



UNLEASHED

ABUSE OF

PALESTINIANS BY

ISRAELI SOLDIERS IN

THE CENTER OF HEBRON

December 2024

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Illustration photography

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Introduction

For over a year, Israel has been waging an unrestrained war on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and within the State of Israel. Its response to the heinous attack led by Hamas on October 7 – and largely, to the shock and anxiety that gripped the Israeli public – unleashed a wave of violence that swept through the region, taking almost all remnants of humanity or morality with it. The death and destruction wreaked by Israel's war machine in the past year have reached unimaginable proportions.

The indiscriminate violence that has always marked the Israeli apartheid regime's approach to Palestinians living in the area under its control is now appearing in its most direct and exposed form. This report focuses on one of its manifestations in the West Bank: recurring incidents of severe abuse of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers in the center of Hebron throughout the summer of 2024.

The context in which the abuse took place

The Hamas-led attack on 7 October greatly exacerbated the ongoing dehumanization of Palestinians in Israeli discourse, which filled with explicit calls for violence and revenge by politicians and opinion leaders. With Palestinians collectively presented as an undifferentiated mass of enemies, causing them harm is considered not only legitimate but even welcome. Throughout 2024, many Jewish-Israelis have adopted the view that every Palestinian is guilty until proven otherwise – including military officers directly in charge of running the daily lives of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

This approach takes different forms in the various territories under Israel's control. Its most aggressive manifestation is in the Gaza Strip, with extensive, indiscriminate use of lethal weapons in crowded residential areas,¹ massive destruction of civilian infrastructure,² mass deportation, starvation and forcible transfer,³ and the creation of "kill zones" where anyone spotted is shot regardless of their involvement in the fighting.⁴ All these are presented to Israelis as necessary military achievements, whose cost in human life is negligible.

1 **The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)**, *Thematic report – Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks during the conflict in Gaza (October – December 2023)*, June 2024.

2 **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, *Reported impact snapshot*, November 2024.

3 See **B'Tselem**, *Manufacturing Famine: Israel is Committing the War Crime of Starvation in the Gaza Strip*, April 2024.

4 See Yaniv Kubovich, *"Israel Created 'Kill Zones' in Gaza. Anyone Who Crosses Into Them Is Shot"*, **Haaretz English edition**, 31 March 2024.

A "silent war" in the West Bank

In the West Bank, the view of all Palestinians as enemies who should be treated with unyielding force is translating into further oppression of the entire civilian population, by the various arms of the Israeli regime. A record number of Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire in 2024,⁵ and the number of detentions and administrative detainees reached a historic high.⁶ Since the beginning of the war, many attacks on Palestinians by soldiers and settlers have been documented throughout the West Bank.⁷ The attacks were aimed at Palestinians suspected of no wrongdoing and often carried out in plain sight, in full view of officers and commanders. Together with the rise in the scale and frequency of such attacks, this means they are not isolated incidents, but the outcome of an explicit, deliberate and systemic policy.

Soldiers are being urged to take more "proactive" and "offensive" actions,⁸ while the public is demanding – or, at least, accepting – revenge on all Palestinians for the crimes of Hamas. Coupled with the ongoing dehumanization of Palestinians in Israeli discourse, this has led soldiers to see themselves as authorized to play the role of prosecutor, judge and executioner in any encounter with a Palestinian. In practice, every soldier has been granted virtually unlimited power to use violent means of oppression. Much like the abuse running rampant in Israeli detention facilities for Palestinians (who are classified by Israel as "security prisoners"),⁹ soldiers in the field, too, know they will not be held accountable for their conduct.

Hebron: A case study

B'Tselem's field researchers gathered testimonies from Palestinians who were attacked by soldiers in the city center of Hebron between May and August 2024. Their accounts indicate a rise in the scope, type and severity of violence that soldiers are currently employing against Palestinians in the West Bank. It appears that Palestinian residents of Hebron may, at any moment, fall victim to brutal violence openly inflicted on them as they go about their daily affairs. The victims were cho-

5 See figures on casualties in Gaza on [the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) website. According to B'Tselem data, from Oct. 2023 to 19 Nov. 2024, Israeli forces killed at least 742 Palestinians in the West Bank, including at least 160 minors. Another seven Palestinians from the West Bank were killed within the State of Israel, five of them by Israeli forces and two by Israeli civilians. At least 21 more Palestinians, including at least one minor, were killed by Israeli civilians or by an unknown Israeli party.

6 See [data on administrative detention in the Occupied Territories](#) on [B'Tselem's](#) website.

7 See [updated incident log](#) on [B'Tselem's](#) website.

8 See Dvir Amar, "[The Retaliation Way: 35 years since the establishment of the Yehuda Brigade](#)", [Channel 7](#), 24 August 2023 (Hebrew).

9 See [B'Tselem](#), [Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps](#), August 2024.

sen randomly, with no connection to their actions. In more than one incident, the assailants recorded the abuse and bragged about it openly, to further the humiliation or receive praise from their fellow soldiers and social circles.

Some victims recounted that the soldiers sought any feeble pretext to justify the abuse. A "suspicious" picture or signs of following updates on Gaza, found on a victim's cellphone, were enough to justify transfer to one of the military posts scattered throughout Hebron and subjection to physical and mental abuse for hours, at gunpoint, while handcuffed and blindfolded.

Background — central Hebron

In the center of Hebron, the second largest Palestinian city in the West Bank, about 900 Israeli settlers live among tens of thousands of Palestinians.¹⁰ More than 1,000 soldiers uphold the systems of separation and military control in the city. To allow settlers and soldiers to move around freely, Israel has reduced Palestinians' freedom of movement over the years, mainly in area H2 that contains the Israeli settlements.¹¹ These movement restrictions now include dozens of fortified checkpoints, roadblocks, and permanent and temporary military posts that tend to open and close at random, with no prior notice.¹² The checkpoints are equipped with advanced identification and data collection systems,¹³ and Palestinians crossing them are often subjected to humiliation and violence.¹⁴ On weekends and Jewish holidays, the restrictions are further tightened in order to cordon the area off for Jewish visitors.

Since the Hamas attack and the beginning of the war on October 2023, Israel has greatly tightened the movement restrictions in Hebron. Initially, a full curfew was im-

10 An estimated 900 settlers currently live in Hebron, including settlement residents and students of [Yeshiva Shavei Hebron](#). See [YESHA Council](#) statistics (Hebrew). According to [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics](#) data from 2023, approximately 232,500 Palestinians live in Hebron. According to [OCHA](#) data from 2022, approximately 33,750 Palestinians live in H2.

11 See [B'Tselem](#), [Playing the Security Card: Israeli Policy in Hebron as a Means to Effect Forcible Transfer of Local Palestinians](#), September 2019.

12 In early September 2019, there were 22 checkpoints and 64 physical obstacles throughout the center of Hebron. In a survey of Palestinians in Hebron who live near settlers' homes and the streets they use (2015-2018), 81% of respondents reported having to cross a checkpoint at least once a day to get home, 89% could not get home by car, 88% of children had to cross a checkpoint on their way to school, and 90% of families reported their children had been detained, physically searched or harassed at checkpoints. See [OCHA-OPT](#), [The humanitarian situation in the H2 area of Hebron city: Findings of needs assessment](#), April 2019 (hereinafter: [OCHA survey](#)).

13 See Hagar Shezaf, ["Israel Surveils Palestinians in West Bank in Massive Facial Recognition Program"](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 8 November 2021.

14 The OCHA survey found between 2015 and 2018, 75% of Palestinian homes located near the areas and streets used by settlers were searched at least once; in 97% of these searches, a family member was physically assaulted by the forces; 20% of families reported one of their children being arrested by soldiers; and 75% of families cited violence by Israeli forces as their main cause of concern. See [OCHA survey](#), supra note 12.

posed on the tens of thousands of Palestinians living in H2. Two weeks later, "breaks" from the curfew were declared – several hours on some weekdays, during which Palestinians were allowed out of their homes.¹⁵ A year on, Palestinians are still forbidden to move freely in the city from the evening to the next morning. Witnesses say that basic daily activities such as visiting a doctor or family – opportunities to lead reasonable lives, already curtailed before the war – are now even further diminished.¹⁶

The testimonies

In recent months, B'Tselem's field researchers collected 25 testimonies from Palestinians who were abused by Israeli soldiers in the center of Hebron. All the incidents of abuse took place between May and August 2024. Excerpts from the testimonies are included in this report, and the full text can be found on a map of the Hebron city center on our website.¹⁷

The victims described **acts of violence, abuse and humiliation by soldiers aimed at men, women, teenagers and children**. They were seized while going about their daily affairs: on their way to work,¹⁸ having coffee in the yards,¹⁹ or going to buy groceries.²⁰ Most were taken to military facilities, where the major abuse took place. Some of the abuse was filmed by the soldiers, including on video calls with acquaintances.

None of the victims were suspected of an offense, nor were they charged, and all were let go immediately after the assault, many of them in a state that required medical attention. Only two victims were arrested, but were ultimately released with no further action taken against them.²¹

B'Tselem's field researchers spoke to other Palestinians who were similarly abused after October 7 but declined to give their testimony, fearing revenge by soldiers or the Israeli authorities.

15 See **B'Tselem**, "[Israel holding 750 families in Hebron's Area H2 under curfew for last month, in form of collective punishment](#)", 9 November 2023; See Hagar Shezaf, "[Stay Inside: Hebron Residents Face Restrictions Like Never Before, Unable to Leave Their Homes or Neighborhood](#)", **Haaretz English edition**, 4 January 2024.

16 See, for example, the testimonies of [Wisam Dufosh](#) and [Amir al-Fakhuri](#).

17 See [map of the Hebron city center](#) on **B'Tselem's** website.

18 See testimonies of [Hisham Abu Is'ifan](#) and [Mu'tasem Da'na](#).

19 See, for example, testimonies of [Muhammad Abu Ramileh](#), [Amir 'Aref Jaber](#) and [Muhammad 'Aref Jaber](#).

20 See, for example, testimonies of [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#) and [Amir al-Fakhuri](#).

21 See testimonies of [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Muhammad Farhat Jaber](#).

Random selection of victims

The testimonies indicate that the soldiers picked their victims entirely at random, seizing them on the way home, on the way to work, at checkpoints, on the street, hanging out with friends or running errands.

"At around 7:00 A.M. I was on my way to work. I'm a civil servant at the Ministry of Education. As soon as I got to the street that separates the a-Ras area from the Wadi al-Hassin area, a soldier who was standing about 50 meters away pointed his gun at me and yelled at me to stop. I did as he said and asked him in English to calm down, but he kept yelling and acting all wound up. I explained to him that I was going to work and wasn't dangerous in any way. He came over and pushed me, and then he ordered me to hand over my ID card and phone. Before I could give him the phone, he grabbed me by the back of the neck and shoved me to the ground. My back hurt a lot and I shouted. [...] When I kept shouting in pain, the soldier sat on me and pressed both his knees hard into my chest, until felt I couldn't breathe from the pain".

From the testimony of Hisham Abu Is'ifan, 54, a father of six from the Wadi al-Hasin neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 12 June 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"[...] I was hanging out with friends in Ziad's yard. [...] We were seven guys there. We were chatting and drinking coffee to pass the time, because once the curfew is on, we can't leave the neighborhood or do anything else. At 11:00 P.M., a soldier came into the yard and stood there, looking at us and pointing his gun at us. Then he ordered my friend Muhammad Abu Ramileh and me to get up and go over to him. We both got up immediately and walked over to him, and he ordered us to hold hands and walk ahead of him. He took us to the military observation point next to the Jaber checkpoint, walking behind us and pointing his gun at us the whole way".

From the testimony of Muhammad 'Aref Jaber, 21, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 17 May 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"He came over and pushed me, and then he ordered me to hand over my ID card and phone. Before I could give him the phone, he grabbed me by the back of the neck and shoved me to the ground"

"Once the curfew is on, we can't leave the neighborhood or do anything else. At 11:00 P.M., a soldier came into the yard and stood there, looking at us and pointing his gun at us"

In some cases, the soldiers demanded the victims' cellphones²² and searched them for "justification", no matter how feeble or absurd, for harassing the owners. In several incidents, the pretext given for the abuse was "punishment" for content found on phones, such as updates on the situation in Gaza²³ or on military activities in Hebron.²⁴

"The soldiers pulled my ID card and press card out of my pocket and ordered me to unlock my phone. I unlocked the phone, and they looked through it and found content to do with the war in Gaza [...] The soldiers blindfolded me and led me about 250 meters on foot to the military camp near the southern gate of the Kiryat Arba settlement. [...] They sang songs about revenge against Hamas in Hebrew, praising Israel and calling for killing of women and children. They made us repeat the words and curse the Palestinians. I understand Hebrew very well. They asked us about the events of October 7 and the killing of the children in Majdal Shams, and I told them I knew nothing about it because I live in Hebron. They kicked me and said, 'It's called Israel'. At that point, more soldiers came into the room. They started playing songs of praise to Israel on a speaker and dancing wildly around us".

From the testimony of Mu'tasem Da'na, 46, a father of eight from the neighborhood of Wadi a-Nasara in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 28 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"Another soldier handed me my phone and ordered me to unlock it with the password. He went on Instagram and saw a fake picture of an Israeli soldier with three hands saving babies on October 7, which had 'Photoshop' written on it. He asked me about it, and I said it was just a picture. He said, 'We'll show you Photoshop'. [...] After a few minutes, the soldiers put me in a jeep and made me sit on the floor. [...] Two of them spoke fluent Arabic. The jeep sped out of there. One of the soldiers grabbed me by

"The soldier asked me, 'Do you like Hamas?' I said no, and then he grabbed me by the arm, twisted it around my neck and strangled me"

22 See, for example, testimonies of [Mahmoud Jaber](#), ['Abd al-Majid Khatib](#) and [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#).

23 See testimonies of ['Abd al-Majid Khatib](#) and [Mu'tasem Da'na](#).

24 See testimonies of [Yasser Abu Markhiyeh](#) (from [21 June 2024](#) and [14 July 2024](#)) and [Mu'tasem Da'na](#).

the hair and slammed my face into the back door, three times in a row. I felt that my mouth and nose were bleeding. The soldier asked me, 'Do you like Hamas?' I said no, and then he grabbed me by the arm, twisted it around my neck and strangled me [...] Two soldiers started slapping me and asking me again: 'Do you like Hamas?' Again, I said I didn't, and then one of them hit me hard in the testicles. I screamed in pain, and then he hit me harder in the same place. I begged him in the name of God to stop hitting me".

From the testimony of Mahmoud 'Alaa Ghanem, 18, from the town of Dura in Hebron District, who was attacked by soldiers on 8 July 2024 |

[Read the full testimony here](#)

"They (the soldiers) spread out in the house, acting aggressively and violently. One of them pushed me hard against the wall and started frisking me, while kicking my legs and yelling and swearing at me. He ordered me to unlock my phone and hand it over. I saw him get into one of my WhatsApp groups and scroll through it. As soon as he finished, without saying a word, the other soldiers started violently leading me to the road while slapping and kicking me. [...] (The soldier) ordered me to shut up and told me to call my mother a 'slut' and to curse Hamas and Sinwar. I obeyed, because I was afraid of what they would do to me. All that lasted about an hour, until a masked soldier came into the room and spoke to me in fluent Arabic. He cursed me for following updates on what was happening in Gaza, and then he untied my hands, took off my blindfold and told me to get lost. He said the next time they found news about Hamas on my phone, they wouldn't take mercy on me".

"I saw him get into one of my WhatsApp groups and scroll through it. As soon as he finished, without saying a word, the other soldiers started violently leading me to the road while slapping and kicking me"

From the testimony of 'Abd al-Majid Khatib, 19, from the neighborhood of Tel Rumeidah in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 10 June 2024 |

[Read the full testimony here](#)

"[...] When I got to him, (the soldier) ordered me to hand over my ID card. I did, and he ordered me to unlock my phone and hand it

over, too. I heard him talk to someone on the wireless radio and say my name. About five minutes later, four soldiers arrived at the checkpoint. One of them spoke to me in Arabic and accused me of contacting Al Jazeera and slandering the Israeli army. I told him that I had, in fact, spoken to Al Jazeera three weeks earlier about soldiers who attacked me on 22 June 2024 [...] Then he tied my hands behind my back with zip ties and fastened them very tight. Two soldiers pounced on me and started beating me, including in the testicles, for several minutes".

From the testimony of Yasser Abu Markhiyeh, 52, a father of four from the neighborhood of Tel Rumeidah in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 14 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

Details of the abuse

Many of the victims were forcibly taken to military facilities, posts or watchtowers,²⁵ where they were attacked by one or more soldiers. Others were abused inside inspection rooms at checkpoints,²⁶ or in military vehicles.²⁷

The victims described severe physical and mental abuse, including, among other things, punching and kicking; blows delivered with firearms,²⁸ batons²⁹ or a chair;³⁰ slamming the head against a wall or the body against the floor;³¹ whipping with a belt;³² and, in one case, stabbing.³³ Three of the victims had their faces covered to the point of suffocation.³⁴ In several cases, the soldiers poured an unidentified putrid liquid on the victims,³⁵ or threw garbage and plastic bottles at them in two other

25 See, for example, testimonies of [Isma'il Jaber](#), [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#), [Muhammad Abu Ramileh](#) and [Muhammad Farhat Jaber](#). At least four witnesses said they were brought to the military watchtower in the Wadi al-Hasin neighborhood.

26 See, for example, testimonies of [Amir al-Fakhuri](#) and [Muhammad Farhat Jaber](#).

27 See, for example, testimonies of [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Isma'il Jaber](#).

28 See, for example, testimonies of [Mahmoud 'Alaa Ghanem](#), [Wisam Dufosh](#), [Muhammad 'Abd al-Hafiz Rajabi](#) and [Halal Rajabi](#).

29 See testimonies of [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Amir 'Aref Jaber](#).

30 See testimony of [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#).

31 See, for example, testimonies of [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#), [Isma'il Jaber](#) and [Muhammad 'Abd al-Hafiz Rajabi](#).

32 See testimony of [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#).

33 See testimony of [Isma'il Jaber](#).

34 See testimonies of [Ahmad Abu Sha'ban](#), [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#). Other witnesses, including [Mahmoud 'Alaa Ghanem](#) and [Hisham Abu Is'ifan](#), said they had trouble breathing due to repeated blows or a soldier's chokehold.

35 See testimonies of [Yasser Abu Marhiyeh](#) (from 14 July 2024), [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#) and [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#).

instances.³⁶ The soldiers threw a ball at the heads of at least three victims,³⁷ and in another three cases, put cigarettes out on the victims' skin.³⁸ Most of the victims were abused while blindfolded, with their hands tied, and forced to stay in painful positions for hours on end.³⁹ Some were forced to sit in the scorching sun for hours,⁴⁰ and others in a room with freezing air conditioning.⁴¹ Some were deprived of food and drink for long periods of time.⁴² During the physical assaults, victims were also verbally abused, including swearing and humiliating remarks made against them, family members or their religion.⁴³

"Two soldiers grabbed me by the arms and lifted me forcefully. They led me to the entrance to the military post and pushed me in, so that my face hit the iron door. They forced me to climb up the stairs of the tower with no help, blindfolded. I fell a few times during the climb, and every time I did, the soldiers beat me. When I got to the top of the tower, they put me in a room with a rough metal floor and forced me to kneel on it with my head down. They started hitting me with their guns and kicking me. [...] One of the soldiers stood on my ankles and pressed them down hard. I screamed in pain. He also ordered me to curse my mother and say that I was a 'son of a whore', but I refused again, and he hit me in the back with the barrel of a rifle. Then he pressed it against my head and asked, 'Do you want to die a martyr?' I said yes, and he said, 'Then I'll shoot you in the head and you'll die a martyr'".

"Then he pressed it (the barrel of a rifle) against my head and asked, 'Do you want to die a martyr?' I said yes, and he said, 'Then I'll shoot you in the head and you'll die a martyr'"

From the testimony of Isma'il Jaber, 22, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 30 May 2024 |

[Read the full testimony here](#)

36 See testimonies of [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and ['Udai al-Fakhuri](#).

37 See testimonies of [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#), [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Amir 'Aref Jaber](#).

38 See testimonies of [Ahmad Abu Sha'ban](#), [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and ['Abd al-Majid Khatib](#).

39 See, for example, testimonies of [Isma'il Jaber](#), [Muhammad Farhat Jaber](#) and [Mahmoud Jaber](#).

40 See testimonies of [Ahmad Abu Sha'ban](#), [Isma'il Jaber](#), [Mu'tasem Da'na](#) and [Mahmoud Jaber](#).

41 See testimony of [Amir 'Aref Jaber](#).

42 See, for example, testimonies of [Mu'tasem Da'na](#), [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Amir 'Aref Jaber](#).

43 See, for example, testimonies of ['Abd al-Majid Khatib](#) and ['Udai al-Fakhuri](#).

"One of the soldiers came to me and put his cigarette out on my right leg. He put it out slowly, so it would hurt more. One of them asked: 'Does it hurt?'. When I said yes, he punched me in the back of the head, stood on my legs and pressed down hard".

From the testimony of Muhammad a-Natsheh, 22, from the Tel Rumeidah neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 14 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"One of the soldiers came to me and put his cigarette out on my right leg. He put it out slowly, so it would hurt more"

"(The soldiers) started hitting and kicking me hard in my face, shoulder and back [...]. At some point, one of them ordered me to stand up. Two other soldiers lifted me up, and then they kicked me hard in the knees. They hit me again and again, which hurt a lot. Every time they hit me, I fell down and they immediately stood me up again. [...] One of the soldiers pushed me and slammed my face into a concrete wall. He did that three times in a row. I screamed in pain and felt very dizzy. [...] Pretty soon, I couldn't kneel anymore and tipped over on my side. One of the soldiers came and propped me back up on my knees, shouting at me in Hebrew. I couldn't understand what he was saying. The shirt covered my whole head, including my nose and mouth, and I could hardly breathe. [...] I kept screaming because of the pain in my leg. The soldier picked me up and sat me by the door of the room, where the soldiers walked back and forth, stepping on me and beating me on the way, sometimes with batons. I asked them: 'Why are you doing this?', and they responded with laughter and contempt".

From the testimony of Mahmoud Jaber, 20, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 16 August 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"Every time they hit me, I fell down and they immediately stood me up again"

"In the room, (the soldiers) started beating, punching and kicking me all over my body. Then they made me sit on the floor, poured water on me and turned the AC on really low. I was very cold.

At some point, I was so cold, I yelled at the soldiers that I couldn't take it anymore. In response, they attacked me again and hit me, this time with clubs. One of the soldiers said 'Mikasa' (a soccer ball brand), and then hit me on the head with something that felt like a ball. I heard a female soldier swearing at me. She pulled at the back of my shirt, and then I felt cold water trickling down my back".

From the testimony of Amir 'Aref Jaber, 20, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 21 June 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"At some point, I was so cold, I yelled at the soldiers that I couldn't take it anymore. In response, they attacked me again and hit me, this time with clubs"

"[...] They forced us to kneel, and started kicking us and hitting us with the butts and barrels of their rifles. Then, suddenly, I heard the sound of a leather belt coming from above, and one of them started whipping us with a belt on our heads and all over our bodies. We were barefoot, because they didn't let us put shoes on before we left the house, and our slides fell off on the way. The soldiers stepped on our feet. The beating with the belt lasted about three minutes, and then the soldiers brought a bucket and put it on my head. Later, I understood they also put a bucket on Yazan [who was arrested with me]. They started playing with a ball or something like that, and threw it at the bucket on my head. It hurt every time the ball hit the bucket. It was hard to breathe and I felt like I was suffocating".

From the testimony of Qutaybah Abu Ramileh, 25, from the a-Salaymeh neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers along with his brother Yazan, 22, on 8 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"Suddenly, I heard the sound of a leather belt coming from above, and one of them started whipping us with a belt on our heads and all over our bodies"

"Before the jeep took off, the two soldiers started slapping me on the neck, punching me in the chest and swearing at me. They forced me to repeat humiliating swearwords about my mother such as 'I'm a son of a whore and a whore', to curse Allah, Sinwar

and Hamas, and to repeat the phrase 'Am Yisrael Chai' ('the people of Israel live'). I could hear the clicks of a camera flash and realized they were taking pictures of me".

From the testimony of Muhammad Abu Ramileh, 20, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, was attacked by soldiers on 17 May 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

In one case, soldiers attacked minors during a night raid on their family's home:

"I was doing housework when my son Muhammad (14) came running in, frightened and panting. He went to one of the rooms and three soldiers ran in after him. I followed the soldiers into the room and asked them what they wanted. They started attacking my two sons. One of them grabbed Muhammad by the neck and lifted him in the air. [...] My daughter (16) tried to get the soldiers away from her brothers, and they started hitting us both with their guns, pushed us out of the room and locked it from the inside with the key. Through the door, I heard the soldiers continuing to attack them. I knocked on the door, crying and screaming. Then I went out to the yard and called out to the neighbors for help. [...] (Muhammad) was lying on the floor, motionless. I started shouting that the soldiers had killed him. [...] My other son, who was in the room with Muhammad, tried to follow him but passed out and fell down the stairs leading to the road. Some young guys picked him up and took him to the car [...] and they drove to the hospital".

From the testimony of Halah Rajabi, 50, a mother of nine from the al-Hariqah neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers along with her family in their home on 31 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"They forced me to repeat humiliating swearwords about my mother such as 'I'm a son of a whore and a whore', to curse Allah, Sinwar and Hamas, and to repeat the phrase 'Am Yisrael Chai'"

"Through the door, I heard the soldiers continuing to attack them. I knocked on the door, crying and screaming. Then I went out to the yard and called out to the neighbors for help"

Some of the soldiers used guns and other weapons as part of the abuse. In two cases, soldiers fired in the air to scare the victims.⁴⁴ In one case, soldiers fired rubber-coated metal bullets that hit the victim in the head.⁴⁵ In seven incidents, soldiers threw stun grenades at the victims and their family members,⁴⁶ four of them indoors.⁴⁷

"[...] The soldiers ordered us to leave. My husband turned the car around, and the soldiers were still surrounding us. One of them looked at me and winked. He gave me a mocking smile and then I saw him pull the pin on a stun grenade and throw it between my legs. I pushed the grenade away and it fell under the seat. I shouted, 'Grenade! Grenade!' and ducked to the other side. Muhammad [my husband] turned around to me when I shouted, so the grenade exploded under his face. He passed out. Thank God, the car stopped by itself. It was hard getting out of the car at first, because of the thick smoke and because I was so scared about Muhammad. I managed to get out and started shouting on the street and calling for help. Some local residents came over [...]. People on the street were shouting 'Martyr! Martyr!', and my blood froze in my veins with fear. We arrived at al-Muhtaseb Hospital with Muhammad still unconscious".

"One of them looked at me and winked. He gave me a mocking smile and then I saw him pull the pin on a stun grenade and throw it between my legs"

From the testimony of 'Abir Id'es-Jaber, 33, a mother of four from the al-Manshar neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers along with her husband on 21 August 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

Most of the victims were injured and bruised when they were released from the attack. Some required medical attention and were taken to hospital by their families or by acquaintances.⁴⁸ At least three witnesses were too afraid to go to the hospital, fearing the strict restrictions on movement and the possibility of encountering the soldiers again.⁴⁹

44 See testimonies of [Muhammad Jaber](#), ['Abir Id'es-Jaber](#) and [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#).

45 See testimony of [Wisam Dufosh](#).

46 See, for example, testimonies of [Wisam Dufosh](#), [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#) and [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#).

47 See testimonies of [Yasser Abu Markhiyeh](#) (from 21 June 2024), [Muhammad Jaber](#), [Amir al-Fakhuri](#) and [Halah Rajabi](#).

48 See, for example, testimonies of [Hisham Abu Is'ifan](#), [Wisam Dufosh](#) and [Muhammad 'Abd al-Hafiz Rajabi](#).

49 See testimonies of [Amir 'Aref Jaber](#), [Hisham Abu Is'ifan](#) and [Isma'il Jaber](#).

Sexual violence

Several victims recounted varying degrees of sexual violence and physical humiliation, ranging from explicit threats of rape,⁵⁰ to forced undressing,⁵¹ and strong blows to the genitals.⁵²

"The five soldiers surrounded me and started hitting me with their guns. One of them hit me on the head with a rifle. I fell down and they continued beating me, aiming deliberately for my testicles and other sensitive parts. The beating lasted a few minutes. I started feeling faint. [...] When I came to, I was in an ambulance. It took me to the Aliya

Governmental Hospital in Hebron, where they did X-rays. I also had bruises all over my body, especially on my testicles. My head wound was stitched and the doctors wanted to keep me at the hospital for 24 hours for observation, but I chose to go home after my daughter Rital called me, crying, because she'd seen pictures of me bleeding on the neighborhood WhatsApp group. It's been a week and my testicles still hurt badly. I'm getting medical treatment and am worried I'll find out I have major damage in that area. I also have severe pain in my back and feel that my health is deteriorating day by day."

From the testimony of Wisam Dufosh, 35, a father of three from the neighborhood of Tel Rumeidah in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 24 June 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"The five soldiers who were in the room got up and started beating me hard. When they were done, they made me take off all my clothes. One of the soldiers got a metal detector and ran it over my body. When he got to the right

"They continued beating me, aiming deliberately for my testicles and other sensitive parts. The beating lasted a few minutes. I started feeling faint"

"(The soldier) forced me to undress again and do 150 push-ups. I told him I couldn't, and then the soldiers beat and cursed me"

⁵⁰ See testimonies of [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#) and [Isma'il Jaber](#).

⁵¹ See testimonies of [Mahmoud Jaber](#) and [Muhammad Farhat Jaber](#).

⁵² See testimonies of [Yasser Abu Markhiyeh](#) (from 14 July 2024), [Wisam Dufosh](#), [Muhammad 'Abd al-Hafiz Rajabi](#) and [Mahmoud 'Alaa Ghanem](#).

knee, the device beeped because of the 'platinum' (metal implant), and he used it to hit me on the knee. Then they told me to get dressed. I got dressed, and one of the soldiers took 50 shekels I had in my pocket and forced me to undress again and do 150 push-ups. I told him I couldn't, and then the soldiers beat and cursed me. I was completely naked. It was a very humiliating experience".

From the testimony of Mahmoud Jaber, 20, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 16 August 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"After several minutes of severe beating and cursing, the soldier hit me hard in the testicles with the barrel of his gun. I passed out and don't know what happened next. I woke up at Mohammad Ali Al Mohtaseb Hospital with doctors giving me first aid. I had bruises all over my body and swelling in my head".

From the testimony of Muhammad 'Abd al-Hafiz Rajabi, 14, from the al-Hariqah neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers along with his family in their home on 31 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"The soldiers cursed me with humiliating swear words, and some of them stepped on my legs. It hurt a lot and I couldn't say anything. One of them got an office chair and put it on my legs. He sat on it from time to time, which hurt a lot. They kept swearing at me the whole time, and one of them spat at me, too. It went on like that for about an hour, and then one of the soldiers said to me in Arabic: 'We'll rape you'. One of them grabbed my head, and another soldier tried to open my mouth and shove a rubber object in it. I made a huge effort not to open my mouth. I heard him say in Hebrew: 'Film him, film him'. [...] Then a soldier who spoke Arabic came. He came over and ordered me to get up, but I couldn't. He grabbed me by the neck, lifted me up and made me stand facing the wall, and then he started pushing my head left and right violently with his hands, saying: 'If I see you in this place again, I'll rape you and kill you. I'll do the same to anyone else I see here'".

"One of the soldiers said to me in Arabic: 'We'll rape you'. One of them grabbed my head, and another soldier tried to open my mouth and shove a rubber object in it"

From the testimony of Muhammad a-Natsheh, 22, from the Tel Rumeidah neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 14 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

Visual documentation of the abuse

Sometimes, documenting the violence, abuse and humiliation was part of the attack itself. Some incidents were filmed on video, likely on the soldiers' cell phones.⁵³ In some cases, the soldiers were on a video call with acquaintances during the abuse, and joked about the suffering they were causing the victims.⁵⁴

"Then the soldiers brought ice and put it down my underwear. Yazan [who was arrested with me] told me afterwards they did the same to him. They also poured an alcoholic drink into our clothes. I heard a soldier talking to a girl on the phone. I think it was a video call. They were laughing and making fun of us. [...] The soldiers spoke to us in Hebrew, which I don't understand. One of the soldiers kicked us in the head and face while cursing us and our mothers. Then I heard him go up the stairs of the tower, and I heard music and songs from up top. The soldier would come down, hit and kick us, then go back up and then come back down. It went on like that until about 11:00 A.M. Yazan told me he couldn't take it anymore and didn't feel well".

From the testimony of khitam Da'na-al-Qimari, 25, from the a-Salaymeh neighborhood in the center of Hebron, was attacked by soldiers along with his brother Yazan, 22, on 8 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"They made me walk until we got to a room, where they made me kneel again. One of the soldiers pushed me and my back hit a hard, sharp object. It hurt a lot, and I let out a scream. The soldiers laughed. I heard the sound of laughter on a cell phone and figured they were filming me and sharing it with friends".

From the testimony of Mahmoud Jaber, 20, from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, who was attacked by soldiers on 16 August 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"It hurt a lot, and I let out a scream. The soldiers laughed. I heard the sound of laughter on a cell phone and figured they were filming me and sharing it with friends"

53 See, for example, testimonies of [Mu'tasem Da'na](#), [Muhammad Abu Ramileh](#) and [Muhammad a-Natsheh](#).

54 See, for example, testimonies of [Isma'il Jaber](#), [Qutaybah Abu Ramileh](#) and [Mahmoud Jaber](#).

Lasting impact of the abuse

The testimonies indicate that the abuse had a lasting psychological impact. Some of the victims reported trouble sleeping due to nightmares about the attacks. All were left keenly aware that although that particular incident may be over, they and their families are living in a constant threat to their lives, bodily integrity and wellbeing.

"A week after the attack, I still have headaches and feel dizzy. I have nightmares and can't sleep at night. Every sound in the house terrifies me and I'm scared all the time. I can't forget the moment the soldiers chased me, or the moment they closed the door and started brutally beating my brother and me".

"I have nightmares and can't sleep at night. Every sound in the house terrifies me and I'm scared all the time"

From the Testimony of Muhammad 'Abd al-Hafiz Rajabi, 14, from the al-Hariqah neighborhood in the center of Hebron who was attacked by soldiers along with his family in their home on 31 July 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"When I was done shaving Mahmoud, they ordered me to shave my hair, mustache and beard as well, and threatened that they would do it themselves if I didn't obey. [...] I've never felt so humiliated and insulted in my life. I can't get over it and my mental health is suffering. When I got back to my neighborhood, all shaven, I was ashamed. I was too embarrassed to even host relatives who came to congratulate me on my release".

"When I got back to my neighborhood, all shaven, I was ashamed"

From the testimony of Muhammad Farhat Jaber, 55, a father of seven from the Jaber neighborhood in the center of Hebron, was arrested by soldiers on 15 August 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

"Once we were in the yard, the soldiers went into our house and I heard them ransacking it [...] The soldier said the boy had thrown stones at soldiers and that they were going to take my kids and me to the military post. I told them Muhammad is just three years old and doesn't understand what it means to throw stones. My children were afraid of the soldiers. They cried and clung to me. [...] That

"That night, my kids didn't want to sleep in their room and clung to me all night. They kept talking about how the soldiers invaded our home"

night, my kids didn't want to sleep in their room and clung to me all night. They kept talking about how the soldiers invaded our home, turned everything upside down and broke some of the flowerpots in the entrance. [...] I spent the whole night tidying the house and calming my children, and I'm still very shaken".

From the Testimony of Khitam Da'na-al-Qimari, 26, a mother of two from the a-Ras neighborhood, near the settlement in the a-Rajabi (Hashalom) building in the center of Hebron, whose home was raided by soldiers on 17 August 2024 | [Read the full testimony here](#)

Conclusion

Since the beginning of the war in Gaza in October 2023, the various arms of the Israeli apartheid regime have greatly increased their use of violence and other oppressive measures against Palestinians.

The Palestinians abused in central Hebron, most of them young men going about their daily affairs, were easy targets. The soldiers who attacked them, like the government and many Jewish-Israelis, see them as collectively responsible for the actions of Hamas. This approach makes it permissible to harm them with no moral or other compunction. In such a public climate, extreme violence is considered inherent to fighting the enemy, as is its use to instill fear in the entire Palestinian population. The violence inflicted by soldiers, who understand what is expected of them and rise to the task, is extremely injurious to the lives, wellbeing and safety of Palestinians. This, alongside the fact that law enforcement regarding harm to Palestinians and their property is virtually nonexistent, means the routine violence is likely to continue unchecked.

The scope of violence revealed in the testimonies – carried out in plain sight, and sometimes recorded – makes it clear that the abuse cannot be explained only as a personal vendetta by soldiers or a flaw in the system. It shows that this violence is **the outcome of a systematic, longstanding policy of oppression, expulsion and dispossession that is at the very core of the Israeli apartheid regime.**⁵⁵

This reality leaves Palestinians with two options: uproot themselves from their homes, land and communities, or live in constant fear of violence.

⁵⁵ See **B'Tselem**, *A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid*, January 2021.