



WORLD WEEK FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL, 2016

## VIOLENCE

### FACTS

- \* Between 1 October and 30 December 2015, 142 Palestinians were killed and 15,620 injured.
- \* Since 13 September 2015, 40 people have been killed in terrorist attacks and 527 people (including 4 Palestinians) injured. There have been 157 stabbing attacks (including 76 attempted attacks).

### GENERAL SITUATION

For the past year, Palestine and Israel have been engulfed in a wave of violence that has been referred to as a third “intifada” (uprising) by some commentators and as a “wave of terror” by the Israeli government. Since 13 September 2013 there has been a major spike in attacks between Palestinians and Israelis.

Israeli settler attacks (some would say terrorism) against Palestinians has surged in recent years<sup>1</sup>. The firebombing of the Dawabsha family in the Palestinian village of Duma in July 2015, which killed an 18-month child and his two parents, appeared to mark a serious escalation of the violence. That it would take months



Ahmad Dawabsha at Tel Hashomer hospital Tel Aviv

before Israeli authorities made any arrests in connection with this case fed into an escalating environment of tension and fear. At the same time peace talks were stalled and conflict over the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Temple Mount complex were escalating.

The 22 September 2015 killing of 17-year-old Hadeel al-Hashlamoun appears to have been the final spark that ignited this wave of violence. She was shot repeatedly by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in Hebron in controversial circumstances.

Hundreds of attacks have been carried out by Palestinians against Israeli civilian and military targets. These attacks have taken place inside Israel and within the occupied West Bank. The killing of Eitam and Naama Henkin by Hamas operatives while driving in the northern West Bank with their children in the back seat was particularly harrowing. In a sense not felt even during the Second Intifada, many Israelis no longer feel safe walking their own streets<sup>2</sup>.

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs catalogued 157 stabbing attacks, 100 shootings, 46 vehicular attacks and 1 vehicle bombing in this period resulting in 40 deaths and 521 injuries<sup>3</sup>.

Israeli security forces have responded to these (predominantly knife-) attacks, in many circumstances, by erecting significant barriers to movement within Israel and the West Bank (particularly in Jerusalem), and shooting to kill<sup>4</sup>. Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon was forced out of government soon after falling out with

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2012-08-18/rise-settler-terrorism>

<sup>2</sup> Robert M Danin, “Israel among the nations”, in *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2016, p. 28

<sup>3</sup> As of 31 July 2016: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Wave-of-terror-October-2015.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PS/SG\\_Report\\_FoM\\_Feb2016.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PS/SG_Report_FoM_Feb2016.pdf)

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu over the prosecution of <sup>1</sup> an Israeli soldier who shot a Palestinian after he had been incapacitated while attempting to carry out a knife attack on a group of Israeli soldiers. Minister Ya'alon backed Israeli army chiefs who sought to pursue a manslaughter charge against the soldier in question amidst calls for impunity<sup>5</sup>.

Between 1 October and 30 December 2015 142 Palestinians were killed and 15,620 injured<sup>6</sup> - the vast majority of casualties occurring in clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli military personnel.

### **CASE STUDY** (taken from *Ecumenical Accompanier, Emily, from the Hebron Team*)

On 1 July 2016, Sarah al- Hajuj Atrayera, 27, was shot dead at a checkpoint nearby Hebron's Ibrahimi mosque. [3] Israeli forces state that she attempted to stab a soldier. The incident took place the day after a 13 year-old Jewish girl was stabbed to death in her home in the nearby settlement, Kiryat Arba. The Palestinian assailant was killed at the scene. The Palestinians were appalled by this act of aggression which they say goes against Islam.

For some in the community there are strong negative impacts. Mahdi and Maha Abu Eisheh witnessed from their kitchen window the death of Abd al-Fattah Sharif, 21, controversially killed on March 24th 2016 by an Israeli soldier while lying wounded on the ground. The children are terrified to pass checkpoints, which they have to do twice to get to school. Their father, Bassam, has been trying to build their confidence but said they suffer from disturbed sleep.

In many cases, such as that of Abd al-Fattah, the Palestinians killed was reported to be in possession of a knife. In others, it was not so clear. What all of the cases had in common, however, was the use of lethal force by the Israeli forces. Amnesty International, called the incidents 'unlawful killings' or 'extrajudicial executions'. Article 6 of the ICCPR stipulates that deprivation of life is only permitted if others' lives are endangered.



Hebron H2-Soldier stops Palestinian man and children at checkpoint at Ibrahimi Mosque- Photo EAPPI/Emily

Abd al-Fattah's case sparked international outrage as a result, but it was not an isolated case. In many of Hebron's cases, those killed did not pose an immediate threat to life. Following media attention, the soldier that killed Abd al-Fattah was put on trial, but more often there is no investigation. The Israeli authorities consistently refuse to release CCTV footage despite international pressure. B'Tselem issued a statement last month in which it denounced the Israeli justice system: "the semblance of a functioning justice system allows Israeli officials to deny claims... that Israel does not

enforce the law on soldiers who harm Palestinians" but "an examination of the...military law enforcement system indicates that it makes no attempt to fulfil even [its] limited mandate".

Abd al-Fattah is only one example of medical assistance being withheld. Red Crescent director, Dr. Abed Rabbo Manasra, said that in all such incidents, Palestinian ambulances are refused passage, he reported that some were attacked en route. The paramedics in the Israeli ambulances on the scene, Dr Manasra said, are often ideological settlers. UK journalist Jonathan Cook writes: "These paramedics appear to be openly flouting internationally established principles of neutrality that all medical staff are supposed to observe

<sup>5</sup> [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ej\\_2015oct21\\_1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ej_2015oct21_1.pdf);

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-summons-yaalon-for-clarification-over-speech-on-idf-values/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/12/israeli-palestinians-injured/>

Article 32 of the 4th Geneva Convention also prohibits “omission leading to death, for example, deliberate refusal to give medical care”.

What makes Amnesty International identify some of these killings as ‘extrajudicial’? In cases where the assailant is no longer a lethal threat, killing cannot be justified by security but is driven by retribution on a perceived enemy, outside a legal framework. This is against Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights: the right to a fair trial. A former soldier from Breaking the Silence told us in his army training he was taught to see Palestinians as a threat. “If you see people as a threat, you take them out of the bracket of innocent people” he said, adding: “shoot to kill is not only the right thing to do, it is the brave thing to do”.

Many of the human rights violations arise from the fact that the civilian population of the West Bank is governed by military law and under military control. These unlawful killings are just another reminder of the human cost of the military occupation; an occupation that needs to end for a just peace to prevail.

### **CREDITS AND OTHER SOURCES**

- Full blog from EA Emily : <https://blog.eappi.org/2016/07/06/neutralising-threats-the-human-cost-of-military-occupation/>)
- For up-to-date facts on violence and human rights abuses in the Occupied Territories and Israel go to: [www.btselem.org/about\\_btselem](http://www.btselem.org/about_btselem) The Israeli Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
- More background of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel [www.eappi.org/en](http://www.eappi.org/en)
- Israeli soldiers talk about the Occupied Territories [www.breakingthesilence.org.il/](http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/)