutions during the systematic implementation of their strategic plan. Within this framework, they formulate colonialist plans and ideas to deport Palestinians from Jerusalem. This was recently escalated by Israel’s adoption of major colonialist plans to coercively Judaize Jerusalem and ethnically cleanse its indigenous population. These plans include the notorious Silicon Wadi project and the City Center project.
- Israeli authorities and their related institutions – especially the Municipality of Jerusalem – are implementing major economic plans and projects to tighten their regulatory grip on properties in Jerusalem through the restriction of building expansion. This is done to minimize the number of Palestinians in politically sensitive areas that may affect the final status resolutions and visions for Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupation authorities also use the revocation of residency policy (such as revoking I.D. cards) as a hostile mechanism to forcefully displace Palestinians and maintain what is called the “demographic balance” in Jerusalem (maintaining a Jewish majority of at least 70% in Jerusalem).



- From 1967 until the end of 2020, the number of Palestinian Jerusalemites who suffered from residency revocation was 14,643.
- The forcible displacement policy adopted by Israeli occupation authorities against Palestinians is in clear breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, especially Articles (45), (46) and (49), which prohibit individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations, of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, regardless of their motive.

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