



Embassy of the State of Palestine

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific

Fact Sheet / 24 August, 2016

Palestinians of Hebron suffer from restriction of movement, displacement, and abuse at the hands of Israeli settlers and soldiers

The City of Hebron

The Facts

- Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank, with a population of approximately 200,000 Palestinians, among whom live around 1,000 Israeli settlers¹
- The city is home to the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs—a holy site for both Muslims and Jews alike²
- After the 1993 Oslo I Accord, Hebron was divided into the Palestinian controlled H1 Zone (comprising 80% of Hebron) and the Israeli controlled H2 Zone (comprising the remaining 20%)³
- Approximately 160,000 Palestinians live in H1, while 40,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israeli settlers live in H2⁴
- There are currently four Israeli settlements in Hebron⁵
- Israeli government plans to allow the construction of an additional settlement within the Plugat Hamitkanim Israeli military compound were announced on August 22, 2016⁶
- Palestinian homes are continuously demolished to make way for Israeli settlements; for example, on 2 February this year, 23 Palestinian homes in the Hebron area were destroyed to make room for Israeli Defense Force ‘training areas’, leaving 10 adults and 68 children homeless⁷
- Harsh restrictions of movement for citizens of Hebron are enforced by Israel, especially in H2⁸
- Palestinians are frequently denied access to their businesses, places of worship, health services, and educational facilities⁹
- Last month, all entrances to Hebron were closed except for one—affecting the lives of approximately 700,000 Palestinian people in the area¹⁰
- One example of the impact on the lives of Palestinians: Taysir Aby Ayeshe, a citizen of Hebron, stated “At 2am my wife, who was pregnant, started to bleed a lot. We had to go by foot to the Aliyah government hospital, about half a kilometre away.” She lost the baby.¹¹
- There are over 120 Israeli military blockades, including 18 permanently staffed checkpoints, which segregate restricted areas from the rest of Hebron¹²
- Palestinians are barred access to several “Israeli only” streets in Hebron¹³
- Almost 2,000 Palestinian businesses in Hebron have been forced to shut down due to restrictions¹⁴

- More than 1,000 Palestinian homes in heavily restricted areas of Hebron have been abandoned¹⁵
- Palestinians living in H2 are constantly subject to abuse and violence at the hands of Israeli settlers, which is often overseen by Israeli soldiers¹⁶
- For example, Hashem al-Azzeh, a Palestinian refugee who lives in H2, reported that he and his family have been repeatedly attacked. Bahija Sharabati, mother of six, reported that “a soldier on the roof broke out in hysterical laughter and threw sand and stones at me while I was standing outside the house”. She also cited cases of abuse by settlers. She “filed dozens of complaints to the Israeli Police, but nothing has changed”.¹⁷
- The large majority of complaints about Israeli settler attacks are closed by the Israeli police without indictment¹⁸

Analysis

- Access restrictions, compounded by systemic harassment from Israeli settlers and soldiers, have resulted in the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and businesses and significant deterioration of living conditions for the Palestinians remaining in H2 (who face serious challenges in accessing basic services such as schools, health services, and water)¹⁹
- Israel justify the restrictions imposed on Palestinians as a means to allow the Israeli settlers residing in the city to lead normal lives²⁰
- Israeli laws are rarely enforced on Israeli settlers involved in violence, intimidation, and vandalism against Palestinians²¹

International Law

- As with all Israeli settlements in the West Bank, those in Hebron are illegal under international law (The Fourth Geneva Convention)²²
- Israeli policy in Hebron breaches its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law—violating the human rights to life, liberty, personal safety, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, health, property, among others²³
- As the occupying power, Israel is obliged to ensure that the humanitarian needs of all Palestinians living in Hebron are met and that they are able to exercise their human rights²⁴
- Israel is also obliged to ensure that those responsible for intimidation and violence are held accountable under Israeli law²⁵
- **Australia is urged to uphold the principles enshrined in international humanitarian and human rights law by putting pressure on the Israeli government to allow the Palestinians of Hebron freedom of movement and access to vital services, hold violent Israeli settlers and soldiers accountable for their actions, and dismantle the illegal settlements in Hebron**

Israeli policy in Hebron has a severe negative impact on the livelihood of Palestinian residents

Israeli policy in Hebron is illegal under international law

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