



Palestinian home ransacked during Israeli military raid in Fasayil village. (Photo Credit: EAPPI)

Violence Against Palestinians in the Jordan Valley by Israeli Security Forces and Settlers

13 June 2023

Overview

Approximately 56,908 Palestinians reside in the Jordan Valley, while approximately 11,000 Israelis settlers are living in the area. Today, Palestinian Indigenous residents of the Jordan Valley are the subject of violence and exploitation by settlers and Israeli security forces with the intention to take over more land. According to Rabbi Arik Ascherman, founder of the Israeli human rights organization Torah of Justice, “the settlers figure that if you harass the Palestinians enough by making it financially impossible for them to survive, you get them to leave without firing a shot.”ⁱ Exerting sustained pressure on the Palestinians’ wellbeing and means of livelihood creates a situation where they will decide to vacate the space due to coercion tactics.

According to the Israeli human rights group B’tselem, settler violence against Palestinians is a form of government policy, aided and abetted by official state authorities with their active participation. While the state takes over land openly, using official methods sanctioned by legal advisors and judges, the settlers initiate violence against Palestinians also to take over more land.ⁱⁱ

Israel has instituted in the Jordan Valley a system of exploitation and control that demonstrates its intention to annex the Jordan Valley, such that, today, 53% of the area is considered “state land,” 46% of the Jordan Valley is military firing zones, and 20% of the land is considered as natural reserves. Not only that, but Israel has also seized lands in the northern Jordan Valley

for the Separation Barrier; and has placed 64 landmine fields near the route of the Jordan River.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Violence in Numbers^{iv}

Palestinians have been subjected to a great deal of violence, due to Israel’s efforts to evict them and to annex the Jordan Valley. During the last 5 years between the 1 January 2018 and the 31 December 2022 documentation of violent incidents has shown:

- 774 Palestinians, including 35 children were arrested.
- 1073 Palestinians were displaced, of whom 167 were children.
- 977 attacks by settlers, and search and arrest operations by Israeli security forces, were conducted.
- 399 flying checkpoints were placed in the Jordan Valley.
- 236 Palestinian structures were demolished. 45% of the demolitions of 108 structures took place in 2022.^v

Injuries in the Jordan Valley^{vi}

During the five years between 2018 and 2022, no less than 1,015 Palestinians in the Jordan Valley were physically injured by Israeli security forces and settlers. Looking ahead, the numbers suggest that violence is on the rise. The first quarter of 2023, compared to the first quarter of 2022, reveals the following:

	Injuries	Number of Affected Children	Fatalities
1 January 2022 - 31 March 2022	5	0	0
1 January 2023 - 31 March 2023	81	4	6*

* 8 Palestinians were killed during the last 5 years, 6 of them during the first quarter of 2023.

EAPPI Documentation and Reporting on Violence in the Jordan Valley

During the one year since EAPPI resumed post-COVID operations, between the 1 April 2022 and the 1 April 2023, ecumenical accompaniers documented 1,404 human rights violations. Violence amounted to 674 incidents or 48% of the violations.

In comparison to five years ago, in 2018, ecumenical accompaniers documented no more than 299 human rights violations. Violence amounted to 121 incidents or 40% of the violations.

Overall, the percentage of violent incidents increased by 452% from 2018, to the first year of EAPPI post-COVID operations between April 2022 and 2023. The following table shows the comparison in the number of violent incidents between the two periods:

Type of Violence	2018	1 April 2022 - 31 April 2023

Harassment	84	493
Injuries	11	13
Physical Abuse	2	39
Vandalism	1	82
Arrest/Detention	23	47
Total:	121	674

Eyewitness Testimonies of Violence in the Jordan Valley

- On the 2 May 2023, ecumenical accompaniers visited Ein Shibli. They met a Palestinian woman who had an Israeli settler come to her home; he threatened to poison the family and burn the home if the family does not leave, and insulted the woman with profanities. The woman appeared very sad, and said: "Our life is terrible. They [settlers] kill our cows, poison our field, take our sheep, and they attack and insult us. What should we do?"
- On the 16 June 2022, ecumenical accompaniers visited Ras Al Teen community. There they were told by a local resident that the children are afraid to play outside due to settler harassment. At the time of the visit, a Palestinian woman was in the hospital under critical condition, and two young men were arrested after settler and military attacks on the community.
- On the 12 October 2022, ecumenical accompaniers visited El Gabon community, where residents experience settler harassment from two outposts nearby, and the community knows that they are being watched carefully. Ecumenical accompaniers had documented seeing a drone flying over the community during a previous visit. One community member said: "The settlers target one community at a time, and when the Palestinians are tired and they leave, the settlers move to the next community. They will not stop until we all leave."

ⁱ Jordan Valley. Ethnic Cleansing and Harassment of Palestinian Farmers. Adrian Guerin, June 2020. OrientXII

<https://orientxxi.info/magazine/jordan-valley-ethnic-cleansing-and-harassment-of-palestinian-farmers,3986>

ⁱⁱ Settler Violence = State Violence. 25 November 2021. B'tselem

<https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/dispossession-and-exploitation-israels-policy-jordan-valley-northern-dead-sea>

ⁱⁱⁱ Dispossession and Exploitation: Israel's Policy in the Jordan Valley and Northern Dead Sea. B'Tselem, May 2011

<https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/dispossession-and-exploitation-israels-policy-jordan-valley-northern-dead-sea>

iv UN OCHA Protection of Civilians Online Database

<https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>

v UN OCHA Demolition Database

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