



Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)

Jerusalem Women – Issues of Concern

Submission

May 2017

Submitted to: Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967

The Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling ([WCLAC](#)) is a Palestinian non-governmental organization established in 1991 and based in Ramallah and East Jerusalem. WCLAC aims to address the causes and consequences of gender-based violence within the community as well as the gender-specific effects of prolonged military occupation.

“All measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention...and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

United Nations Security Council resolution 465
Adopted 1 March 1980

Since 1967, the legal status of East Jerusalem as occupied territory has been authoritatively confirmed on multiple occasions by the UN Security Councilⁱ, the International Court of Justice (ICJ)ⁱⁱ and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).ⁱⁱⁱ Further, no state currently maintains an embassy in Jerusalem consistent with a policy of non-recognition of Israel’s unilateral annexation of the east of the City in accordance with the well-established principles of international law and the non-acquisition of territory through aggression.

Be that as it may, successive governments continue to anchor Israel’s control over East Jerusalem in a process that is making the resolution of the conflict based on a two state solution impossible and condemning future generations to a continuous cycle of violence. This June will mark 50 years since the start of Israel’s illegal annexation of East Jerusalem and the reality on the ground is getting worse for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in the city with the most vulnerable among them paying the largest cost.

During the period 1 May 2016 – 30 April 2017, WCLAC field researchers collected representative samples of testimonies from Palestinian women living in East Jerusalem focussing on the issues that most concern them. These issues include: building permits and house demolitions; settler violence and encroachment; police violence, night raids and arrests. During this period WCLAC has collected 30 testimonies and the common themes running through each one is a sense of insecurity and injustice arising out of the lack of accountability and the absence of a political solution. Below is a chart showing the distribution by type of incident followed by a table of evidence collected:

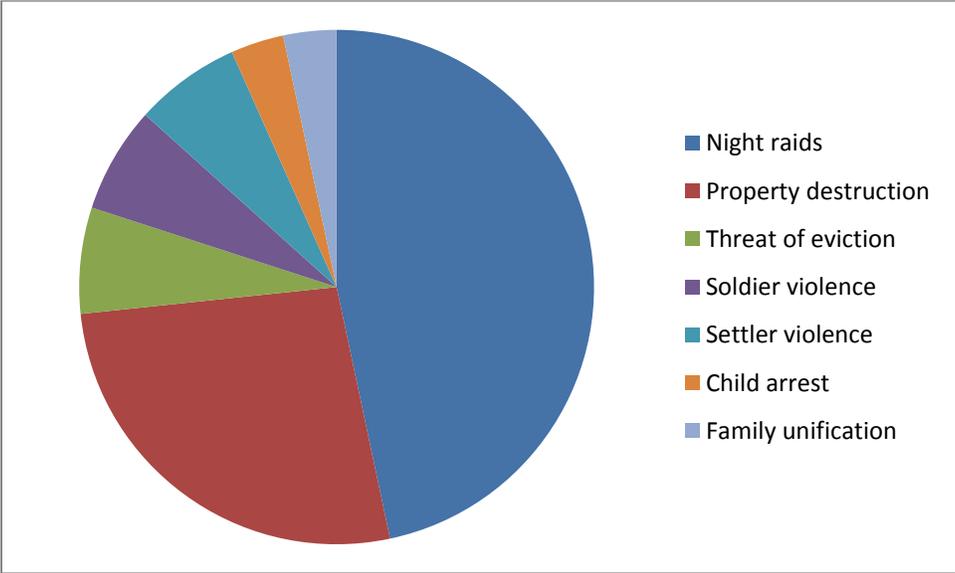


Chart 1: Distribution of evidence by type of incident

Table of Evidence Collected by WCLAC
1 May 2016 – 30 April 2017

	Name	Age	Location	Date of incident	Type of Incident
1	Testimony 1 Name Mahira M.	50	Al 'Isawiya	17 Apr 2016	Night raid
2	Name: Zahra Q.	51	Old City	2 Oct 2016	Night raid
3	Name: Ayda T.	62	Silwan	19 Jul 2016	Property destruction
4	Name: Shireen K.	31	Silwan	On-going	Family unification
5	Name: Shahd Q.	25	Silwan	25 Sep 2016	Property destruction
6	Name: Abeer W.	34	Silwan	20 Aug 2016	Threat of eviction
7	Name: Shireen H.	36	Silwan	18, 19 Jul 2016	Property destruction
8	Name: Manar Q.	33	Silwan	1 Dec 2016	Soldier violence
9	Name: Hania N.	45	Kafr 'Aqab	8 Feb 2017	Night raid
10	Name: Nafiza R.	26	Silwan	29 Mar 2017	Property destruction
11	Name: Basma D.	29	Kafr 'Aqab	8 Feb 2017	Night raid
12	Name: Nihad K.	63	Hizma	15 Feb 2017	Night raid
13	Name: Hind	58	Hizma	15 Feb 2017	Property destruction

	A.				
14	Name: Raghad H.	32	Silwan	29 Mar 2017	Property destruction
15	Name: Suhier R.	44	Ath Thuri	19 Sep 2016	Property destruction
16	Name: Rula R.	36	Silwan	17 Dec 2016	Night raid
17	Name: Nora Q.	36	Silwan	19 Feb 2017	Night raid
18	Name: Manal N.	45	Ras al-Amud	17 May 2016	Night raid
19	Name: Badrie h J.	48	Ath Thuri	27 Sep 2016	Soldier violence
20	Name: Badrie h L.	48	Ath Thuri	6 Oct 2016	Night raid
21	Name: Manar N.	33	Silwan	15 Dec 2016	Settler violence
22	Name: Rula B.	36	Silwan	15 Dec 2016	Settler violence
23	Name: Shireen H.A.	36	Silwan	15 Dec 2016	Night raid
24	Name: Mufida B.	58	Ath Thuri	20 Dec 2016	Threat of eviction
25	Name: Manal N.A.	45	Ras al-Amud	12 Feb 2017	Child arrest
26	Name: Evelen A.	42	Kafr 'Aqab	4 Feb 2017	Night arrest
27	Name: Sawsan K.	45	Kafr 'Aqab	4 Feb 2017	Night arrest
28	Name: Anahee d R.	52	Ath Thuri	2 Jan 2017	Property destruction
29	Name:	62	Kafr 'Aqab	9 Feb 2017	Night raid

	Wijdan B.				
30	Name: Wala J.	27	Kafir 'Aqab	9 Feb 2017	Night raid

I. Building permits, home demolitions and threat of eviction

“It was painful for me to see how much stress and agony my husband was going through, being on the edge of losing our house. I can never feel safe anymore; I and my family are living under continuous fear of losing our home and we feel desperate because nothing could be done to save the house. The idea of demolishing the house that I have lived in and had all my memories in haunted me.” Mufida B.

Whilst the population in East Jerusalem has grown significantly since 1967, only 13 per cent of the land is zoned for Palestinian construction, much of which is already built on. This leaves very little opportunity for orderly and planned growth in Palestinian neighbourhoods and leads to overcrowding with a housing density of 11.9 square metres per person. By way of contrast, 35 per cent of East Jerusalem has been confiscated and zoned for the use of illegal Israeli settlements with a house density of 23.8 square metres per person, almost twice as much as that allocated for Palestinians.^{iv} Palestinians wishing to build on the 13 per cent of land zoned for this purpose must still apply for building permits from the Israeli authorities. These permits are expensive and notoriously difficult to obtain. The result is a significant level of “unauthorised” construction in order to accommodate natural growth in the Palestinian neighbourhoods as the community has no realistic expectation that an adequate number of permits will be granted.

What is clear from the testimonies collected by WCLAC during this period is that the mere threat of home demolition has an almost paralysing effect on the residents causing them to live in constant fear and insecurity. Further, once a demolition order has been issued, many Palestinian families spend thousands, if not tens of thousands of shekels on lawyers and fines in an attempt to save their properties. This economic burden frequently impoverishes the community forcing families to move in with their in-laws, or in some cases, to abandon Jerusalem altogether and move to the West Bank or to emigrate.

II. Settler violence and encroachment

“Attacks by settlers occur on a regular basis, which makes it hard for us to feel safe, not even in our homes. I even fear to fall asleep lest the settlers come; they usually verbally harass us, sometimes they would throw garbage in front of our house.” Rula B.

East Jerusalem currently includes the old city and 71 square kilometres of land to the east which was designated as part of Jerusalem by the Israeli authorities in 1967. The area has a population of approximately 500,000 of which 60 per cent are Palestinians. The remaining 40 per cent are Israeli citizens living in settlements constructed after 1967 in violation of international law.^v The natural and

foreseeable consequence of inserting large numbers of civilians into a conflict zone in violation of international law is to increase tension and resentment.

III. Police violence, night raids and arrests

“At around 3:00 a.m. the soldiers left the house; they used the roof to monitor the area and then left. The soldier didn’t tell us why they were searching the house and they didn’t give us any written documents. Losing my children is the most terrifying thing that can happen to me; I worry about them a lot especially from getting hurt by the Israeli soldiers. I can never feel safe or stable in such an occupied country where soldiers can enter our houses and disturb us any time they wan ”. Wijdan B.

Not surprisingly, there is a close correlation between settlement activity in East Jerusalem and police violence, night raids and arrests due to the inevitable increase in tension that this causes.

Time and again, women report in their testimonies how they fear that their children will be arrested and beaten simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. As tensions in the city rise, clashes can occur without warning, particularly in proximity to the Al Aqsa Mosque, and any Palestinian in the area is at risk of being beaten or arrested.

Since 2014, WCLAC has collected testimonies from women with firsthand experiences of Israeli military night raids on their family homes. A common theme throughout the testimonies is the sense of fear and terror created by these night raids. Most occur between 2:00am and 4:00am and commence with aggressive banging at the front door. Soldiers in full battle gear enter the house and gather family members into one room while the house is searched.

“Ibrahim still suffers from his injury. He also lost his appetite and fears to leave the house even to go to school. I also lost my appetite and I find it hard to sleep. I live in constant worry.”Badrieh J.

IV. Annexure: Evidence collected by WCLAC

Testimony 1

Name Mahira M.
Age: 50
Location: Al'Isawiya, Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 17 April 2016

On 17 April 2016, about 22 Israeli soldiers, accompanied by a service dog, raid the house of 50 year old woman from Al'Isawiya in Jerusalem at 2:30 a.m. and deliver an arrest warrant for her son.

Mahira is a 50 year old mother from Al'Isawiya near Jerusalem.

“On 17 April 2016, at around 2:30 a.m., I woke up terrified to the sound of loud banging at the front door, it felt like the door was about to fall off its hinges. My son Jameel (22) answered and about 22 Israeli soldiers accompanied by a dog entered the house.”

“As soon as they entered the house the soldiers beat Jameel. I tried to intervene and stood between the soldiers and my son, trying to stop them. The commander yelled at me then handed an arrest warrant summoning my other son Murad (27), for questioning. He told us Murad had to hand himself over to the police at Al-Maskubieh the following day. Luckily, Murad wasn't home that night.”

“The soldiers ordered us to gather in a room and five soldiers stood to guard us. The other soldiers searched the house and caused a lot of damage to the furniture. They threw our clothes and kitchen utensils on the floor. The dog jumped on our beds and sniffed around the house. About 2 hours later the soldiers left the house.”

“The following day soldiers arrested Murad from the medical center as he was lying on the bed taking his medication. The soldiers showed up and asked Murad if the blue bag next to his bed was his. When Murad said yes, the soldiers immediately tied his hands to the back with plastic ties and took him away.”

“Our lawyer informed us that Murad was detained at Al Maskubieh police station. He had a court hearing on 25 April and the hearing was adjourned until 9 May 2016. We were not allowed to attend Murad's hearing but I managed to see him from a distance as they brought him into the court room. We haven't yet received a charge sheet, nearly 10 days after his arrest, and we still don't know the reason for Murad's arrest.”

Testimony 2

Name: Zahra Q.
Age: 51 years old
Location: Old City of Jerusalem
Nature of Incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of Incident: 2 October 2016

On 2 October 2016, Israel police raid the house of 51 year old woman from the Old City in Jerusalem at 1:45 a.m. and detain her for a few hours and later hand her an exclusion order banning her from entering the Mosque.

Zahra is a 51 year old woman who lives on her own in the Old City of Jerusalem and works as a nurse at the clinic inside Al-Aqsa Mosque.

“On 2 October 2016, at around 1:45 a.m., I arrived home after a family gathering at my brother’s house. As I was changing my clothes I heard unusual sounds outside the house. I looked out the window and saw Israeli policemen. A short while later they pointed their flash lights into my house.”

“Shortly afterwards I heard loud banging at the front door. When I asked who it was, someone responded telling me to open up. I asked to be given a minute to put my clothes on but the person responded that I should open the door immediately.”

“I quickly got dressed and when I opened the door I saw about 15 Israeli policemen accompanied by a woman in civilian clothes. The woman entered the house first and asked me if I lived alone and I said yes. Then she told me to show my Identity Card and I did.”

“The woman took my Identity Card and told me I was under arrest but didn’t give me a reason. In the meantime my brother who lives nearby heard the commotion and came to check on me but the policemen prevented him from entering the house. My brother had an argument with them as he tried to enter the house and I lost my temper and started to yell and shout at them. Then they held me to try to control me and we ended up pushing each other, but I wasn’t hurt.”

“The police made more arrests that night and I was taken to a police station inside the Old City together with another man who was arrested at the same time as me. About 15 minutes later I was transferred to another police station near Jaffa Gate.”

“At the Police station at Jaffa gate, the police officer wanted to scare me and told me I was arrested upon orders from the chief commander of the area who instructed them to exclude me from Al Aqsa Mosque where I work as a nurse at the clinic there. They accused me of being a trouble maker.”

“At around 3:30 a.m., I was released. My brother was waiting for me outside the police station and I went home with him.”

“On that same morning at around 10:30 a.m., a summons from the police was delivered to my house. I went to the police station and the police handed me an exclusion order from Al Aqsa Mosque. The exclusion order was valid from 2 October 2016 until 2 December 2016 and I was accused of disturbing law and order.”

“This exclusion order which was handed to others too comes at the time of Israeli religious holidays so that the settlers can perform their religious rituals in the Old City around the Mosque.”

“Working as a nurse at the clinic inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque means a lot to me and it is a terrible feeling to be able to see the Mosque from my house and yet be banned from entering it.”

Testimony 3

Name: Ayda T.
Age: 62
Location: Silwan
Nature of incident: Property destruction
Date of incident: 19 July 2016

On 19 July 2016, Israel forces surround the house of 62 year old widow from Silwan at 4:00am and demolish a shack used by her son as an auto repair shop without notice.

Ayda is a 62 year old widow from Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“In 2010, my son built a shack on a small piece of land that we own next to our house. He wanted to use it as an auto repair shop to supplement our income. For over 4 years, my son tried to obtain a permit for the shack and paid 100,000 shekels in fees but the Municipality did not issue a building permit because of alleged zoning reasons.”

“On 19 July 2016, at around 4:00am, I woke up to the sound of commotion outside the house. I went to see what was going on and saw a huge number of Israeli police and soldiers accompanied by a bulldozer surrounding the house. I was terrified of the scene and felt pain in my stomach. One policeman greeted me and I asked him what they were doing here as I was worried they had come to arrest someone. The policeman ignored me.”

“Shortly afterwards a bulldozer started to knock down the shack without explanation and without prior notice. We were not given time to remove anything from the shack and all the contents got buried under the rubble. Our financial loss was huge.”

“Our neighbors woke up to the noise and gathered in the area but the policemen pushed them back into their homes. The demolition went on until around 7:00am and the bulldozer moved on to demolish our neighbours’ structures. We all stood by and did nothing; we were scared that if we resisted tear gas would be fired at us.”

“One day earlier about 10 Israeli policemen raided my house at 1:30am and arrested my two sons Karim (28) and Oday (18) without giving any explanation.”

“I live in constant fear. The arrest of my two sons and the demolition of the shack came as a total shock to me as there was no prior warning.”

Testimony 4

Name: Shireen K.
Age: 31 years old
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Family reunification
Date of incident: On going

Shireen is a 31 year old mother of four children who lives with her family in Silwan in East Jerusalem without the necessary documents which the authorities have not issued yet.

“I got married in 2001, when I was 16 years old, at first I lived in Hebron city for one month then my husband and I moved to Bab Al-Magharbeh neighborhood in Jerusalem at Tareq’s aunt’s house, where I lived for eight years and had my four children.”

“I was able to move to Jerusalem only because I obtained a renewable three-month permit; this permit limited me to the Jerusalem area, and I was only allowed to use one military check point called “Al-Nafaq”.

“For about nine years I lived in Jerusalem in fear; I couldn’t apply for family reunification because I was younger than 25 years old, thus I was not free to move around.”

“I missed many of the family occasions at my parents’ house in Hebron, and also my family couldn’t visit me because they didn’t have a permit to enable them to cross the military check points. Because I wasn’t a Jerusalem ID holder I was not allowed to obtain a driving license or to work inside Israeli.”

“Whenever I or any of my children became sick, and my permit was being renewed, I couldn’t even leave the house and go to the nearest clinic, fearing of being caught by the Israeli police without a permit.”

“On 24 November 2016, as I became 25 years old, my husband and I appointed a lawyer and applied for family reunification at the ministry of interior in Jerusalem.”

“I was required to submit the following papers; a copy of my birth certificate and my children’s birth certificates, my marriage contract, my ID, my husband’s ID and many other documents like water and electricity bills to prove that the center of my life was in Jerusalem.”

“I was told by the Israeli ministry of interior that they would respond to my application in six months. During this period I had to make sure to keep applying for a permit to cross the checkpoints.”

“Six months later the response was that my application is still under review. However we continued to follow up the process of our paper at the ministry of interior in Jerusalem; and every time I go there with my husband I become nervous and afraid.”

“Also I had to stay home waiting for a sudden visit by the national insurance employee so they can check and make sure that I live in Jerusalem. In less than two years I had more than 10 sudden visits from them and the process is still going.”

“Up until now the family reunification procedure has cost us around 20,000NIS; the lawyer payment, paper work and issuing permits. I still have all the ministry of interior vouchers.”

“I currently don’t have a permit, which makes me imprisoned inside my own house. At the end of the month I have to check with the ministry of interior and hopefully this time I will have good news.”

“I feel that I am a stranger living in my own country, I don’t have the most basic rights of living with my family and moving freely.”

“For many years now the only thing that I think of is obtaining a temporary residency permit; all because I have a Palestinian ID and my husband has a Jerusalem ID. I feel exhausted and worn out.”

Testimony 5

Name: Shahd Q.
Age: 25
Location: Ein Al-Luzah, Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property
Date of incident: 25 September 2016

On 25 September 2016, Israeli officials oversee the self-demolition of an annex which belonged to the family of 25 year old woman from Silwan in East Jerusalem.

Shahd is a 25 year old woman who lives with her family in Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“On 29 August 2016, at around 9:00 a.m., I was having breakfast with my parents and my brother Oday (19) and the front door was open when we were suddenly surprised to see three employees from Jerusalem municipality in uniform. The employees entered the house without our permission.”

“We were all shocked to see the municipality employees and my father and brother rushed to the front yard and closed the door behind them so that my mother and I could put on proper clothes.”

“I got dressed and went outside where I saw one of the municipality employees talking disrespectfully to my father and pointing to the small annex saying it was built without a permit. The employee did not allow anyone to talk and asked us to show him our identification cards.”

“Another employee took pictures of the annex, from inside and outside while another employee handed my father a demolition order and asked him to check out the order with the municipality. The employee asked my father to sign the document but he refused.”

“My mother was terrified but she kept calm. I felt my heartbeat increased; because the soldiers were trying to provoke my father and Oday by yelling at them, and I was afraid that they could get hurt so I kept calming down my father and Oday.”

“My father went twice to the municipality, but nobody was available to meet with him. He would wait for hours only to be told to come back later.”

“On 03 September 2016, at around 10:30 a.m. we heard a knock on the front door. My brother answered and it was an employee from the municipality. The Employee wanted to check the annex again, and took more pictures.”

“The employee wanted to know why we didn’t go to the Municipality to sort things out and my brother explained exactly what had happened to my father when he went. The employee handed my brother another demolition order and asked him to check out the order with Jerusalem municipality.”

“On 12 September 2016, my father appointed a lawyer who in turn followed up the case with the Municipality. The lawyer told my father that we had a hearing on 25 September 2016, at 9:00 a.m.”

“Only my father and the lawyer attended the hearing of 25 September 2016; the accusation was building without a permit, and the judge noted that the municipality sent us a warrant, with pictures of the external room from the outside, through the mail to check out the municipality, but the lawyer assured the judge that we didn’t receive anything.

“The court ordered us to pay 24,000 shekels fine and in return the Municipality would issue a building permit. Alternatively, the annex would be demolished and we would have to cover the demolition costs which could go up to 90,000 shekels. The third choice the court gave us was that my father demolishes the annex within 24 hours.”

“On 27 September 2016, at around 10:00a.m., my father and brother started to demolish the annex while the Municipality employees watched and supervised. It was very hard to demolish one’s own property, and it cost us a lot of money. Also physically it was hard work. It took my father and brother all night to turn the annex into a pile of rubble.”

“On 30 September 2016, at around 11:30 a.m., the municipality employees came yet again and to make sure the annex was demolished. They took pictures of the rubble and I felt disgusted by the whole thing.”

Testimony 6

Name: Abeer W.
Age: 34
Location: Ein Al-Luzah, Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Threat of eviction
Date of incident: 20 August 2016

On 20 August 2016, Israeli municipality officials accompanied by the police deliver a warning to Abeer’s family for allegedly building without a permit.

Abeer lives with her husband and their 3 children aged 11 – 13 in Silwan neighbourhood in East Jerusalem

“On 20 August 2016, at around 8:00 a.m., I woke up to the sound of very scary and loud banging at the front door of our building. I was shivering of fear, my children remained asleep while I woke my husband up then we both went downstairs and met my mother in law who opened the front door.”

“I saw two municipality employees, wearing white shirts and dark blue trousers, and four Israeli soldiers, one police car and one policewoman standing outside. It was a Saturday and we were surprised to see the Municipality employee show up on their day off.”

“The Municipality employee took my husband’s Identification Card number, and handed him a warning for building without a permit and made him sign a paper as proof of receipt.”

“Although Murad tried to explain that we had applied for a building permit, but the employee insisted that we had to follow up with the municipality. Then the Municipality employee along with a policeman took pictures of the house from inside and outside.”

“The following day, Murad informed the family lawyer who in turn notified us that a court hearing was scheduled on 13 September 2016 at 9:00a.m. Murad and the lawyer attended the hearing and presented official documents that proved our case. The hearing was adjourned.”

“This was the first time that we received a warning for building without a permit, although we were surprised by this action as Murad had applied for a permit back in January 2000.”

“So far, we have paid over 80,000NIS, including lawyer’s fees, and we were fined 20,000NIS on the day of the hearing.”

“For the last 16 years each time we applied for a building permit our application was denied, and each time it was denied we appealed. We kept appealing hoping that at some point we would obtain a building permit.”

“We could have ignored the process and not paid all these amounts of money, but we chose to keep following up the case because we feel that we belong to the area that we live in, in Silwan.”

“My family and I feel constantly insecure and unsafe, knowing the municipality might come at any time and demolish our home.”

Testimony 7

Name: Shireen H.
Age: 36
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property
Date of incident: 18, 19 July 2016

On 18 and 19 July 2016, Israeli officials raid the house of 36 year old mother from Silwan multiple times and search it without explanation, push her daughter to the ground and cause damage to the furniture, before demolishing an adjacent structure.

Shireen is a 36 year old mother of six children aged 19 - 9 from the neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“On 18 July 2016, at around 1:00 a.m. we received a phone call from our neighbors alerting us that Israeli policemen were surrounding our house. Seconds later I heard loud banging at the front door. My husband Arafat rushed to answer.”

“A large number of policemen and Special Forces were standing outside the door and on the staircase; together with about five intelligence officers, and about 15 other officials. They searched the house, without explanation and then left.”

“At around noon on the same day, as I came back home, I saw a large number of Israeli policemen, hundreds of them, surrounding the house. Some were installing cameras while others filled the streets and the neighbors’ roof tops.”

“I went into my house and told my children to get ready to go outside, moments later I heard loud banging at the front door. My son Mohammed answered and asked the officer if they had any written documents. The officer responded with a no. I told the officer that my husband wasn’t home and therefore I could not let him in, but he told me that he didn’t need my permission and that he was going to search the house.”

“A large number of police, intelligence, and Special Forces officers entered my house and started to search it; they caused damages to the furniture, they search as if they were looking for something but they did not tell us what they were looking for.”

“When Mohammed asked the policemen to take it easy while searching the house, a policeman attacked him and beat him. My daughter Tamara (13) wanted to defend her brother but a policeman pushed her away and she fell to the ground, then a policeman threw a piece of wood at her but luckily it didn’t hit her.”

“My son Shadi came back home and was surprised to see Israeli policemen inside our house, the minute he got inside the house four soldiers held him and started to beat him without justification.”

“I felt totally helpless as I stood aside and watched my children being beaten in front of my eyes. Then the policemen made me take them around the house, so they could search it.”

“When they were done searching, they arrested my sons, Shadi and Mohammed, without telling us why and without giving us any written documents. Then they told us my sons were accused of obstructing their work.”

“At about 9:00 pm on the same day, again, I heard loud banging at the door. My husband turned on the lights and opened the door. There were 8 Israeli officers. My husband did not allow them in, and they left.”

“At around 4:45 a.m. my husband and I woke up to unusual sounds in the neighborhood. We looked out the balcony and saw Israeli officials demolishing our storerooms which my husband rents out to earn us some money. They had two bulldozers and military jeeps and two GMC cars.”

“My husband ran outside but the officials did not allow him to get near the site. One of the soldiers pointed his flash light at me while I was still standing on the balcony and ordered me back into the house, but I refused. The demolition process started at 5:00 a.m. and was over by 7:00 a.m.”

“My sons were released within 24 hours. Over the past 5 years we have received multiple warnings for building without permits. My family and I feel stressed and terrified that the Israeli officials might come back and demolish the house that we live in. It is almost impossible to obtain building permits; that is why we are left without a legal option.”

Testimony 8

Name: Manar Q.
Age: 33
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Arrest/soldier violence
Date of incident: 1 December 2016

On 1 December 2016, mother of a 13 year old boy finds out that her son was detained by Israeli police as he walked home from school. He was later accused of throwing stones and was put under house arrest for 5 days.

Manar is a 33 year old mother of 4 children aged 7 – 17 from the neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“On 1 December 2016, at around 12:30 p.m., I was home waiting for my son Mahdi (13) to come back home from school at the usual time. I started to worry when Mahdi didn’t show up. At around 2:20 p.m., I went out to the neighborhood and asked his schoolmates who told me Mahdi had left school on time.”

“I informed my husband then called Mahdi’s teacher, the teacher told me that the Israeli police arrested a group of children in the area around two hours ago. I became extremely worried and afraid; I called my husband and at around 5:00 p.m. we both met in front of the police station, which is located in Salah Eddin Street in East Jerusalem.”

“I was shocked to see other parents gathered in front of the police station, some had been waiting since 2:00 p.m.; they too suspected that their children had been arrested. The police won’t communicate with us and kept us outside the police station.”

“The parents appointed a lawyer and he was able to enter the police station and then informed the parents with the names of the children in detention; Mahdi’s name was on the list.”

“At around 6:30 p.m., my husband and I were shocked when the lawyer told us the children were going to be held for 3 days for questioning and advised us to go home.”

“We all refused to leave although the weather was extremely cold. At around 9:30 p.m. the lawyer came out again and asked all of us, the parents, to go inside the police station; we were told that the children were accused of throwing stones at a police car, then we had to sign a document committing us to keeping our children under house arrest for 5 days or else pay 5000 Shekels fine.”

“Shortly afterwards Mahdi came out of the police station shivering and exhausted; he didn’t say a word all the way home. Later on he told me that a policewoman was aggressive and forceful as she arrested him. She forced him face down to the ground while yelling at him. She tied his hands to the back with plastic ties causing pain to Mahdi.”

“Mahdi explained further that during interrogation he had two interrogators who accused him of throwing stones at the police car and wanted names of other boys involved in the incident; Mahdi denied this accusation and had no names to give, he clarified that he was going back home from school.”

“The interrogators disregarded Mahdi’s statements and kept treating Mahdi badly; they kept him in his undershirt in a cold room then ask him whether he was feeling cold. The interrogators threw out the content of Mahdi’s school bag then made him put the objects back inside the bag.”

“I took days off work to pay close attention to Mahdi during his five days house arrest. By monitoring his changed behavior I got extremely worried about him; especially that the police was roaming around the house constantly during this period, and Mahdi was so terrified that he wouldn’t even look outside the window.”

“During the detention period Mahdi slept during the day and watched television at night. He had no appetite for food. It was painful for me to see my son suffering so much; I hardly ever see Mahdi smile anymore.”

“Back in August Mahdi was arrested by the police as he was stopped by the police in the street while he was on his way to the grocery store. At that time my sister, who is my neighbor, called me and told me to bring my ID and come out to rescue Mahdi. “

“When I arrived to the scene I saw five police officers; one was holding Mahdi and my sister was trying to prevent the police from arresting him. The police accused Mahdi of throwing stones, and he was yelling and insulting us using rude words.”

“I insisted to go with Mahdi to the police station because he was still underage; the police made me sit in the back seat of the car and had Mahdi sit on my lap. The police station is only five minutes away from where I live but the police car was roaming around the city for about half an hour. And the police was trying to provoke me and Mahdi by swearing at Palestinians as the police car passed them on the street.”

“My son hadn’t done anything wrong. His arrest is unjustified and is designed to frighten and intimidate him.”

Testimony 9

Name: Hania N.
Age: 45
Location: Kafr 'Aqab
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 8 February 2017

On 8 February 2017, Israeli soldiers raid the house of 45 year old mother from Kafr 'Aqab at 3:00am and detain her son after pushing her to the ground and causing damage to the furniture.

Hania is a 45 year old mother of two children aged 13 and 22 from Kafr 'Aqab in East Jerusalem

“On 8 February 2017, at around 3:00 a.m. , my husband and I woke up to the sound of a loud explosion. I got dressed quickly then we all went to the living room where I was shocked to see about 20 Israeli soldiers in full military gear spread all over the house. Some of them had camouflage mud on their faces. I then realised they had blown up the front door and entered the house.”

“A soldier asked me and my daughter Razan (13) to enter bedroom; I refused so he pushed me and I fell on the ground, I was hurt but I had to stand up and enter the room, Razan was shivering of fear.”

“I didn’t quite know what was going on in the house while I was in the room but hen the commander came in and told me to say goodbye to my son Mohammad (22) because they wanted to arrest him. I went outside where I broke down in tears when I saw Mohammed’s hands tied behind his back with plastic ties.”

“I hugged Mohammed goodbye, then the soldiers took him and left the house without allowing me or any of my family members to follow them outside. The soldiers didn’t give me any written documents or even tell me why they arrested Mohammed or where they were taking him.”

“When I looked around I realized that the soldiers had searched the house as I saw the damage they had caused to the furniture, the place looked like a mess.”

“In the morning, my husband appointed a lawyer who in turn found out that Mohammed was detained at Al Maskubieh police station. That was all we knew.”

“It was a terrifying experience and I still don’t know the fate of my son. I was in shock when the soldiers pushed me to the ground and felt humiliated and I still feel pain in my right arm 2 days after the incident.”

Testimony 10

Name: Nafiza R.
Age: 26 years old
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property
Date of incident: 29 March 2017

On 29 March 2017, about 100 Israeli soldiers surround the house of 26-year-old mother from Silwan and give the family 10 minutes to evacuate the house before demolishing it.

Nafiza is a 26-year-old mother of four children from Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“My name is Nafiza and I am 26 years old. I live in Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem with my husband Imam and our four children aged 1 to 9. I live with my family in an independent 100 square meters spaced house, made of two floors; it has three bedrooms, a living room, a bathroom and a kitchen. Our house was built in 2004; we didn’t apply for a building permit; because when Jerusalemites, especially those who live in Silwan area, submit building permit applications to the Israeli authorities, they are either rejected or are referred to endless court proceedings which are very costly.”

“In 2014 Israeli police handed my husband a demolition order written in Hebrew. Imam hired a lawyer to follow up the case, we paid the lawyer 10.000USD to try and revoke the demolition order but his efforts were not successful.”

“On 15 March 2017 the lawyer received another order also written in Hebrew, from the Israeli municipal authorities again for lack of a building permit. On 29 March 2017, at around 4:30 a.m. my husband woke me up telling me someone was knocking at the front door. When he answered we were surprised to see more than 100 Israeli soldiers surrounding the house. They were accompanied by 4 military jeeps and a bulldozer.”

“The commander ordered us out of the house and informed us of their decision to demolish the house. I went crazy when I heard the commander’s orders; I couldn’t comprehend what he had said. My husband asked the commander to get some details but the commander told us they were going to demolish the house within 10 minutes.”

“I woke my children up and got them dressed then we all went outside the house and stood in the street. I had a nervous breakdown, feeling helpless as I and my family sat on the ground watching our own house being demolished.”

“The soldiers prevented us from taking any of our belongings outside the house; only some soldiers took out some furniture and left most of it inside the house, then the bulldozer started to knock down walls.”

“My children were terrified and started to cry. I was torn apart trying to hold my tears back and to show strength in front of my children. I tried to make them feel safe but to no avail. At around 6:30 a.m., the soldiers finished the demolition process and they withdrew from the area. Then our neighbors came to check on us and to support us. I currently live with my family at my parents’ house until we find another place.”

Testimony 11

Name: Basma D.
Age: 29
Location: Kafr 'Aqab
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 8 February 2017

On 10 February 2017, about 15 soldiers break into the house of 29 year old mother from Kafr 'Aqab at around 3:00am without making noise and detain her husband without explanation.

Basma is a 29 year old mother of 2 children aged 2 and 4 from Kafr 'Aqab in East Jerusalem.

“On 8 February 2017, at around 3:00 a.m., I woke up to a strange sound inside the house. I woke my husband up and we both went to the living room where we were shocked to see about 15 soldiers in full military gear inside the house. The soldiers used a device that removes the hinges off the door without making any noise. I was shivering of fear especially because this was my first experience of a night raid.”

“My husband and I sat in the living room while three soldiers aimed their guns at us. The remaining soldiers searched the house without causing any damages.”

“About 15 minutes later, the commander asked for my husband’s identity card. Then the commander ordered the soldiers to arrest Samer. The soldiers tied my husband’s hands to the back with plastic ties then took him outside the house without explaining the reasons for his arrest and without presenting any written documents. The soldiers didn’t allow me to follow them outside the house.”

“I called my father in law who in turn contacted an NGO. The NGO found out that my husband was detained at Al Maskubieh police station.”

“I am very worried about my husband’s fate and my children ask about him all the time. I hope he will be released very soon.”

Testimony 12

Name: Nihad K.
Age: 63
Location: Hizma, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property destruction
Date of incident: 15 February 2016

On 15 February 2017, a family in a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem are forced to demolish their own house for lack of a building permit after the authorities threatened to demolish it over their heads if they didn't.

Nihad is a 63 year old woman from Hizma in East Jerusalem.

“On 14 February 2017, at around 4:00 p.m. my husband and I were sitting in our courtyard, when two Israeli jeeps pulled over and about 10 soldiers in full military gear stepped out. The commander approached us and told us we had to demolish our house, or else they were going to demolish it and make us pay the costs. The soldiers left without giving us any written documents and without clarifying the reason for requesting the demolition.”

“The following day, at around 8:00 a.m. about 10 military jeeps showed up to check on the house and to see whether we had demolished it or not. This time the commander hung a piece of paper at the door with a heading in Arabic saying “house demolition”. The rest of the document was in Hebrew which we don't understand.”

“The commander explained that the house required a building permit which we did not obtain at the time when we built it about a year ago. My family did not even bother to apply for a permit knowing that the authorities will deny it as they normally do for many residents of East Jerusalem who apply for such permits.”

“Then the commander threatened my husband that if he didn't demolish the house himself they would demolish over our heads. I felt drained and was about to lose my mind as the thought of my house being demolished came to my mind. I started to think and worry about where I should go and where to live.”

“About an hour after the soldiers had left, my husband and some relatives moved the furniture outside then started to knock down the brick walls using tools and a jack hammer. We knew there was no other choice. It was extremely hard to knock down walls but still possible. We decided to demolish our house right away because we knew no matter what we did or even if we appealed in the courts and paid the fines and fees, the demolition was going to take place.”

“I was very sad during the demolition; I worked hard to build my house and now I lost it in the blink of an eye. I feel frustrated and my husband and I have no home anymore.”

“At around 4:00p.m., on 15 February 2017, the soldiers came back again to check on the house; we had only one wall left and the soldiers had come with a bulldozer. The soldiers stayed for

about an hour, during which time clashes broke out between them and some men in the neighborhood, but thankfully, no one was hurt.”

“My husband and I have since moved into my son in law’s house which is quite inconvenient for us and him.”

Testimony 13

Name: Hind A.
Age: 58
Location: Hizma, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property (Home demolition)
Date of incident: 15 February 2017

On 15 February 2017, Israeli authorities hand a demolition order to the family of 58 year old woman from Hizma in East Jerusalem and force them to demolish their house themselves.

Hind is a 58 year old mother from the village of Hizma in East Jerusalem.

“On 15 February 2017, at around 8:00a.m., my husband and I were home when we heard loud banging at the front door. When my husband answered he found soldiers standing by the door. My house was surrounded by about 10 military jeeps and more than 20 soldiers in full military gear.”

“The soldiers handed my husband a house demolition order; the order was written in Hebrew but only the headline was hand written in Arabic and it only said “house demolition. The soldiers notified us that we had to demolish the house on that same day because we didn’t have a building permit. 15 minutes later the soldiers left the house. I was shocked to receive a demolition order, especially that this was the first time that we receive one; I broke down and felt helpless.”

“We didn’t apply for a permit because we knew at the time our application would be eventually rejected, just as they did to many other Jerusalemites who apply for permits.”

“At around 12:00p.m., the same group of soldiers came back to check if we had demolished the house. When they found it still standing they threatened my husband to demolish it over our heads and that we had until 4:00 p.m. to demolish it. The soldiers said this and left.”

“My husband and I surrendered to the fact that no matter what we try to do the house will be demolished; even a lawyer wouldn’t be able to do anything.”

“My husband and I, with the help of some neighbors, moved the furniture outside and started to knock down the brick walls. It was exhausting but we managed to demolish it using manual tools and a Jack hammer.”

“I was terribly sad and had mixed feelings of loss and fear; I lost the house I worked hard to establish and now my family will be homeless.”

“At 4:00 p.m. the soldiers came back. About 10 military jeeps and a bulldozer arrived and knocked down the remaining wall.”

“The soldiers remained for about an hour; during which clashes started between the men of our town and the soldiers, the soldiers fired stun grenade and tear gas at us. I inhaled tear gas and fell

to the ground feeling extremely tired. The soldiers left the house around 5:00 p.m. after making sure that my house was turned into pile of rubble.”

Testimony 14

Name: Raghad H.
Age: 32
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property destruction
Date of incident: 29 March 2017

On 29 March 2017, about 100 Israeli soldiers surround the house of 32-year-old mother of 6 children aged 8 to 14 from Silwan and demolish her house without prior notice.

Raghad is a 32-year-old mother from the neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“Since 2014 we started to receive home demolition warrants from the Israeli authorities. We hired a lawyer, and paid over 10000USD in fees but the lawyer could not revoke the demolition order.”

“On 15 March 2017, our lawyer told us that the authorities sent us another demolition order which was written in Hebrew. The reason for the demolition warrant was lack of a building permit. We never applied for a building permit because we were certain that the authorities would deny our application, just as they do with so many other Jerusalemites.”

“On 29 March 2017, at around 4:30a.m., I woke up to the sound of loud banging at the front door. I followed my husband who went to answer and we were both shocked to see about 100 soldiers in full military gear surrounding our house. We also saw four military jeeps and a bulldozer. The commander told my husband to ask everyone to get out because they had come to demolish it.”

“We were not given any prior notice. We were shocked yet we had to follow orders. I went inside the house to wake up my children while my husband remained at the door talking to the commander.”

“My husband and I and our children stood outside by the main street; it was very painful for me to watch the house that I’ve been living in since 2004 being destroyed in front of my eyes. My children were by my side crying, terrified.”

“The commander didn’t give us a demolition order or tell us why they were going to demolish the house; they just proceeded. I couldn’t hold my tears back.”

“The commander didn’t allow me or my husband to bring out any of our clothes or other possessions. Around 20 soldiers entered the house; they brought out very few clothes and two

pieces of furniture, most of our possessions remained inside the house, then they started to demolition it.”

“During the demolition process many of our neighbors gathered, we were all watching the house turning into a pile of rubble. At one point my son Mohammed (10y) ran towards the house yelling and crying, but one of the soldiers prevented him and held him off with his hand away from the house.”

“By 6:30 am, the house was gone and my family and I became homeless. My children cry all the time missing home; I also feel unsafe and unstable since we moved into my husband’s family’s house. I have no privacy and no personal space.”

Testimony 15

Name: Suhier R.
Age: 44
Location: Ath Thuri, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property destruction
Date of incident: 19 September 2016

On 19 September 2016, 44-year-old mother from Silwan is forced to demolish the shop she owns after Israeli authorities served her with a demolition order for lack of building permit.

Suheir is a 44-year-old mother from Ath Thuri in Jerusalem. Suheir supports her family by running a shop which she owns.

“In April 2015, I received financial aid from an NGO, Agricultural relief, from which I was able to build a small shop, (12*250) square meters, and was able to fill it up with food supplies. I was proud of my accomplishment, as I am running the house since my husband is sick. Although it was not easy to deal with suppliers but I felt happy to be financially independent and able to support my family.”

“One day in July 2016, at around 10:00a.m., I saw through surveillance camera, which I can see the front of the shop from, two employees from the municipality of Jerusalem, wearing white shirts and blue pants, along with three armed Israeli police, standing in front of the shop. I was too scared to go and check what they wanted; I stayed home watching the surveillance camera; the municipality employees took pictures of the shop, then posted a paper on the shop’s door and left after 15 minutes.”

“When I picked the paper it was an administrative demolition order for building without a permit. The order did not include specific date of demolition, but it said we needed to follow up with the municipality. The order was written in Hebrew and Arabic.”

“Since that moment every time I went to the shop I felt afraid and unsafe, expecting the municipality employees and the police to come any minute.”

“On 16 August 2016, at around 10:00a.m., the municipality employees posted another administrative demolition order on the shop. Again the order did not include specific date for the demolition, but it said we needed to follow up with the municipality, and it was written in Hebrew and in Arabic.”

“After discussing the issue with my husband we thought that our best choice was to demolish the shop ourselves. We knew there was no point in applying for a building permit as it was almost certain it would be denied. That was the same reason why we didn’t apply for a permit in the first place. Also if we let the Israeli authorities demolish the shop, we would have to pay the high costs of demolition and we cannot afford it.”

“On 16 September 2016 at around 8:00a.m., my husband and our eldest son Bilal (21) started to demolish the shop using manual tools and a Jack hammer. It took them two days to demolish the shop. We had to empty the shop beforehand then I sold them for a reduced price.”

“It was hard for me to watch my shop being demolished so I couldn’t stay around; on the second day I left the place all day and only came back in the evenings. I felt frustrated and drained especially when I saw the expressions on my husband’s and my son’s face; mixed feelings of frustrations and extreme exhaustion.”

“I hired a lawyer to follow up with the Israeli authorities, just to make sure that there was no charges left against us concerning the shop demolition, I paid the lawyer about 2000NIS to do this job, until he made sure that we had a clean file.”

On 23 September 2016, two municipality employees along with four Israeli police showed up. They took pictures of the demolished shop and left.

“Currently my household is facing a real financial crisis; I am working hard to find a job to support my family.”

“I will not let what happened bring me down; although I lost my main source of income, I decided not to give up and I will continue trying to find solutions to bring about descent living standard for me and my family.”

Testimony 16

Name: Rula R.
Age: 36
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 17 December 2016

On 17 December 2016, a large number of soldiers and policemen raid the house of 36 year old mother from Silwan and arrest her son after verbally abusing her and pushing her to the ground.

Rula is a 36 year old mother of 4 children aged 7 to 20 from Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“On 17 December 2016, at around 1:00a.m., my husband Zuhair received a phone call from the Israeli police, who spoke in Arabic asking him to immediately go to the police station to write down his testimony regarding the incident that occurred on 16 December 2016 in which our 17-year old son was harassed and badly beaten by a settler. When Zuhair asked if there was need to bring our the policeman told him there was no need to.

“Around 1:30 a.m. and after my husband left the house to the police station, I heard loud banging at the front door and someone was shouting asking us to open up. When I looked at the Surveillance cameras, I was shocked to see a large number of Israeli soldiers and police in front of the house; I froze in my place for a few seconds.”

“I was shivering as I came closer to open the door; I asked my children to stay inside one of the rooms and I shut the door.”

“It is hard to explain but I felt terrified when I opened the door and the commander introduced himself to me, while four soldiers stood behind him and pointed their guns at me.”

“The commander entered the house along with six masked soldiers; he asked to call out everyone the house to gather in the living room. Then the commander handed me an arrest order for Yazan, written in Arabic, and asked for my ID.”

“I was still shivering and I was looking at the commander feeling shocked and helpless. My younger daughter Darin (7) was crying and shivering, she was holding me tight. The soldiers didn’t allow my brothers in law to enter the house.”

“Two soldiers shackled and tied Yazan’s hands with plastic ties and took him outside. When I tried to snatch Yazan one soldier pushed me to the ground and another pointed his ground at me.

“The commander kept me in the living room while the soldiers started to search the house; they caused damages and broke the furniture, cupboards and glassware in the kitchen.”

“The commander asked me to hand him the video records of the surveillance camera but I told him we didn’t have tapes inside the surveillance camera.”

“The commander went mad started to yell at me; he verbally abused me and accused of lying. Then he sat Darin on his lap and asked Darin about the tapes, she was terrified. At around 3:00 a.m. the soldiers left the house. The minute they left I crashed to the ground; I was barely able to breath, my neighbors helped me. I felt helpless not being able to defend my son Yazan and frustrated that the soldiers came after they made sure that my husband was not home.”

“Yazan was detained for two days prior to his court hearing which was on 20 December 2016 at 2:00 p.m. My husband and I attended the hearing and Yazan was accused of starting the row with the settlers.”

“He later was placed under house arrest for 10 days, and had to pay a fine of 10000NIS, from which he had to pay a 1000NIS immediately. Yazan spent his house arrest time at his grandparents’ house in Ras al-Amud. He had a very hard time and didn’t eat or sleep well because he was so upset that he was falsely accused and punished for something he did not do.”

“My fear for the safety of my children against settlers and policemen grows each day. My husband and I feel helpless and that we have failed to protect our children.”

Testimony 17

Name: Nora Q.
Age: 36
Location: *Batn Al-Hawa*, Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 19 February 2017

On 19 February 2017, Israeli police arrest 13 year old boy while on his way back from school and pushed his mother to the ground as she tried to rescue him.

Nora is a 36-year-old mother of 5 children from Silwan in East Jerusalem

“On 19 February 2017, at around 1:30p.m., I was waiting for my son Saied (13) to come back home from school at the usual hour. I got extremely worried when it was 2:10 and Saied was not home yet. I stood in the main street just outside the front door waiting; then I saw two of Saied’s friends running towards me yelling that the soldiers had arrested Saied.”

“I was terrified and without thinking I ran to the place where Saied’s friends told me he was arrested. I didn’t even call my husband or tell anyone I just wanted to reach my son. It took me 10 minutes to reach Saied; he was sitting on the ground with his hands hand cuffed behind his with metal cuffs. I started to shake when I saw Saied surrounded by six soldiers; a number of people were trying to rescue Saied from the soldier.”

“I approached Saied and I tried to take him away; one of the soldiers pushed me to the ground, I didn’t feel the pain I was focused on my son. Another soldier held Saied’s neck and squeezed it. I lost my temper and started to yell at the soldiers; “that’s my son and he didn’t do anything”, I yelled. Again I tried to snatch Saied from the soldiers but they pushed me a second time to the ground, I fell down and hurt my head.”

“Saied’s grandmother (62) showed up and tried to reach Saied but the soldiers yelled at her and pushed her back. For about 30 minutes Saied was surrounded by the soldiers and I was begging them to let him go; I was shivering and crying but none of the soldiers paid any attention.”

“At around 3:30p.m., a police car showed up and four policemen stepped out. I addressed one of them who spoke Arabic; I told him I was Saied’s mother and that he was still a child, the policeman told me Saied was accused of throwing stones at a military jeep.”

“The policeman allowed me to accompany Saied to the police station, but he told me to go back home and bring my ID, he also told my mother in law to accompany me because I was barely able to walk.”

“As I was walking back home, one of Saied’s friends yelled and told me that the soldiers put Saied in the military jeep and left. I got so overwhelmed that I fell to the ground; the policeman lied to me, they took Saied away!”

“At around 4:00 p.m. my husband and I and the lawyer went to the police station looking for Saied. We waited outside and no one spoke to us or gave us any information, I went back home while my husband stayed.”

“At around 11:00 p.m. my husband called me and told me Saied was interrogated for seven hours and that he was accused of throwing stones at the soldiers.”

“On that same day, 19 February 2017, Saied’s hearing was held and he was sentenced to house arrest for a week, and fined 2000 Shekels. When Saied came home, his nose was bleeding. During his time under house arrest the soldiers were present in the neighborhood all the time, one time Saied stood outside the front door and a soldier yelled at him to go inside.”

“My family and I tried to support Saied in all ways possible. After the house arrest period Saied would directly go to his father’s work place after school avoiding coming back home and avoiding soldiers.”

“I suffered pain in my hands, feet and head since the soldier pushed me to the ground; I barely eat and I live in fear, many times I wake up at night horrified when I hear the soldiers in the neighborhood.”

Testimony 18

Name: Manal N.
Age: 45
Location: Ras al-Amud, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 17 May 2016

On 17 May 2016, Israeli soldiers raid the house of 45-year-old mother from Ras el-Amud in Jerusalem and arrest her 19-year-old son.

Manal is a 45 year old mother of 5 children aged 14 to 19 from the neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud in East Jerusalem.

“On 17 May 2016, at around 4:00 a.m. I was awake getting ready for dawn prayers when I suddenly heard loud banging at the front door. My son Mohammed (19) was up studying, so I and Mohammed checked our surveillance camera and saw about 20 Israeli soldiers and few policemen and Special Forces outside the house. I got worried and afraid; I asked Mohammed to go inside another room inside the house, then I woke up my husband who stood next to me while I opened the door.”

“When I opened the door a soldier in full military gear pointed his gun towards me and my husband. The commander who was in civilian clothes introduced himself then entered the house, about 15 soldiers in full military gear, some of whom were masked, followed him into the house.”

“The commander asked me to name everyone inside the house, when I mentioned Mohammed’s name he stopped me and asked me to call him in. I went to Mohammed and tried to calm him down because he was afraid; the commander sat with Mohammed in the living room. My husband and I stayed with him.”

“I tried my best to remain calm although I was getting extremely worried about Mohammed while he was being interrogated by the commander. My other children were still asleep so I was careful not to make noise and wake them up.”

“The commander interrogated Mohammed for about 15 minutes; during the interrogation the commander focused on wanting to know where Mohammed was the night before. He also asked me and I told him that he spent his time at home studying.”

“The commander told me and my husband that he was going to arrest Mohammed he was accused of throwing stones and Molotov cocktail at soldiers.

“I yelled at the commander telling that those accusations were false but the commander handed my husband an arrest warrant, written in Arabic, and then left the house. Two soldiers shackled Mohammed and hand cuffed him to the back then took him into the military jeep.”

“I attended Mohammed’s hearing on 23 May 2016, at 4:00 p.m.; Mohammed was sentenced to a year in prison. After appealing he got six months of imprisonment and had to pay a fine of 1000NIS. The court’s rule was based on evidence as they claimed; evidence of recording and witness on the case, but we not even our lawyer was allowed to see that evidence. It was unfair to prevent us from seeing the evidence, I am sure that Mohammed is innocent.”

“Mohammed was released on 28 November 2016; it was hard for Mohammed to eat or sleep well after his release, I was worried about him but still I was happy that he was back home. Later Mohammed got busy looking for universities to resume his studies which calmed him down a bit.”

“Living in Ras al-Amud is stressful; we live under constant stress whenever any of my family members leaves the house, fearing to be attacked by the soldiers or the settlers, or getting arrested.”

Testimony 19

Name: Badrieh J.
Age: 48
Location: Ath Thuri, East Jerusalem.
Nature of incident: Soldier violence
Date of incident: 27 September 2016

On 27 September 2016, the 14-year-old son of a woman from Ath Thuri neighbourhood in Jerusalem is rushed home by his cousins with serious bullet wound in his waist.

Badrieh is a 48-year-old mother of 6 children from the neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“On 27 September 2016, at around 6:00p.m., I was inside the house when I heard my son Ibrahim (14) screaming, I ran outside the house and saw Ibrahim’s cousins carrying him, I followed them inside the house. I was shocked to see Ibrahim on the couch bleeding and screaming of pain. Ibrahim’s face turned pale. He was hit by a bullet in the waist.”

“I became so overwhelmed that I started to cry; I asked his cousins to call an ambulance, then I uncovered Ibrahim’s wound and felt dizzy when I saw the amount of blood. I almost fainted, but I tried to control myself as I did not want to scare my son.”

“My daughter Roshan (28) who is a trained nurse gave Ibrahim first aid. About 10 minutes later we received a call from the ambulance telling us that the soldiers stopped them at and did not allow them to reach the house.”

“I became very worried, we transferred Ibrahim using his cousin’s car and drove to the ambulance; it took us about 15 minutes to reach the ambulance, during the drive I was holding Ibrahim’s hands and tried to encourage him, Ibrahim fainted but he regained his consciousness inside the ambulance.”

“Ibrahim remained for about a week at Al-Maqased hospital in Jerusalem. After returning home he had fever and we took him to the hospital again. I tried my best to be there and support Ibrahim all the time.”

“Ibrahim still suffers from his injury. He also lost his appetite and fears to leave the house even to go to school. I also lost my appetite and I find it hard to sleep. I live in constant worry.”

Testimony 20

Name: Badrieh L.
Age: 48
Location: Ath Thuri, East Jerusalem.
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 6 October 2016

On 27 September 2016, 10 Israeli soldiers raid the house of 48-year-old mother from Ath Thuri in East Jerusalem and arrest her 15 year old son.

Badrieh is a 48 year old mother of 6 children aged 15 to 28 from Ath Thuri neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

“On 6 October 2016, at around 2:00a.m., I woke up horrified to the sound of loud banging at the front door; the rest of the family woke up except for my son Ibrahim (15) who remained asleep. It took me a while to get out of my bed, I was shivering. By the time I made it to the door my son Ahmad (17) had already answered.”

“I was shocked to see 10 soldiers in full military gear standing by the door; the commander stepped inside the house with two other soldiers who were pointing their guns at me. The commander wanted everyone to get outside the house, then he asked me to go back inside and wake Ibrahim up and bring him out too, along with my husband. He also asked to see my identity card.”

“The commander then gave me an arrest warrant for Ibrahim and told me he was accused of throwing Molotov cocktail at soldiers. When I went into the house one soldier followed me. My husband asked what was going on from his room and I told him the soldiers were going to arrest Ibrahim. My heart broke when I heard my husband cry feeling helpless as he couldn’t get out of bed because of a physical disability.”

“When I woke Ibrahim up he was terrified to see the soldier standing over his head. I calmed him down and asked him to put on some warm clothes. I held my tears back to keep Ibrahim calm, and I asked him not to resist the soldiers, it was hard for me and it felt as if I was letting go of my son.”

“Outside the house; two soldiers held Ibrahim against the wall and tied his hands to the back with plastic ties, then they pushed him into a military jeep. My daughters were crying and shouting at the soldiers and my son Ahmad was angry but I asked him not to interfere so he won’t get harmed or arrested too.”

“On 6 October 2016, Ibrahim had a court hearing. I and the family lawyer attended the hearing, I saw Ibrahim in court and he looked pale and afraid. I tried to go closer to him but the guards prevented. Not much happened in court and the hearing was adjourned till the following day. On 7 October 2016 at 1:30p.m.; the court decided to extend Ibrahim’s detention for another 4 days for further interrogation. I couldn’t help but yell at the judge during both hearings, because I was

frustrated by the injustice of the false allegations against my son because the court failed to present any credible evidence against him.”

“The third hearing was on 12 October 2016, at 2:00 p.m.; I was not allowed to attend the hearing only the lawyer did. Ibrahim was placed under house arrest for 10 days and was not allowed to attend his school; he was also required to pay 5000NIS if he broke the house arrest.”

“The house arrest was very hard for all of us but especially for Ibrahim. He lost his appetite and showed aggressive behavior towards us. His friends visited him regularly and that was good. I have sought psychological support for Ibrahim and myself because I think we both need it.”

Testimony 21

Name: Manar N.
Age: 33
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Settler violence
Date of incident: 15 December 2016

On 15 December 2016, 17 year old son of a woman from Silwan in East Jerusaem comes home limping and with a bruised eye after being beaten by settlers.

Manar is a 33 year old mother of 4 children from Silwan in East Jerusalem

“On 15 December 2016, at about 6:00 p.m., my son Anas (17) came back home. I was terrified when I saw him because he was limping and had a bruised and swollen eye. Anas only told me that he and his friend Majd (17) had a clash with settlers living near us, He also told me that the Israeli police came and the issue was solved.”

“Two days later, my colleague wanted me to watch a video which was taken from surveillance camera of someone’s house, about settlers beating up men from Silwan. The minute I saw the video I realized that those beaten were my son Anas and his friend. The video showed them being attacked by 4 settlers and 2 armed guards. It also showed Anas being hit on the head by a stick and then against the wall and then it showed Anas lose consciousness.”

“When Anas regained consciousness he picked up a stick to defend himself; suddenly four Israeli police showed up and didn’t listen o Anas or to his friends, they just pushed aside. I got angry and very worried about Anas; he was so traumatized that he wasn’t even able to tell me what really happened, he couldn’t defend himself and was harshly beaten.”

“When I faced Anas with the video, he told me that the police threatened to arrest and interrogate him and his friend if they didn’t leave the place immediately. The police wasn’t aware of the surveillance camera, we thought of charging an accusation against the settlers having the evidence recorded on video, but Anas refused.”

“At 8:30 p.m. that same day, 17 December 2017, Anas was in front of the house with four of his friends, while I and my husband Mousa were inside the house. I suddenly heard Anas shouting back at some people; when I got outside the same settlers and their guards who attacked Anas were yelling and verbally abusing Anas and his friends, also Anas started to swear back. Mousa tried to calm them down.”

“One of the guards pushed Mousa away and swore at him and then the second guard shot one bullet in the air and then again aimed at Mousa’s left leg, at point blank. Anas and I immediately took Mousa inside the house, things were out of control, then a police car showed up, but the police didn’t enter our house.”

“Then we took Mousa to the hospital. As soon as we arrived I was shocked to see two police cars waiting for us. Two police officers accompanied us inside the hospital, and while Mousa was in

the emergency room they were questioning him. The police tried to talk Mousa into admitting that he started the row, but Mousa refused the accusation and insisted on repeating the true version of the story.”

“Right before leaving the hospital, the police officer gave orders to Mousa prohibiting him from leaving Jerusalem city, not even to the west bank until the interrogation is over. Three days later, on 20 December 2016, Mousa was discharged.”

“I feel stressed and worried about Mousa and Anas, I am afraid that the settlers would attack again; I can never be or feel safe anymore.”

“A week later, on 28 December 2016, Mousa was summoned to the police station, so he took the lawyer and went. The lawyer called me and told me that Mousa was going to be held at Al-Maskubieh police station for the night.”

“Mousa was accused of verbally and physically assaulting a settler. He was sentenced to house arrest for five days. Mousa was released out that same day.

“The file hasn’t been closed yet and both Mousa and Anas were called for more questioning. This has caused instability and fear for me and my family.”

Testimony 22

Name: Rula B.
Age: 36
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Settler violence
Date of incident: 15 December 2016

On 15 December 2016, settlers assault 15 year old son of a mother from Silwan without provocation.

Rula is a 36-year-old mother of 4 children from Silwan in East Jerusalem.

“On 15 December 2016, at around 4:00 p.m. my son Hamzeh (15) came and informed me that four settlers attacked my other son Yazan. I started to shiver out of fear for Yazan, I informed my husband in a phone call, and then I hurried up to Yazan who was few meters away from the house on the same main street. I broke down and started to yell and cry out loud when I saw Yazan standing by a wall with his face swollen and bleeding. I felt dizzy but I tried to control myself.”

“I tried to get closer to Yazan but four Israeli police prevented me; I yelled at them and assured them that I won’t let what happen to my son go by without accountability. About 10 minutes later my husband showed up, he also yelled at the police; especially when a witness told us later that the police stood watching the settlers attacking Yazan and didn’t interfere. Yazan was silently looking at me and it was clear to me that he was in pain.”

“The police allowed me and my husband to take Yazan home; Yazan’s body was bruised and swollen. At around 10:00 p.m. we took Yazan to the emergency room to get x-ray and medical checkups and report, to be used as evidence in court if necessary.”

“The following day, 16 December 2016, at around 8:00a.m., my husband went to the police station and filed a complaint against the settlers who attacked Yazan; he also submitted relevant evidence including pictures and short video of the attack and the medical report.”

“Around 7:00p.m. on the same day, while Yazan and his friends were standing in front of my house; three settler guards started to insult them and irritate them then another three settlers joined, they all started to beat Yazan and his friends without provocation.”

“My husband and I and a few neighbors went outside to see what was going on; but the guards and the settlers started to shoot. We all ran inside the house, during the clash one of our neighbor was shot in his leg. I again started to shiver out of fear; my legs became stiff. I didn’t feel safe I was crying out of stress feeling humiliated.”

“Half an hour later the police interfered and stopped the clash; then a policeman knocked our front door and asked to talk to Zuhair. Zuhair told the police that the settlers started the clash and our outdoor surveillance camera proves that.”

“Meanwhile I asked Yazan and Hamzeh to stay inside another room in the house, fearing that the police would arrest them if they saw them. Another policeman came in and asked Zuhair, in Hebrew, to hand them the tapes recorded by the surveillance camera, but Zuhair refused to hand the tapes to the police because he wanted to use them as evidence in the court. At around 12:00a.m. The police left.”

“Attacks by settlers occur on a regular basis, which makes it hard for us to feel safe, not even in our homes. I even fear to fall asleep lest the settlers come; they usually verbally harass us, sometimes they would throw garbage in front of our house.”

Testimony 23

Name: Shireen H.A.
Age: 36
Location: Silwan, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 15 December 2016

On 15 December 2016, about 30 Israeli policemen surround the house of 36-year-old mother from Silwan and arrest her 18-year-old son for questioning.

Shireen is a 36 year old mother from Silwan in East Jerusalem

“On 15 December 2016, at around 1:15a.m., I and my family were asleep when I and my husband woke up terrified hearing loud banging on the main door of my house. I and my husband went to the living room; my daughter Israa (12) got up and was also in the living room.”

“When my husband opened the door; I was shocked to see around 30 policemen surrounding the house. My husband asked me immediately to go to my bedroom; I remained in the room along with Israa, but I was able to hear everything.”

“I was extremely afraid, and I was very curious to know what the policemen wanted and I was very worried about my sons. That same moment I received a phone call from our neighbors warning us, but it was too late.”

“One intelligence officer and one policeman entered the house, the rest remained outside. My husband asked them to remain quiet because our children were sleeping, then the intelligence officer handed my husband an arrest order for one of our sons. It was written in Hebrew but my husband was able to read it.”

“My children were up by this time because of the noise; my son Shadi (19) was arrested five times before, after hearing what the officer said he started to get dressed thinking that he was the one the soldiers wanted to arrest but the intelligence officer emphasized that they wanted to arrest Mohammed (18), and this was his third time to be arrested.”

“The intelligence officer clarified to my husband that they want Mohammed for interrogation purposes only and that my husband can pass by the police station at Salah Addin Street at 8:00 a.m. and bail Mohammed out. I got more worried about Mohammed but I didn’t leave my room.”

“The police tied Mohammed’s hands to the back with plastic ties and left the house around 1:30 a.m. without searching the house. On that same day, 15 December 2016, at around 7:30 a.m. my husband was waiting in front of Salah Addin police station. There were 15 other families waiting to check on their children.”

“My husband had to wait until 12:00p.m. Until he was able to bail Mohammed out for 5000NIS, to be paid if Mohammed breaches his five days house detention order. When Mohammed came

back home he told me that the police interrogated him from 2:00 a.m. until 5:00 a.m. about a settler's jeep that was burned in Silwan. Mohammed explained his daily routine to the interrogators assuring them that he knows nothing about the incident, and that he didn't witness anything."

"In previous time during night raids I used to cry and get frustrated and afraid, but now I feel numb. Night raids are so frequent that being numb is my only way to deal with them."

Testimony 24

Name: Mufida B.
Age: 58
Location: Ath Thuri
Nature of incident: Threat of Home Demolition
Date of incident: 20 December 2016

On 20 December 2016, Israeli officials bang at the door of 58 year old woman from Ath Thuri neighbourhood in East Jerusalem at around 10:00am and hand her a demolition order for her house.

Mufida is a 58-year mother of 3 children from Ath Thuri neighbourhood in East Jerusalem

“On 20 December 2016, at around 10:00 a.m., I looked outside one of the windows of my house and I was surprised to see five Israeli police officers and two municipality employees inside the courtyard. Seconds later I heard loud banging at the front door. I opened the window and asked them what they wanted; one of the municipality employees asked me to open the door, I refused because I was terrified. The police officer pointed his gun at me.”

“The municipality employee wanted to talk to Rida Brdawheel, my mother in law who owns the house, to hand her a demolition order, which she had to sign. I was shivering behind the door out of fear yet I told him that Rida is 95 years old; she is old and sick and can’t walk.”

“The municipality employee asked me to open the door again but I refused; then he started to yell at me saying the demolition order needed to be signed. I eventually had to sign the paper, after I handed my ID to the police officer to check my relationship to Rida Brdawheel. The document was written both in Hebrew and Arabic, and the reason for the demolition was lack of building permit.”

“15 minutes later the municipality employees and the police left the house; as I watched them leave I noticed two soldiers standing by the front door. I was so afraid that I felt pain and tension in my stomach; having a gun pointed at me was terrifying.”

“The following day, on 21 December 2016, I gave the demolition order to our lawyer who followed up the issue with the authorities and told us that there was nothing we could do and that most probably the house will be demolished.”

“Receiving this order was shocking for my family although this was the 3rd such order that we have received. Although we spent huge amounts of money in fines, lawyers, and engineers trying to get a building permit and avoid getting the house demolished, but in each trail our request was denied by the Israeli authorities and we were fined with money.”

We had several court hearing and we were fined huge amounts of money but still the house could not be saved. In the end we had two choices: either we demolished our house ourselves or pay the demolition costs if the authorities did it themselves.”

“It was painful for me to see how much stress and agony my husband was going through, being on the edge of losing our house. I can never feel safe anymore; I and my family are living under continuous fear of losing our home and we feel desperate because nothing could be done to save the house. The idea of demolishing the house that I have lived in and had all my memories in haunted me.”

Testimony 25

Name: Manal N.A.
Age: 45
Location: Ras al-Amud, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid/arrest
Date of incident: 12 February 2017

On 12 February 2017, 14 year old son of a woman from Ras al-Amud in East Jerusalem is arrested on his way back home from school and is placed under house arrest for a week after being accused of throwing stones at the police.

Manal is a 45-year old mother of 5 children from the neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud in East Jerusalem.

“On 12 February 2017, at around 1:00 p.m., I was worried about my son Saif (14) who was about an hour late coming home from school. At around 2:00p.m. Saif’s cousin (18) came and told me that Saif was arrested by Israeli police and they put him inside the police jeep and drove away.”

“I got extremely afraid and worried about Saif. I told my husband and my oldest son Faris and about half an hour later we all went to the police station at Sala Addin Street. We stood outside the police station waiting for around three hours; then a policeman told us that Saif was detained for sure.”

“At around 6:00 p.m. the police called us into the police station. The commanders met us and told us that Saif was going to be transferred to Al Maskubieh prison for further questioning.”

“Just as we left the police station my husband went to see a lawyer who in turn went to the police station and found out that Saif was not going to be transferred to Al Maskubieh prison until his hearing in held on Sunday, 15 February 2017, at around 1:30 p.m. The police told the lawyer that a charge sheet would be presented during the hearing but they didn’t clarify what he was accused of.”

“Saif spent three nights at the police station. During this time I was not sleeping or eating well thinking about Saif. Saif’s hearing was actually held at 2:00p.m. On 15 February 2017 and my husband and I attended the hearing. I saw Saif when he was brought into the court room surrounded by five policemen. He was shackled and hand cuffed to the front.”

“Saif looked exhausted and when I got closer to him he asked me to get him out of there. It was very painful for me to see my child Saif under such circumstances. He was accused of throwing stones at the police car and then running away and was put under house arrest for a week as punishment. He was not allowed to attend school.”

“Saif was released on the same day. He later told me that during the interrogation the police slapped him and swore at him and threatened to lock him up in jail for a long time.”

“I kept an eye on Saif during his time under house arrest to make sure he did not leave the house because if he did we would have to pay a lot of money in fine. I also worried that the police might arrest him again.”

“Saif barely ate during this time and he wanted me to sleep next to him at night. When his house arrest time was over he would go to school still feeling afraid that the police might arrest him once again.”

“I live under constant fear as the clashes between young men in our neighborhood happen all the time and the police always provoke young men. I feel worried about my children all the time.”

Testimony 26

Name: Evelen A.
Age: 42
Location: Kafr 'Aqab, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid
Date of incident: 4 February 2017

On 4 February 2015, more than 10 Israeli soldiers in full military gear raid the house of 42-year-old mother of 4 children aged 7 to 14 and search her house.

Evelen is a 42-year-old mother of 4 children from Kafr 'Akab in East Jerusalem.

“On 4 February 2017, at around 2:30 a.m., I woke up to the sound of loud banging at the front door. I woke my husband up, thinking that someone needed him for an urgent matter, then I got dressed and followed him to answer the door.”

“I was shocked when I saw Israeli soldiers at the door. My husband asked the commander what they wanted, but the commander didn’t answer him and just entered the house along with six other soldiers in full military gear.”

“The commander asked me and my husband to wait in the living room. Two soldiers stood next to us and prevented us from making any movement. Meanwhile, two other soldiers entered the guests’ room, but 10 other soldiers came out of it. I was surprised but then I realised that more soldiers must have entered the house from through the balcony.”

“The soldiers started to search the house and when they wanted to enter my children’s room my husband told the commander that the children were asleep, the commander told my husband not to be afraid as the soldiers won’t bother the children, and the soldiers didn’t enter my children’s room.”

“I was shivering of fear as I wondered what the soldiers might want from my husband, and why they had raided our house. The commander asked my husband if he owned any weapons and my husband told him he did not.”

“The soldiers continued to search the house then the commander asked my husband whether he knew anyone who has weapons. At around 3:30 a.m. the soldiers withdrew. They prevented Nasser from following them outside the house and they shut the door behind them.”

“The soldiers left without telling us why they had raided our house and without giving us any written documents. Throughout this experience I was so shaken and I worried that my children might be woken up terrified to see soldiers inside the house. I was also worried about my

husband because I thought they had come to arrest him. I find it hard to sleep at night because I worry that soldiers might raid our house again.”

Testimony 27

Name: Sawsan K.
Age: 45
Location: Kafr 'Aqab, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid
Date of incident: 4 February 2017

On 4 February 2017, about 15 Israeli soldiers raid the house of 45-year-old woman from Kafr 'Aqab in East Jerusalem and search her house without explanation after pointing a gun at her 11-year old niece and threatening to shoot her.

Sawsan is a 45-year-old woman from Kafr 'Aqab.

“On 4 February 2017, at around 2:00a.m., I woke up horrified to the sound of breaking glass and someone shouting asking us to open the door. My niece Lamar (11) was sleeping over that night, I got dressed then I asked her to open the door. Lamar was also afraid but she had more guts than I did at that moment, I froze out of fear. My mother and I stood in the living room while Lamar opened the door and about 15 Israeli soldiers in full military gear, entered the house.”

“The commander wanted everyone to get outside the house. I refused and told the commander only women were in the house and that we were too scared to go outside. I was terrified and worried about Lamar when she yield at one of the soldiers asking what they wanted, and the soldier pointed his gun at her and threated to shoot. I asked Lamar to be quiet for her safety.”

“I was also extremely worried about my mother who cannot handle stress because of her old age and her illness. Then we all sat in the living room while 3 soldiers guarded us and prevented us from making any movement.”

“The remaining soldiers searched the house without causing any damage to the furniture, but they flipped things around and caused chaos in the house. They searched all the cupboards, rooms and even the kitchen.”

“At around 3:00 a.m. the soldiers withdrew and left without telling us why the raided our house and without giving us any written documents. They didn’t arrest anyone.”

“I feel weak and I have become terribly scared when I see soldiers; because they have no mercy and they are violent, I get stressed when I see them.”

Testimony 28

Name: Anaheed R.
Age: 52
Location: Ath Thuri, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Property
Date of incident: 2 January 2017

On 2 January 2017, the husband of 52-year-old woman from East Jerusalem seals their house with bricks based on a court decision due to lack of building permit.”

Anaheed is a 52-year-old mother of 5 children from Ath Thuri neighbourhood in East Jerusalem

“My name is Anaheed and I am 52 years old. I live in Ath Thuri in East Jerusalem with my husband Durgham (60) and we have five children; the oldest is Hind (32) and the youngest is Reem (16y). I live with my family in this house since 1996; it is 175 square meters and is on the ground floor.”

“My husband applied for a building permit to the Israeli authorities in 1995; we hired a lawyer and an architect and we prepared all the necessary papers to obtain the building permit. Our application was rejected.”

“Sometime in November 1996, and after we moved into the house, we received our first demolition order. My husband informed the lawyer and we immediately started to work on obtaining a building permit again. In that same year, 1996, we had a hearing and we were fined 20.000NIS, and my husband paid it.”

“Over the years we paid over 160.000NIS; including all the expenses regarding obtaining the building permit, the lawyer’s expenses and other legal expenses. Several hearings were conducted in the past years regarding the building permit; each time the hearing was postponed, and we had to keep following up the process. My family felt drained psychologically and financially; I reached a point where I wasn’t managing the stress well, watching my husband struggling so much broke me down.”

“On 2 January 2017, at around 8:00a.m., I was home alone when I heard loud banging at the front door; someone was yelling in Arabic for me to open the door. When I opened the door I was surprised to see two municipality employees along with four armed Israeli police.”

“My hands started to shiver when the municipality employee handed me demolition order written in Hebrew and in Arabic.”

“The municipality employee asked about my husband, he was speaking to me in a rude and provocative way, I told him that he was at work, he then checked my ID, then he and his

colleague entered the house and took pictures of it, and after 15 minutes they left. I remained calm all the time but when the municipality employees and the police left the house I broke down crying.”

“On 3 January 2017, at around 10:00 a.m. Durgham and the lawyer went the municipality; a hearing was held that same day; the Lawyer submitted all papers that prove our long process of trying to obtain building permit. The court’s sentence was shocking to all of us; the court ordered that the house be demolished by us or by the municipality within 48 hours, and we had to pay a fine of 20.000NIS in payments within two years period.”

“The lawyer was able to appeal and had the court order to have the house sealed by cement bricks and metal instead of being demolished. I fainted immediately when my husband called me and informed about the court’s decision; later I couldn’t stop crying and felt helpless, frustrated at a law that prevents me from having decent living in my house.”

“On 4-5 January 2017, from 8:00 a.m. up until late hour at night, Durgham and my sons Hamzeh (19) and Mustafa (15) bought cement bricks for 2000NIS and started to seal the house, they took out all the house furniture and put it in the front yard of the house. Durgham took pictures of the house after it was sealed and sent it to the municipality as a proof.”

“I and my family stayed over my brother in law’s house for two days then we moved to an old house; which also belonged to our family, but the house is not hygienic and also it has complications regarding obtaining a building permit from the municipality, but it was our only choice. I find it hard to accept the court’s decisions and I feel frustrated and sad wasting a huge amount of money trying to maintain our house. “

“Currently I am trying to reach out for various NGOs, including women institutions, to get psychological and financial support.”

Testimony 29

Name: Wijdan B.
Age: 62
Location: **Nature of incident:** Night raid
Date of incident: 9 February 2017

On 9 February 2017, Israeli soldiers break the front door of the house of 62-year-old mother from Jerusalem and raid her house then search it without explanation.

Wijdan is a 62-year-old widow from Kafr 'Aqab in East Jerusalem.

“On 9 February 2017, at around 2:00 a.m., I and my sons, Murad (24) and Moayad (28), asleep when I woke up to the voice of Murad on the phone. I was shocked when Murad told me that the neighbor called to warn us that Israeli soldiers were surrounding the building. Just as Murad hung up I heard loud banging at the front door.”

“I started to shiver out of fear, I was extremely worried about my sons, I stayed in bed and I asked Murad and Moayad to also stay in their beds. I was listening carefully and I could hear the soldiers trying to open the front door. The soldiers eventually stormed into the apartment after they broke the door. I was able to hear the soldiers’ footsteps and they were many, I didn’t see them but it sounded like some of them were going up to the roof.”

“I was shivering out of fear, worrying that the soldiers would arrest my sons; I and my sons stayed in our beds for about half an hour, I was still able to hear the soldiers searching the house and opening the cupboards. Two soldiers and the commander came inside the bedroom and turned on the light; the commander wanted to check our IDs, I got out of my bed and brought him our IDs.”

“At around 3:00 a.m. the soldiers left the house; they used the roof to monitor the area and then left. The soldier didn’t tell us why they were searching the house and they didn’t give us any written documents. Losing my children is the most terrifying thing that can happen to me; I worry about them a lot especially from getting hurt by the Israeli soldiers. I can never feel safe or stable in such an occupied country where soldiers can enter our houses and disturb us any time they want.”

Testimony 30

Name: Wala J.
Age: 27
Location: Kafr 'Aqab, East Jerusalem
Nature of incident: Night raid
Date of incident: 9 February 2017

On 9 February 2017, eight Israeli soldiers in full military gear raid the house of 27-year-old mother in Kafr 'Aqab at 2:30am and search her house before leaving without explanation.

Wala is a 27-year-old mother of 3 children from Kafr 'Aqab in East Jerusalem

“On 9 February 2017, at around 2:30 a.m., I woke up to the sound of loud banging at the front door. I woke my husband, Rami, up because I expected Israeli soldiers at the door as they have raided our house in April last year.”

“Rami answered the door while I got dressed quickly and followed him. I was shocked when I saw eight soldiers in full military gear at the door.

“The soldiers entered the house and the commander asked me and my husband to sit in the living room. Two soldiers guarded up and prevented us from making any movement. I was scared and very tense and worried that the soldiers had come to arrest Rami.”

“The remaining soldiers started to search the house and my husband asked the soldiers to stay out of the children’s room because they were asleep, the commander allowed me to enter the room to gently wake up my children up. I told my children that soldiers were inside the house; but when I took my children out to the living room and they saw the soldiers, my 8-year-old daughter Leen started to shiver out of terror while my other children stood shaken as they watched.”

“Rami asked the commander what did they wanted, but the commander ignored him and did not answer his question. The soldiers searched everywhere and moved things around but they did not cause any damage. At around 3:30 a.m. the soldiers left the house without telling us the reason for the raid and without giving us any written documents.”

“When the soldiers left the house they prevented us from following them outside and they shut the door behind them.

It was a tough night; I was terrified and worried that the soldiers might arrest Rami;. I don’t feel safe anymore. My children are afraid especially at night thinking that the soldiers might raid our house any day.”

ⁱ See for example UN Security Council resolutions 252, 267, 471, 476 and 478.

ⁱⁱ International Court of Justice, Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, 9 July 2004.

ⁱⁱⁱ ICRC, Expert Meeting, Occupation and other Forms of Administration of Foreign Territory, 2012. Available at: <http://is.gd/wco3OG>

^{iv} Housing density in Palestinian neighbourhoods is almost twice that of Jewish neighbourhoods, 11.9 square metres per person compared with 23.8 square metres per persons. Source: B'tselem (2002). Available at: <http://is.gd/OZp8yq>

^v United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), East Jerusalem: key humanitarian concerns (August 2014). Available at: <http://is.gd/MiaKyv>