



# WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN PALESTINE

*The Struggles of the Occupation*



# INTRODUCTION

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

Feminism, equality, justice.

Women's rights abuse as a by-product of the Occupation

Focusing on:

- SETTLEMENTS AND SETTLER VIOLENCE
- NIGHT RAIDS
- PROPERTY DESTRUCTION AND RESIDENCY REVOCATION
- First-hand accounts: January 2015 - July 2017

# WHY WOMEN?

- Mothers, daughters, sisters.
- The glue of society.

## The Victims

**GAZA:** 73% perceived increase in Gender Based Violence since end of 2014 war. (UNFPA, 2016)

The political situation “**serves as mitigating circumstance that makes violence against women more acceptable**”. (Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 2017)



# THE OCCUPATION

## The Facts

- **1948:** 750,000 Palestinian refugees.
- **1967:** Six-Day War - Israel seizes West Bank, Gaza. Controls 76% of historic Palestine
- **2017:** 50 years of military occupation

## The Law

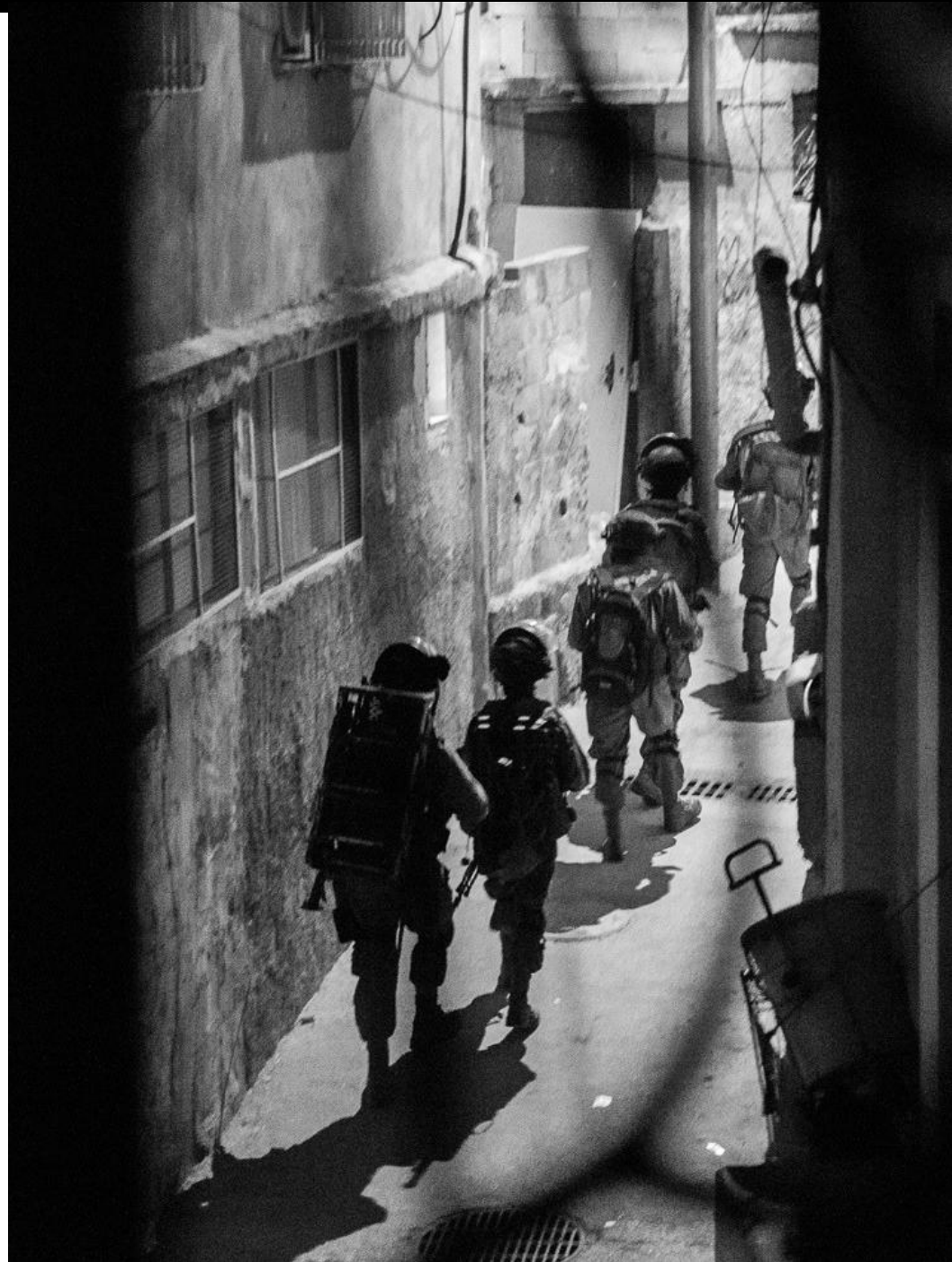
- **Settlements - Art. 49 Fourth Geneva Convention:** "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."
- **Housing Demolitions - Art. 46 Hague Regulations:** private property must be respected and that it cannot be confiscated. **Art. 53 Fourth Geneva Convention** – destruction of property by the occupying state is forbidden.
- **Residency Revocations - Art. 33 Fourth Geneva Convention:** collective punishment is strictly prohibited.

A black and white photograph capturing a night raid in progress. Several soldiers in full tactical gear, including helmets with clear visors and vests, are positioned in a room. One soldier in the center is looking towards a man standing in a doorway in the background. The man in the doorway is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt and trousers. The room contains framed pictures on the wall, including one of a woman in a dress and another of a woman in a headscarf. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source coming from the doorway, creating a dramatic and tense atmosphere.

# NIGHT RAIDS

## NIGHT RAIDS

- 1,360 night raids each year across the West Bank (UN Special Rapporteur, 2017).
- 78% of WCLAC's testimonies involve night raids (Jan 2015 - Jul 2017).
- 305 victims since Jan 2015.
- Shock, fear and intimidation. Long term damage: psychological illnesses.
- 31% of raids - no arrests were made.
- Night raids increase in intensity and number as new military units rotate into area.
- Average distance to a settlement - 1.41 KM (WCLAC 2016).



## NIGHT RAIDS: TESTIMONIES

*"At 4:00 a.m., my family and I woke up to the sound of a small explosion...My husband opened the door....About 30 Israeli soldiers, all in full military gear and with masks on, enter the house. The soldiers were pointing their guns towards my husband and I."*

Nariman M., June 2017

*"The two female soldiers took me into my bedroom to strip search me; they made me completely strip down, even take off my underwear. Instead of using their hands, they passed a searching device across my naked body: I felt humiliated and exhausted."*

Myasar H., May 2017

*"The commander ordered that my children and I sit in my bedroom. Using his weapon, he hit my sons Mohammad, Ibrahim, and Mahmoud, who has Down syndrome. He had no consideration to their condition... Samah and my grandchildren were shaking from fear. Three soldiers stood as guards, with their weapons aimed at us, to prevent us from moving. I cried for my sons and for my grandchildren."*

Nadia H, May 2017

*"I broke down but tried to hold myself together and look strong in front of my family. One of the soldiers brought in Qutyba and tied his hand behind his back with plastic ties. I wasn't allowed to say goodbye, or give him clothes."*

Afaf H. July 2017



# **SETTLEMENTS AND SETTLER VIOLENCE**





## Settlements and Settler Violence

- 600,000 settlers in the West Bank; 43% West Bank under settler control.
- 19 women interviewed by WCLAC: arson, physical violence, car ramming, destruction of property.
- Jan - June 2017: 89 incidents in West Bank. 3 Palestinians killed; 48 injured, including 7 children (UN OCHA, 2017).
- 88% increase in attacks compared to 2016.
- Only 8.5% of cases lead to charges being pressed by Israeli police.

*"The police has an 84.9% failure rate in the investigation of ideologically motivated crime perpetrated by Israeli citizens against Palestinians in the West Bank."*

Yesh Din, 2015



"THE PRESENCE AND CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS LIE AT THE ROOT OF A BROAD SPECTRUM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM."

UN HRC, REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL, *ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY*, 2016.



# HOUSE DEMOLITIONS AND RESIDENCY REVOCAATION

## HOUSE DEMOLITIONS

- 1,093 Palestinian-owned structures demolished or seized throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 2016. (OCHA, 2017)
- 1,600 Palestinians displaced.
- 7,000+ livelihoods affected.
- Choice for families: destroy the house yourself, or pay the Israelis to do it for a price of NIS 70,000 (\$20,040).
- 30% (308) of the structures demolished in 2016 were donor-funded humanitarian assistance structures. Three times higher than 2015. Value of assistance destroyed = over €655,000. (OCHA)
- 13% of East Jerusalem is allowed for Palestinian construction.
- 7% of permit applications granted.

## RESIDENCY REVOCATIONS

East Jerusalem, has a *"two-tiered system"* with *"one set of rules for Jews and another for Palestinians."* It is based not on the rule of law, but on punitive measures and collective punishment fed by *"entrenched discrimination."*

*(Human Rights Watch, 2016)*

### Statistics

- 1967-2016, **14,595** Palestinians from East Jerusalem had residency status revoked, mostly due to a failure to demonstrate a 'centre of life' in East Jerusalem.
- **"Minimal obligation of loyalty to the state of Israel"** – an authoritative and degrading criterion for occupied Palestinians.
- **9000** Palestinians currently residing in East Jerusalem without residency rights. (HaMoked)
- FORCIBLE TRANSFER: Art. 7 Rome Statute.
- **A crime against humanity.**



**GAZA**

# THE WAR AND BLOCKADE

- 2,251 Palestinians killed during 2014 war, including 1,462 (65%) civilians, 299 women (20%) and 551 children (38%).
- Number of internally displaced persons reached 500,000 – 28% of the population.
- Blockade has continued since the war
- Chronic electricity shortages (18-20 hours a day) and inadequate sanitation.
- 56% youth unemployment.
- 78% of young women unemployed.
- Humanitarian crisis. Conditions are “unliveable”, an “open-air prison”. (UNDP)





## CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that international humanitarian and human rights law are the basis of all interactions and cooperation agreements with Israel. Promote Israeli compliance with these laws, and end the culture of impunity enjoyed by Israel.

To call on Israel to respect the dignity of the Palestinian people and to cease their invasive and illegal practices of night raids, settlement construction, housing demolition, and residency revocation. Simultaneously, end the impunity enjoyed by the Israeli individuals involved in settler violence, whether state forces or non-state.

To call Israel to cease its practice of transferring Palestinian female prisoners out of Palestine, a practice illegal under international law. Grant all Palestinian detainees access to legal services and to their family during family visits.

To end the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Guarantee full access for the Gazan population to all basic services necessary to ensure the implementation of their rights to food, water, sanitation, and to the highest attainable standard of health.