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**Human Rights Council****Sixty-second session**

15 June–10 July 2026

Agenda item 2

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development****Report of the Independent International Commission of  
Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including  
East Jerusalem, and Israel\****Summary*

In the present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-30/1, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel examines violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and possible international crimes relating to killing and causing mental and physical harm by non-State actors.

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\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



## I. Introduction, methodology and legal framework

1. In the present report, the Commission sets out its findings with regard to killings and acts causing bodily and mental harm by non-State actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel,<sup>1</sup> involving attacks by settlers, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza and Palestinian armed groups and individuals operating in the occupied West Bank.
2. The report is the Commission's fifth mandated report focusing on acts committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel on and since 7 October 2023. It should be read in conjunction with the Commission's previous reports and conference room papers.<sup>2</sup> The report also includes information on incidents and developments before October 2023, including historical developments, where the Commission considered them relevant to demonstrating patterns of violations over time.<sup>3</sup>
3. In preparing the report, the Commission consulted multiple sources of information, collected hundreds of open-source items, conducted remote interviews with victims and witnesses and received information through an open call for submissions.<sup>4</sup> The Commission sent one request for information and access to the Government of Israel and one request for information to the State of Palestine and to the de facto authorities in Gaza. The State of Palestine submitted information and comments on the report.
4. In its work, the Commission applied the same methodology and standard of proof previously adopted for its investigations.<sup>5</sup> A full list of sources and detailed information used for the present report is on file with the Commission.
5. The Commission relied on the legal framework adopted throughout its work and in its terms of reference.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Commission took note of the advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 of the International Court of Justice, in which the Court stated that the continued presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was unlawful under international law and that Israel was under an obligation to bring to an end, as rapidly as possible, the unlawful occupation, that Israel was under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and evacuate settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and that it had an obligation to make full reparation for damages caused to all natural or legal persons concerned.
6. The Commission notes that aid or assistance to settlers and Palestinian armed groups could include financial contributions and the supply of arms, security equipment and logistic

<sup>1</sup> In the present report, the Commission sets out its findings with regard to killings and acts causing bodily and mental harm caused by non-State actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. The death or injury of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship as a result of acts by non-State actors, including through criminal actions, was not included in the present report; the Commission may examine such cases at a later date.

<sup>2</sup> See [A/79/232](#), [A/80/337](#) and [A/HRC/56/26](#); and conference room papers of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel on detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel, available at [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-3.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-3.pdf); on detailed findings on the military operations and attacks carried out in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 7 October to 31 December 2023, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>; on Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since 7 October 2023, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>; and on a legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> For violations against children, including by non-State actors, a conference room paper will be made available on the web page of the Commission.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-israel/call-submissions-30-september-2025>.

<sup>5</sup> See [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/TORs-UN-Independent\\_ICI\\_Occupied\\_Palestinian\\_Territories.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/TORs-UN-Independent_ICI_Occupied_Palestinian_Territories.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> [A/79/232](#), paras. 4 and 5.

support by third parties, including business enterprises, and third States. The Commission notes that there is a need for further investigation into these matters in order for accountability to be addressed. The overall organizational structure of, and the interlinkages between, the various Palestinian armed groups referred to in the present report and Hamas is on file with the Commission.

## II. Factual findings

### A. Killings and acts causing bodily and mental harm by Israeli settlers

#### 1. Overview

7. According to data on casualties compiled by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat,<sup>7</sup> at least seven Palestinians were killed and at least 832 Palestinians injured (including at least 58 women, 63 boys and 11 girls) by Israeli settlers in the West Bank in 2025.<sup>8</sup> This marks a 133 per cent increase in killings and a 130 per cent increase in injuries over the year 2024, when three Palestinians were killed and 362 injured. In total, at least 26 Palestinians were killed and at least 1,570 were injured by settlers between January 2023 and December 2025. At least six Palestinians were killed by settlers between 28 February and 15 March 2026, against the backdrop of the regional conflict.<sup>9</sup>

8. The numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by settlers have been steadily increasing since 2008, when a total of six Palestinians were killed and 183 injured. In total, 61 Palestinians (including 10 boys and two women) were killed by settlers in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 3,778 injured (including at least 507 boys, 101 girls and 317 women) in the period from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2025.<sup>10</sup>

9. The Commission investigated six incidents of settler attacks that took place between April 2024 and November 2025 and were deemed to be representative of the key trends. Five Palestinian men and one boy were killed in these incidents, and 10 Palestinians sustained bodily and/or mental harm. In two cases, victims were shot in the head, and one of them was a child.

#### 2. Historical background

10. Settler violence towards Palestinians in the West Bank was recorded as early as the 1970s and has been carried out in collaboration with Israeli military authorities, with the goal of pressuring Palestinians to leave.<sup>11</sup> In the early years of the occupation, while the State of Israel overtly took over land,<sup>12</sup> settlers harassed Palestinians to encourage their departure including by instigating their arrest if they refused to leave and by shutting off water access.<sup>13</sup> Over the years, the number of attacks by settlers has increased, along with the intensity and severity of violence.

11. Settler attacks increased during the first intifada, of 1987, and the second intifada, of 2000.<sup>14</sup> Attacks also increased against the backdrop of the emergence of the so-called “price tag” attack policy, which was aimed at exacting a price on the Palestinian population living close to settlements for any political or legal move that the settlers interpreted as being

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties> (accessed 27 April 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Excluding those killed by Israeli security forces collaborating with settlers. See <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/humanitarian-situation-update-352-west-bank/#:~:text=Between%2017%20December%202025%20and,two%20Palestinians%20injured%20per%20day>.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/15March26-Palestinian-families-killed-by-ILS-and-settlers-EN.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

<sup>11</sup> [S/13450](#) and [S/13450/Corr.1](#), paras. 95, 172, 179 and,230; and [A/HRC/22/63](#), para. 51.

<sup>12</sup> See [A/77/328](#).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; see [https://www.btselem.org/settler\\_violence](https://www.btselem.org/settler_violence); and [S/13450](#) and [S/13450/Corr.1](#), para. 95.

<sup>14</sup> See [https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/200103\\_tacit\\_consent\\_eng.pdf](https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/200103_tacit_consent_eng.pdf).

contrary to their interests.<sup>15</sup> Israeli authorities have consistently acknowledged settler violence as a problem, while promoting structural conditions that enable it, including the expansion of settlements, the provision of infrastructure, funding and incentives that sustain settler presence, the deployment of Israeli forces for the protection of settlers and the reinforcement of their attacks on Palestinians and the widespread impunity for attacks. Several parliamentary committees and Knesset deliberations have recognized specific deficiencies by the judiciary and police, including the Karp report of 1982<sup>16</sup> and the Shamgar report of 1994.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Key patterns and the impact of settler attacks

12. The period since 2023 has been characterized by a significant rise in large scale, organized attacks against Palestinian villages and agricultural land involving groups of masked attackers, many of them armed and accompanied by Israeli security forces. Attacks consistently involve shooting and setting fire to property and dwellings and physically attacking Palestinian residents. Settlers have also increased daily campaigns of harassment, trespassing on the land and property and intimidation of Palestinians. Palestinian agricultural land is increasingly the site of attacks, with settlement outposts and farms strategically established on Palestinian agricultural land as part of a broader effort to expand territorial control and ensure continuity between settlement blocs. Between 7 October 2023 and 10 March 2026, a total of 59 shepherding communities were expelled, primarily as a result of settler violence.<sup>18</sup> One of the largest herding communities that was completely displaced due to settler attacks after 7 October 2023 was Khirbet Zanuta, located in the southern Hebron hills, with attacks reportedly originating from the Meitarim Farm outpost, with attackers often accompanied by soldiers.

13. One large-scale attack took place on 11 July 2025 in Al-Batin farmland. On that day, a large group of Palestinians from Sinjil and Al-Mazraa villages was attacked by settlers and Israeli soldiers while cultivating their farmland in Al-Batin area, resulting in the killing of two Palestinians from Al-Mazraa. One died of a gunshot wound and another was beaten to death. At least 17 Palestinians, including four children, were injured by Israeli forces, and three Palestinian adults were injured by settlers. The attackers reportedly came from an outpost established by settlers between Al-Batin and Sinjil in June 2025, essentially blocking the residents' access to their farmland. The Commission is not aware of any investigative or judicial outcome in this case.

14. Many settler attacks have been categorized by settlers as "price tag" or revenge attacks (see para. 11 above). Settlers attacked the Palestinian village of Beitin on 13 April 2024, as retribution for the disappearance and killing of a 14-year-old settler. At least three waves of settlers entered the village, unopposed by Israeli forces who were accompanying the settlers. Settlers used arson, destroyed property and threw stones. As they retreated in the evening, one of the settlers shot at the crowd, striking a 17-year-old Palestinian boy in the head and killing him. On 2 May 2025, a settler from Beit El was reportedly arrested by the Israeli Security Agency on suspicion of shooting the victim. Beyond the reported arrest, the Commission is not aware of any subsequent accountability in this case.

15. The Commission documented multiple other large-scale attacks fuelled by similar motivations, including the mass attack on Huwara in February 2023, resulting in the killing of one Palestinian man and the injury of hundreds, and an attack on Burkin village in May 2025, resulting in the killing of a Palestinian man and the injury of two others.

<sup>15</sup> A/HRC/22/63, para. 55; and see [https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha\\_opt\\_settler\\_violence\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2009\\_11\\_15\\_english.pdf](https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_settler_violence_fact_sheet_2009_11_15_english.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Yehudit Karp, *The Karp Report: An Israeli Government Inquiry into Settler Violence against Palestinians on the West Bank* (Beirut, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984).

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-176177/>.

<sup>18</sup> See [https://www.btselem.org/settler\\_violence\\_updates\\_list?importance=1](https://www.btselem.org/settler_violence_updates_list?importance=1).

#### 4. Harm to Palestinian children by settlers

16. Incidents of settler violence impacting Palestinian children increased in the period 2023–2025, compared with the previous three-year period. During that period, at least two boys were killed by settlers.<sup>19</sup>

17. The Commission documented and investigated several cases of the assault, abduction and abuse of Palestinian children by settlers, including a case involving gender-based violence. In one case, on 19 April 2025, two siblings, a 12-year-old girl and a 3-year-old boy, were abducted by settlers while they were playing outside their home in the village of Beit-Furik. The settlers dragged the children at knifepoint to an olive grove, while covering their mouths, and tied them to a tree using plastic hand ties. The family arrived at the scene shortly after, untied the children and released them. In another case, in August 2024, two 15-year-old boys were abducted while herding livestock and were subjected to abuse by settlers, including forced stripping and being urinated on.

18. Palestinian children directly exposed to settler violence have reported feeling terrified, experiencing nightmares and flashbacks. Children’s situation is compounded by “invisible harms”, causing them to fear normal daily activities, including going to school and playing outside. This harm contributes to “slow violence”, the imposition of gradual, cumulative insecurity, deprivation and fear. In one example, settlers driving an all-terrain vehicle chased and attacked a school bus on 25 January 2026, close to Ein al-Duyuk in Area A (northwest of Jericho), while it was carrying children. According to videos, adult settlers threw stones at the vehicle that tried to flee, while the children were screaming and crying inside.

#### 5. Sexual and gender-based violence

19. The Commission previously reported that, following 7 October 2023, settlers have increasingly resorted to sexual violence and threats of sexual violence to instil fear and humiliate Palestinians.<sup>20</sup> The Commission verified the rape of a Palestinian man by inserting a wooden stick in his anus perpetrated by a group of settlers in 2026. The Commission investigated a case of the attempted rape of a Palestinian man by settlers in October 2023 and documented a similar case in 2025, when an Israeli activist was attacked by settlers who attempted to beat him on his genitals and rape him. On 13 March 2026, a group of settlers attacked Palestinians in Khirbeit Humsa, subjecting the women and girls to beatings and threatening them with rape if the family did not leave the land. One man was stripped, sexually assaulted, his genitals were zip-tied and he was dragged and paraded while being beaten. The Israeli police reported that they had arrested seven persons in relation to this attack; however, the Commission is not aware of any investigative or judicial outcomes.<sup>21</sup>

20. Settlers have also consistently targeted Palestinian women and girls, including older and pregnant women and women with disabilities. In one example, on 19 October 2025, a large group of Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian farmers in the village of Turmus’ayya, outside Ramallah, beat them with sticks and stones and set vehicles on fire. One of the farmers, a Palestinian woman in her fifties, was violently beaten with a club until she became unconscious. Members of the Israeli army were present prior to the assault, fired tear gas at the crowd and detained three human rights defenders who were in Turmus’ayya that day to offer protective presence to Palestinian harvesters. The three defenders were later released. Assistance was requested from the army but not provided. On 27 November 2025, a settler from an outpost was indicted and charged with one count of an act of terrorism of assault with aggravated intention, one count of an act of terrorism of assault with aggravated intention in collaboration and one count of malicious damage to a vehicle.

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

<sup>20</sup> See conference room paper of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel on Israel’s systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since 7 October 2023, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> See [https://x.com/IL\\_police/status/2036042668577267830?s=20](https://x.com/IL_police/status/2036042668577267830?s=20).

## 6. Perpetrators of settler violence: attributes, ideology and aims

21. Settlers have openly admitted to taking actions to expel the Palestinian population, including through violence. They are largely led by religious convictions, including seeing their actions as part of a “holy war” to liberate the broader land of Israel (*Eretz Israel Hashlema*). They have repeatedly published a monthly summary of attacks on Palestinians on popular instant messaging groups and other channels. The Commission documented five instances from November to December 2025 in which settlers assigned responsibility for attacks to specific groups of settlers in a social media group, including to a group named the Battalions of King David. On 22 March 2026, the same group claimed responsibility for arson and graffiti attacks in five villages, as revenge for the death of a settler in Area A of the West Bank in a car accident a few days earlier.

22. Tellingly, one settler named Elisha Yered, who had previously been arrested and received an administrative removal order on suspicion of killing a Palestinian in Burqah village in 2023, said in February 2026: “Enough with the politically correct. We need to kick them out.”<sup>22</sup> He also clearly highlighted that settler attacks are unprovoked, saying: “The best defence is offence ... we unequivocally initiate friction and we are proud of it.”<sup>23</sup> Another settler leader, Meir Atinger, outlined specific sequential steps in the pursuit of occupation of the entire West Bank, including the cancellation of Areas A and B, the establishment of Jewish settlements inside Palestinian cities through the purchase or seizure of homes and the expulsion of Palestinians through sustained pressure.

23. Israeli leaders, including the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, have tried to trivialize settler violence by framing it as essentially committed by “a small group of unruly youth”, who did not represent settlers as a whole. Evidence indicates however that settler violence leading to death or injury is predominantly perpetrated by adult male settlers residing in outposts and farms. That evidence notwithstanding, the Commission found that children, dubbed by some as an “attrition corps”, are increasingly involved in lower-level harassment and attacks intended to inflict consistent low-level harm, including by trespassing, threatening, stealing animals, verbal and physical abuse and vandalism.

24. The Commission documented multiple cases of Israeli children as young as 12 years of age deployed to outposts and found that, while some are the children of settlers, exposed to indoctrination by family members and settler organizations such as Nahala, and enjoying family support, others came from Israel to volunteer at farms, including through recruitment agencies such as Hashomer Yosh (see para. 26 below). The majority of such children have stopped going to school and are instead engaged in physical labour, livestock rearing and guard duty. Israeli authorities have officially recognized them as children at risk and have developed action plans and dedicated budgets to efforts aimed at prevention, removing children and rehabilitation. These efforts have reportedly not achieved significant results.

## 7. Political and financial support by local and national Israeli authorities

25. The Commission previously noted that the right-wing coalition Government elected in December 2022 has pursued policies of expanding settlements and outposts and annexing the West Bank. These include the 8 February 2026 Cabinet decision to expand Israeli civilian authority in Areas A and B of the West Bank.<sup>24</sup> The Minister of Finance, Bezalel Smotrich, the Minister of Settlements and National Projects, Orit Strock, the Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and the Minister of Defence, Israel Katz, are key figures who are responsible for funding and protecting outposts,<sup>25</sup> including where violent attacks originate. They have explicitly permitted or condoned settler violence as an instrument to achieve a broader agenda.

26. The Government of Israel has been funding farms, outposts, educational facilities, recognized settlements, public buildings and roads directly through the Settlements Division

<sup>22</sup> See <https://x.com/ElishaYered/status/201897450792777351?s=20>.

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q48vUD5XowM&t=1s>.

<sup>24</sup> See <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/un-human-rights-chief-deepening-israeli-control-over-palestinian-lands-further-violates-right-to-self-determination/>.

<sup>25</sup> [A/80/337](#), para. 27.

of the World Zionist Organisation<sup>26</sup> or indirectly through support to organisations such as Hashomer Yosh, which recruit volunteers to work in the farms, providing them with shelter and food. Hashomer Yosh received 1,198,799 NIS (approximately US\$385,653) in 2023 and 748,745 NIS (approximately US\$240,855) in 2024 from the Government of Israel,<sup>27</sup> despite being a sanctioned entity.<sup>28</sup>

## 8. Role of Israeli security forces

27. Although Israeli authorities, under increasing international pressure, have occasionally issued removal orders for violent settlers and have dismantled certain outposts seen as “exporters of Jewish terror”, these measures have been, at best, limited in scope and appear to constitute only symbolic gestures rather than genuine efforts to address the issue. In several instances, the evacuation of outposts was immediately followed by escalations in settler violence against Palestinians, including attacks on nearby villages and vehicles, carried out as reprisals for the authorities’ actions. Following the evacuation and dismantling of Givat Mevaser Shalom outpost near Beita on 4 December 2025, settlers attacked Palestinian vehicles on nearby road 60. The outpost was thereafter swiftly reconstructed. Israeli security forces consistently failed to prevent or respond to violence linked to evacuation of outposts, including in the example above, even though such incidents were reasonably foreseeable. Settlers consistently faced no legal consequences for rebuilding evacuated outposts despite violating standing military closure orders.

28. Israeli army units have operated alongside settlers in numerous incidents, treating attacks as “riots” or confrontations between two ostensibly equal sides and, in some cases when Palestinians responded by throwing stones, mischaracterizing settler-initiated assaults as Palestinian attacks. This framing has repeatedly led soldiers to open fire on Palestinians, killing and injuring them, while settlers faced little or no accountability. The increasing participation of Israeli security forces in settler attacks amounts to a de facto collapse of the distinction between settlers and soldiers, which has heightened since thousands of settlers were recruited to rapid response units (*kitot konenut*) and “regional defence brigades” (*hagamar*) and thousands received gun licenses and were armed at the instruction of the Minister of National Security.

29. The army routinely accompanies settlers in attacks, reinforcing a pattern in which State security forces serve as a shield for settler violence rather than as a safeguard for the occupied population. In two incidents investigated by the Commission, an attack in Surif on 19 June 2025 resulting in the killing of one Palestinian man and an attack on Al-Batin farmland on 11 July 2025 resulting in the killing of two Palestinian men (see para. 13), the Israeli army Spokesperson referred to the Palestinians as “militants” and “terrorists”, owing to some stone throwing, although the attacks took place on Palestinian land or in Palestinian villages. Recent declarations by Israeli officials that the Israeli army and settlers are “acting as one” further incentivizes soldiers to assist settlers in attacks.

30. Attacks targeting the village of Deir Jarir near Ramallah in 2025 clearly illustrate the recurring nature of attacks on specific locations, the role of Israeli security forces and the absence of any action by Israeli authorities to prevent further harm. The Commission documented three incidents, between July and November 2025, in which settlers accompanied by Israeli army forces attacked Deir Jarir, confrontations with Palestinians developed into mutual stone throwing and settlers and/or Israeli security forces then shot at Palestinians killing and/or injuring them. Three Palestinians were killed in Deir Jarir in the second half of 2025 as a result of settler violence, and many others were injured.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., para. 36.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.guidestar.org.il/organization/580575629/govsupport>; and [https://www.guidestar.org.il/VF\\_View\\_File?guid=bd06c02e16e4dfd-cd498f941b937e9d-9785939f5f90e24b3d0a737453691c985bfd04a0b0b834e720e540d19e81ba7c-f1b8d35c5ef80af7-ec80adf370cf1133d](https://www.guidestar.org.il/VF_View_File?guid=bd06c02e16e4dfd-cd498f941b937e9d-9785939f5f90e24b3d0a737453691c985bfd04a0b0b834e720e540d19e81ba7c-f1b8d35c5ef80af7-ec80adf370cf1133d).

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-uk-sanctions-target-illegal-outposts-and-organisations-supporting-extremist-israeli-settlers-in-the-west-bank>.

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-343-west-bank>; and <https://pocdb.ochaopt.org/SearchPOC.aspx?Responders=No>.

31. The Commission has recorded notable contradictions between different Israeli security forces in relation to tackling settler violence, ostensibly fuelled by political considerations. In one example, the Israeli Security Agency issued a timely and serious alert ahead of a settler attack on Jit village on 15 August 2024. The alert was ignored by the regional Chief of Police, Avishai Mualem, resulting in a subsequent failure to protect the village from the attack, in which a 22-year-old Palestinian man was killed.<sup>30</sup> A memo issued by the Agency in August 2024 recommending the evacuation of outposts that constituted direct “sources of violence” in the Binyamin area was subsequently dismissed and ignored by Israeli officials.

32. Police inaction is underscored by the refusal of the Israeli army to engage in law enforcement capacities, despite its responsibility to do so. Both serve as a substantial contributing factor to the proliferation of settler violence and impunity. According to Yesh Din, approximately 93.6 per cent of all investigations opened by police in the past 20 years have ended without indictment, as of January 2026.<sup>31</sup> This reflects an acute systematic failure on behalf of law enforcement and the judicial system, including the Israeli police, who often contribute directly or indirectly to attacks. The police were present and directly or indirectly contributed to attacks in 16 of about 30 large-scale settler attacks on Palestinian villages documented by Yesh Din, between 2023 and November 2025.<sup>32</sup> All the victims’ families who spoke to the Commission expressed their total lack of trust in Israeli police investigations.

33. Deficiencies in the justice system have also contributed to impunity for settler violence, including prosecutors “under charging” for offences, the application of different legal systems to settlers and Palestinians and courts deferring to “security narratives” and treating Palestinian accounts as unreliable or culpable. The killing of a Palestinian man by a settler, Yinon Levy, in Um-Al-Kheir village in Masafer Yatta on 28 July 2025 provides an illustration of such deficiencies, which include the immediate arrest of 19 Palestinians at the scene and their detention for two weeks, in contrast with the delayed arrest of the Israeli shooter. In addition, the Magistrate Court in Jerusalem removed the settler’s house arrest provisions shortly after citing weak evidence and the possibility that he was acting in self-defence.

## **B. Killings and acts causing bodily and mental harm by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza**

34. The Commission investigated incidents of summary and extrajudicial executions and severe physical violence inflicted on Palestinians in Gaza by armed militants affiliated with Hamas.

35. The Commission identified 249 individual cases of executions and severe physical violence perpetrated between August 2024 and January 2026, including maiming, resulting in at least 108 deaths and 384 injured. These cases involved executions, kneecapping, bone-breaking with metal pipes or cement bricks and beatings and were framed by the perpetrators as punishments for alleged collaboration with Israel, looting humanitarian aid,

<sup>30</sup> See

[https://www.idf.il/%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%99%D7%97%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94/%D7%9B%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%94%D7%A4%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%9D-%D7%AA%D7%97%D7%A7%D7%99%D7%A8-%D7%94%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%9B%D7%A4%D7%A8-%D7%92%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F/.](https://www.idf.il/%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%99%D7%97%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94/%D7%9B%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%94%D7%A4%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%9D-%D7%AA%D7%97%D7%A7%D7%99%D7%A8-%D7%94%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%9B%D7%A4%D7%A8-%D7%92%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F/)

<sup>31</sup> See [https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/%D7%93%D7%A3+%D7%A0%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D+%D7%90%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%AA+%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7+-+%D7%93%D7%A6%D7%9E%D7%91%D7%A8+2024/DataSheet\\_Law%2BEnforcement\\_\\_Dec2024\\_English.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/%D7%93%D7%A3+%D7%A0%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D+%D7%90%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%AA+%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7+-+%D7%93%D7%A6%D7%9E%D7%91%D7%A8+2024/DataSheet_Law%2BEnforcement__Dec2024_English.pdf); and [https://www.yesh-din.org/data-sheet-law-enforcement-on-israeli-civilians-in-the-west-bank-settler-violence-2005-2025-heb/.](https://www.yesh-din.org/data-sheet-law-enforcement-on-israeli-civilians-in-the-west-bank-settler-violence-2005-2025-heb/)

<sup>32</sup> See [https://www.yesh-din.org/data-sheet-law-enforcement-on-israeli-civilians-in-the-west-bank-settler-violence-2005-2025-heb/.](https://www.yesh-din.org/data-sheet-law-enforcement-on-israeli-civilians-in-the-west-bank-settler-violence-2005-2025-heb/)

theft, drug-related offences or affiliations with internal rivals. Private information about many of the victims' identities was published online, including full names and addresses, a practice known as doxing, exposing victims and their families to the risk of further violence, stigma and social exclusion.

36. The Commission found that Hamas-affiliated forces were involved in at least 60 incidents, of which 7 were investigated in depth.

37. Three key Hamas-affiliated forces were found to be responsible for the perpetration of violent acts: Izz al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas; the Sahm Unit, a plain-clothed paramilitary force created in March 2024 by the Ministry of the Interior in Gaza; and the Rad'a Force, established on 26 June 2025 as a paramilitary police force to suppress crime and target perceived collaborators and rival factions. In several cases, multiple Hamas forces acted together and, in one case, other Palestinian armed groups, including the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Mujahidin Brigades were involved.

38. At least six cases of extrajudicial punishment in 2025 were perpetrated by the Qassam Brigades, resulting in some nine victims executed and 20 injured. At least 45 cases in the period 2024–2025 were perpetrated by the Sahm Unit, resulting in some 14 victims executed and 101 injured; and at least six cases in the period 2025–2026 were perpetrated by Rad'a Force, resulting in some 12 victims executed and three injured.

39. Statements published by a Sahm Unit-affiliated social media channel in relation to punitive actions of the unit have emphasized immediate, on-site punitive decisions without due process. Statements from June 2024 and November 2025 released on Hamas-affiliated social media channels instructed medical practitioners to withhold medical care from the victims. These constitute additional egregious factors affecting victims' right to a fair trial and right to health.

40. The violent acts examined by the Commission caused physical and mental harm, with a significant long-term impact, including further physical harm, enduring family stigma and social exclusion.

## 1. Historical context

41. Armed militants have inflicted summary and extrajudicial executions and severe physical violence on Palestinians in Gaza during several periods in the past. The power struggle between Hamas and Fatah from 7 to 14 June 2007, which resulted in Hamas' seizing control of Gaza, included widespread extrajudicial killings by both sides. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 100 Palestinians were killed by armed forces controlled by Hamas and Fatah in clashes and other circumstances between 13 and 19 June 2007.<sup>33</sup>

42. Hamas forces killed some 29 to 32 Gaza residents between 27 December 2008 and 27 February 2009 during the Israeli Operation Cast Lead. According to the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, people were targeted based on political affiliation, especially Fatah affiliates and supporters, with hospitals serving as sites for questioning, executions and body dumps.<sup>34</sup>

43. Following the Israeli Operation Protective Edge, from July to August 2014, the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1 reported that at least 21 suspected collaborators, including one woman, had been executed in Gaza City by the Qassam Brigades. Use of torture by Hamas forces was also found, often taking place in Al-Shifa Hospital.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See <https://unispal.un.org/pdfs/WBN212.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> See [A/64/890](#) and [A/HRC/12/48](#).

<sup>35</sup> Conference room paper on the detailed findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-i-gaza-conflict/report-co-i-gaza>, para. 497; and <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde21/1643/2015/en/>.

44. Summary and extrajudicial executions and torture were also carried out by Hamas when there was no active Israeli military operation or attack, including in 2015, 2016<sup>36</sup> and 2017.<sup>37</sup>

45. The Commission notes that clear patterns emerge in the timing, methods and targets of punitive justice by Hamas in Gaza. These include the consistent use of summary and extrajudicial executions and severe physical violence amounting to torture. Notably, executions were conducted as public spectacles in open areas like streets, mosques and abandoned police stations and included the photographing, recording or live streaming of the event.

## 2. Background

46. The Commission noted in a previous report that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza from 7 October 2023 until at least 31 July 2025.<sup>38</sup> This included mass killings, massive bombardment of residential areas, the imposition of a total siege involving the use of starvation as a weapon of war and the complete destruction of the international aid delivery system and the education and healthcare systems. Israeli forces systematically targeted civilian Hamas officials, including police and internal security forces (separate from the Hamas military wing), who had held quasi-governance and law enforcement roles prior to October 2023. Hundreds of Hamas police and security personnel were also killed between 7 October 2023 and 18 July 2025, resulting in an absence of law and order structures. Continual Israeli attacks and the destruction of essential infrastructure resulted in an essential vacuum of control, one that Hamas was desperate to counter and ultimately regain. Lawlessness, killings, looting, theft and social chaos were the direct results of that vacuum and Israeli attacks.

47. Gender inequality has also been increasing in the Gaza strip, including cases of domestic violence, early marriage and intimate partner violence. The risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment has also increased as a direct result of the dire humanitarian situation and gendered barriers in access to aid and basic necessities, enabling perpetrators to exploit their power and access.

## 3. Executions and physical violence inflicted on people accused of collaboration and opposition to Hamas after October 2023

48. The Commission investigated three cases of violence inflicted on people accused of collaboration or opposition; two of them included the public execution of victims.

49. On 8 July 2024, a Palestinian activist who was a vocal critic of Hamas and a Fatah affiliate was abducted and severely beaten publicly by a group of masked Hamas assailants in the Jabalia refugee camp, in northern Gaza Strip. The victim sustained multiple fractures and internal injuries and was classified as critical, eventually being medically evacuated abroad. The assault stemmed from the victim's long-standing opposition to Hamas, including public criticism of its governance, economic policies and the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel. The Commission retains information on the identities of six assailants involved in the attack, four of whom are senior members of the Hamas internal security department.

50. On 21 September 2025, a group of militants publicly executed three Palestinian men in front of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, accusing them of collaboration with Israel and of affiliation with Popular Forces (Yasser Abu Shabab's group). The victims are seen in a video blindfolded with their hands tied behind their backs, amid a crowd of onlookers. One of eight masked gunmen addresses the crowd stating that: "... The death penalty has been decided against these traitors." The victims are then knocked to the ground and shot multiple times in

<sup>36</sup> A/HRC/28/80, para. 55; and A/HRC/31/40, paras. 69–72.

<sup>37</sup> A/HRC/37/38, para. 52.

<sup>38</sup> See the conference room paper of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel on legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, available at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/commission-of-inquiry-report-genocide-in-gaza-a-hrc-60-crp-3/>.

the head and upper body. The Commission found that the incident was perpetrated by the Qassam Brigades and the Rad'a Force of Hamas, with the likely additional participation of members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Mujahidin Brigades.

51. On 13 October 2025, eight members of the Doghmosh clan were publicly executed by members of the Qassam Brigades and the Rad'a Force of Hamas in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City. One video depicts eight blindfolded and bound men, all with apparent prior injuries, four of them half-dressed, being dragged by 10 to 15 masked perpetrators into an open space area and made to kneel while the crowd shouts "collaborator" and "spy". Eight of the militants then shot the victims at close range.

52. The victims were accused of collaboration with Israel, stealing humanitarian aid and killing a member of the Qassam Brigades. A series of clashes between 10 and 12 October 2025 between the Doghmosh clan and Hamas ended in a negotiated surrender of Doghmosh family members to Hamas on 13 October 2025, with reported reassurances by Hamas that those surrendered would be treated fairly and investigated. Less than two hours after their surrender, however, the eight men were executed publicly without inquiry or trial.

#### 4. Physical violence inflicted on people accused of theft and other crimes

53. The Commission investigated four cases in which individuals were accused of theft and other criminal offences and were subjected to physical and psychological harm, evidently intended to inflict severe or lasting bodily harm and mental suffering without resulting in fatality.

54. In October 2025, a Palestinian man was severely beaten by more than 10 militants from the Sahn Unit of Hamas. The victim was accused of drug trafficking. He was partially stripped and subjected to forced confession and a severe beating that appeared to result in fractures to both of his legs. Videos of the incident depict one assailant pressing a foot to the victim's chest to pin him down, while another hits the victim with a metal pipe across his chest, legs and arms. Later the victim was hit on his knees, likely resulting in their fracture, while masked assailants covered his mouth.

55. In the same month, two militants from the Sahn Unit of Hamas severely beat and injured a Palestinian man on the Nasser Medical Complex premises in Khan Younis. In video recordings, the victim was seen tied up in a stress position (*shabeh*) and being forced to confess to illegally selling tobacco and severely beaten on his wrists, chest and arms with a metal pipe, while he screamed in pain.

56. In the same month, five militants from the Sahn Unit of Hamas severely beat and caused serious leg injuries to a Palestinian man on the Nasser Medical Complex premises, an event also captured on video. The victim was accused of drug trafficking and of expressing support to the United States of America and Israel. The victim was stripped to his underwear and pinned to the ground while one militant repeatedly smashed a large cement brick on his legs and another hit his ankle with a metal pipe, likely fracturing it, amid his screams.

57. In December 2024, five masked militants from the Sahn Unit of Hamas assaulted and knecapped an unidentified Palestinian man in an open area in front of the Nasser Medical Complex, in front of a crowd including at least three children. According to several sources, including a statement by the perpetrators, who likened the act of stealing to "collaborating", the victim was punished for stealing. Throughout the attack, the victim's hands were bound and his face covered. The victim was shot three times in his knees by a semi-automatic rifle. According to two doctors interviewed by the Commission who reviewed the footage, the victim would likely suffer from a permanent disability.

#### 5. Use of the Nasser Medical Complex

58. One witness told the Commission about three incidents in which Sahn Unit and other Hamas members severely beat victims in the hospital and one in which they shot a man in the cafeteria tent. The shooting incident escalated into an attack by the victim's family on the emergency department, which was met by Hamas counterfire from inside the hospital. On seven or eight occasions, the witness heard screams coming from the building, and, on one of those occasions, masked Sahn Unit-linked individuals exited the building afterward.

59. On 14 February 2026, Médecins sans frontières announced that all non-essential medical operations at the Nasser Medical Complex had been suspended since 20 January 2026. The non-governmental organization stated that, since the implementation of the ceasefire, its staff had observed armed and masked men in parts of the hospital complex, incidents of intimidations, arbitrary patient arrests and suspected movement of weapons within the hospital.<sup>39</sup>

60. The Commission's findings in relation to three cases involving violence inflicted by the Sahm Unit indicate that these acts were carried out inside the Nasser Medical Complex, close to the Hind Dagmah Medical Center, and an adjacent small building (see paras. 55–57 above). This is consistent with the testimony of the witness referred to above and with the statement of Médecins sans frontières observing activities of armed men in parts of the hospital complex.

61. The Commission concludes on reasonable grounds that the Sahm Unit of Hamas has interrogated and mistreated Palestinian civilians in the Nasser Medical Complex in Gaza in the period 2024–2025. It notes, however, that such conduct does not amount to “acts harmful to the enemy”, namely Israel. Therefore, the hospital would not have lost its protection under international humanitarian law and would not constitute a legitimate target for attacks.

## 6. Violence inflicted on children

62. In four incidents documented by the Commission, boys accused of theft were subjected to extreme physical violence. In one case, a blindfolded boy with hands tied was made to sit on the ground as a heavy slab was repeatedly dropped on his leg, appearing to break it. In another case, a boy was forcibly dragged and subjected to intense public beating with sticks on his legs by two masked men. In both cases, the acts were attributed to Hamas, and information on the victims was distributed publicly on Hamas channels.

63. The Commission found that children were spectators in 27 publicly staged incidents of violent punishment. This exposure results in normalizing extreme violence, desensitizing children to it and sustaining a climate of fear. It also creates long-term emotional and mental harm.

## 7. Sexual and gender-based violence

64. The Commission documented and investigated 20 cases involving sexual and gender-based violence in Gaza that were publicized by Hamas, including 11 cases attributed to Hamas-affiliated forces (Rad'a Force, Sahm Unit and Qassam Brigades among others).

65. Sexual and gender-based violence was committed as part of the broader attacks against alleged collaborators and thieves, which include severe physical violence and killing. Victims were subjected to acts of a sexual nature, including forced stripping and nudity. They were often photographed and filmed, with the footage subsequently distributed on Hamas channels, as a means of publicly humiliating and stigmatizing alleged collaborators with Israel or thieves, as well as their families. In 10 cases, male victims were forcibly undressed and/or forced into humiliating positions by Hamas members, including two cases of victims filmed in their underwear.

66. Acts intended to emasculate and subjugate included forced head-shaving, stepping on a victim's head and writing graffiti on the body. In one documented case attributed to the Sahm Unit of Hamas, a victim is seen stripped to his underwear and coerced to confess to theft, while also being subjected to doxing. In another case, a boy is seen in a video tied and stripped, with his head smeared in paint, while being coerced to confess to being a thief. In another example, several male victims are seen partially stripped, with the word for “thief” (*harami*) painted on their backs. One victim described being subjected to physical and mental abuse while being threatened with castration.

67. The Commission documented four cases of the forcible head-shaving of male victims publicized by Hamas. In one example, a Hamas assailant of the Sahm Unit is seen standing

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.msf.fr/gaza-nos-reponses-a-vos-questions>.

on the head of a partially stripped victim, beating the victim's legs, hips and buttocks with a wooden stick. The caption of the video states that the victim was forcibly shaved.

### C. Killings and acts causing bodily and mental harm by Palestinian armed groups and Palestinian individuals in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel

68. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Palestinian armed groups or individuals had killed 12 Israeli civilians and injured 83, as of 18 November 2025. In addition to those killed on 7 October 2023, a total of 60 Israeli civilians were killed in the period 2023–2025,<sup>40</sup> including 19 women, nine boys and two girls; 42 of the victims were killed in the occupied West Bank (36 of whom were settlers); the remaining 18 were killed in Israel. The majority of the fatalities occurred in 2023 (29), representing a 93 per cent increase in Israelis killed, compared with 2022 (when 15 Israelis were killed). In addition to those killed on 7 October 2023, some 212 Israelis were killed between January 2008 and December 2025,<sup>41</sup> including at least 35 Israelis killed as a result of rocket and mortar fire by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza.<sup>42</sup> Israelis attacked or exposed to threats of attacks have suffered significant mental health consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

69. In relation to the attacks of 7 October 2023, the Commission noted in a previous report that at least 809 civilians were killed that day, including at least 280 women and 68 foreign nationals, while 251 persons were taken hostage. Members of Hamas, other Palestinian armed groups and some Palestinian civilians deliberately killed, injured, tortured, took hostage (including children) and committed sexual and gender-based violence against civilians and members of the Israeli security forces, some of whom were hors de combat. Children were killed, injured and physically and emotionally mistreated and instrumentalized by attackers for propaganda purposes.<sup>43</sup> The Commission found that hostages were mistreated in captivity, and it documented reports by at least six released hostages (three men and three women) stating that they had been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence. Hostages who were taken alive were killed in captivity either at the hands of their abductors or as a result of Israeli attacks.<sup>44</sup> In January 2026, the body of the last of the Israeli hostages was returned to Israel from Gaza.<sup>45</sup>

70. The Commission documented multiple attacks against Israelis that took place after 7 October 2023, including a ramming and knife attack that took place on 26 December 2025, in which one Israeli man and one woman were killed and several others wounded in Emek Izrael in the north of Israel. According to the Israeli army, the attacker, originating from Qabatiya village in the West Bank, was apprehended at the scene and indicted on 29 January 2026 for the killing of the two victims and for the attempted murder of three others. In a shooting and knife attack in Jaffa that took place on 1 October 2024, seven Israelis were killed (including four women) and 16 others were wounded. According to the Israeli Security Agency, two assailants, residents of Hebron, entered the light rail station, shooting at

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>. These numbers exclude some 800 Israeli civilians killed on 7 and 8 October 2023 in southern Israel, which the Commission previously reported on (A/HRC/56/26, para. 9, and conference room paper of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel on detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-3.pdf>).

<sup>41</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

<sup>42</sup> See <https://statistics.btselem.org/en/all-fatalities/by-date-of-incident?section=overall&tab=overview&nifgaSensor=%5B%22a14a397%22%5D&dateSensor=%221199156400000%2C1767225599000%22&regionSensor=%5B%2265b3a57%22%2C%225f6a04e%22%5D&pogeaSensor=%5B%2275c9ac7%22%5D>.

<sup>43</sup> See A/HRC/56/26.

<sup>44</sup> A/79/232, paras. 85–87.

<sup>45</sup> See <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/operation-returning-home/all-hostages-have-been-returned-from-the-gaza-strip-to-israel/>.

passengers, then walked down Jerusalem Boulevard, while attacking passers-by. Hamas claimed responsibility for this attack.

71. Israeli security forces have used a variety of methods purportedly to thwart attacks, many of which have resulted in the commission of additional human rights violations against Palestinians, including collective punishment. Alleged perpetrators were often summarily executed at the scene, even when no longer posing a threat. As a matter of a long-standing policy, Israeli security forces also sealed and/or demolished the homes of alleged perpetrators following attacks, affecting entire families and communities. On 30 March 2026, the Knesset passed a law mandating the death penalty by hanging for Palestinian defendants convicted of murder on a “terror-related” basis.

72. The Government of Israel has argued that such measures are a means of deterrence; however, they may have had the opposite effect – fuelling further attacks against Israelis by Palestinians as a measure of resistance and revenge.

### **III. Legal analysis and conclusions**

#### **A. Killing and acts causing bodily and mental harm by settlers**

73. Settler violence in the West Bank functions as a means of implementing Israeli State policy, with both the State and violent settler groups working towards the same strategic objectives: entrenchment of Israeli settlements, annexation of Palestinian territory and displacement of Palestinians from their land. Palestinians are now forced to choose between enduring physical and mental harm, including death, and displacement. Groups of settlers have – through acts of violence – deliberately forced Palestinians into shrinking, fragmented enclaves, with the aim of creating contiguous zones of Jewish presence in the West Bank, further diminishing Palestinians’ right to self-determination. Despite periodic statements condemning settler violence and the occasional dismantling of unauthorized outposts, Israeli authorities have taken no meaningful or sustained measures to curb such attacks. The Commission finds that settler violence may be attributable to Israel, particularly when it is committed on the instruction, or under the direction or control, of the State.

74. The Commission investigated six attacks that led to death of six Palestinians and to the injury of 10 others. The incidents were unprovoked, with the direct involvement or tacit support of Israeli security forces. Israel has obligations as the occupying Power under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) and under international human rights law towards the Palestinians in the West Bank, namely, to ensure that their safety and rights are safeguarded. Such obligations include the need to protect them against abuses by third parties. In the vast majority of cases of settler violence investigated, the Commission has found a consistent pattern whereby the Israeli authorities: (a) failed to take reasonable measures to prevent foreseeable attacks; (b) failed to properly and effectively investigate and punish the perpetrators of the attacks, thereby maintaining impunity; (c) permitted and enabled settler attacks, including through army support and the provision of weapons and financial support to settlers; and (d) shifted blame onto Palestinians.

75. Contributing to the Israeli security forces’ growing role in facilitating and participating in settler violence is the routine labelling of Palestinians who throw stones to defend themselves, their property and land in the face of settler attacks as “terrorists”. This description is used to directly justify the use of excessive and deadly force against Palestinians and solidifies a consensus within the Israeli security establishment around the legitimacy of using such force. The Commission considers that lethal force used in such circumstances constitutes a violation of international human rights law, since it fails to meet the standard of proportionality and necessity within the law enforcement framework applicable in the West Bank. Perversely, there is a stark contrast between the immediate arrest and prolonged detention of Palestinians following stone throwing during settler attacks and the lax approach taken against settlers when they kill and injure Palestinians. The Commission notes that impunity is fuelled by police inaction, and deficiencies in the Israeli

justice system, including under-charging for offences and applying a different legal system for settlers and Palestinians.

76. The Commission concludes that the conduct of Israel in allowing settler violence to continue unabated, and colluding in the commission of violence, is in breach of its obligations to protect Palestinians under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to safeguard the rights of Palestinians under international human rights law, including: (a) right to life; (b) right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including sexual violence; (c) right to liberty and security; (d) right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family and home; (e) right to adequate standard of living, particularly the right to housing; (f) right to education; and (g) right of children to engage in play and recreational activities.

77. Palestinian children are harmed by settler violence in ways that target them as children, while they are engaged in quintessential activities of childhood, such as playing outside their homes or going to and from school, or tending to animals and fields. The Commission stresses that children suffer from immediate physical and mental harm, as well as the long-term psychological impact, from such violence, disrupting their education, their freedom of movement and their basic sense of security.

78. Israeli children are increasingly involved in violent incidents, both as perpetrators and as victims. Children living at outposts are exposed to constant indoctrination and radicalization by groups such as Nahala; their childhood is erased and seen as secondary to their role in pioneering settlements and removing Palestinians from the land. The Commission finds that the conduct of recruiting, soliciting and coercing children to participate in settler violence is a form of child abuse and exploitation.

79. The Commission previously reported that, since October 2023, settlers have increasingly resorted to sexual violence and threats of sexual violence to instil fear and humiliate Palestinian families, Palestinian communities and human rights defenders. Women and girls of all ages continue to be targeted and limited in their day-to-day activities by settler violence, limiting their access to public spaces, such as schools and workplaces, and decreasing their possibilities to escape abusive situations, such as intimate partner violence. This has resulted in multiple generations of Palestinian women and girls facing fear, stress and anxiety on a daily basis due to threats to their and their children's safety, as well as increased family tensions. The pattern of settler attacks against and affecting Palestinian women is underscored by the permissive culture that normalizes such violence and the institutional reluctance of the Israeli authorities to provide Palestinian women and girls with the special protection required under international law.

80. Women and children suffer distinct age- and gender-related effects, especially mental harm, compared with others within a community. Accordingly, the harm suffered by Palestinian women and children may be an instrumental factor in pushing Palestinian families and communities to flee. The Commission finds that settler violence against women and children is a part of a wider strategy to target Palestinians in the West Bank, including by forcible transfer.

## **B. Killing and acts causing bodily harm of Palestinians by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza**

81. Hamas has repeatedly committed grave abuses against Palestinians in Gaza over multiple historical periods, using the cover of Israeli military offensives and the broader collapse of law and order to carry out campaigns of internal repression, torture and unlawful killings. These practices continue to date, in a context where the genocide inflicted by Israel has devastated Gaza's infrastructure, eliminated civil policing and administrative structures and helped to create a deep power and security vacuum in which no functioning, accountable law enforcement or judicial system protects civilians. The destruction and control by Israel have rendered much of Gaza uninhabitable and stripped people of viable options for safety, work or political recourse. Ordinary Palestinians find themselves trapped between the structural violence and mass atrocities of Israeli forces and the predatory, fear-based rule of

Hamas, effectively becoming victims of all sides, while also being violently repressed and controlled by the very faction that claims to govern them.

82. The Commission identified 249 individual cases of executions and severe physical violence inflicted on Palestinians in Gaza in the period 2024-2025, resulting in at least 108 deaths and 384 injuries. The Commission considers that this likely represents only a partial number of cases and victims. In the seven cases investigated by the Commission, victims were punished by Hamas-affiliated forces for their alleged collaboration with Israel or due to theft and other alleged criminal activity. The punishments of public execution and severe physical violence were imposed arbitrarily and summarily. Hamas used these punishments as a tool to eliminate opposition and control Gaza, consistent with historical trends that saw surges in violence against civilians during and immediately after the conduct of hostilities.

83. The Commission finds that the execution of 11 victims by Hamas-affiliated forces due to alleged collaboration with Israel on 21 September and 13 October 2025 (see paras. 50–52 above) amounts to the war crime of murder and to a violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the right to life, the right to liberty and security and the right to a fair trial. The Commission finds, in five additional cases of severe physical assault of five victims by Hamas-affiliated forces (see paras. 49 and 54–57 above), that the acts amount to the war crime of torture and are a violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the right to life, the right to liberty and security, the right to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the right to a fair trial.

84. In four of the cases identified by the Commission, children were accused of theft and were punished without due process and consideration to their age (see para. 62 above), which may amount to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under international law. Children present at the sites of mass violence were exposed to a risk of long-term trauma and mental harm, which may amount to a violation of children's right to an adequate standard of living and their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

85. Public punishments, in particular against perceived "collaborators", have consequences that extend beyond the acts themselves and may last for generations. Many of the public acts were recorded and published online to instil fear and deter others from committing similar offences and as a form of public humiliation for the alleged crimes. The publicity of the punishment amounts to degrading treatment, while acts of doxing amount to outrages upon personal dignity and a violation of the right to privacy under international law. The publication of personal information also exposes the families and associates of the victim to the risk of violence and persecution.

86. Forced nudity and forced head-shaving constituting sexual and gender-based violence were carried out as a means of asserting authority and provoking fear among the civilian population (see sect. III.B.7 above). Gender-based violence was intended to inflict shame on men, causing mental harm on the victims who were stripped of their agency and autonomy through the humiliating acts. Such acts constitute a violation of the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The stripping of male victims, documented by the Commission, including to their underwear in public areas, amounts to sexual violence in the form of forced public nudity under international law. Compounded with the violence that victims were subjected to, these acts amount to the war crimes of cruel treatment and outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.

87. The Commission found that members of Hamas have tortured Palestinian civilians in the Nasser Medical Complex, in violation of customary international law, which provides that hospitals are to be respected and protected in all circumstances. Such conduct however does not result in the loss of special protection of the hospital against attacks under international humanitarian law.

### **C. Killing and acts causing bodily and mental harm to Israelis by Palestinian armed groups and individuals**

88. The Commission has stated in a previous report that the war crimes of intentionally directing attacks against civilians and murder or wilful killing had been committed by indiscriminately firing projectiles towards populated areas in Israel. It also found that, for the attacks of 7 October 2023, Hamas and other armed groups were responsible for the war crimes of intentionally directing attacks against civilians, murder or wilful killing, torture, inhuman or cruel treatment, destroying or seizing the property of an adversary, outrages upon personal dignity and taking hostages.<sup>46</sup> In the holding and treatment of hostages, the Commission found that Hamas and other armed groups committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including torture, enforced disappearance and other inhumane acts.<sup>47</sup>

89. There has been a notable increase in the killing and harming of Israelis since October 2023, raising serious concerns that such attacks are in violation of the principles of distinction and proportionality under international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes. Notwithstanding, the Commission highlights that many of the measures imposed by Israel in response to attacks are incompatible with international humanitarian law and international human rights law and may amount to international crimes, including the recently passed death penalty law.

## **IV. Recommendations**

90. **The Commission urges the Government of Israel to:**

(a) **Immediately end the unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory, cease all new settlement activities, remove all settlers and settlements in compliance with the advisory opinion of July 2024 of the International Court of Justice and remove all obstructions to the full exercise of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination;**

(b) **Take all preventative measures to ensure the protection of Palestinians, including children, from settler violence, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including through the issuance and enforcement of clear orders to the Israeli Security Forces to protect the Palestinian population; conduct transparent investigations; and immediately dismantle all outposts and ensure they are not re-established;**

(c) **Ensure an immediate end to the violence, harassment and intimidation of Palestinians, including women and children, ensure accountability for violence against Palestinians perpetrated by settlers and the Israeli Security Forces, including through proper investigation, prosecution, punishment and compensation;**

(d) **Ensure accountability for settlers who target and limit the lives of women and girls and safeguard their right to autonomy and liberty;**

(e) **Protect Israeli children from recruitment or exploitation by settlers, provide for the rehabilitation and reintegration of children, including through restorative justice, psychosocial care and access to education. Prosecute, according to the law, individuals responsible for the recruitment of children and close or disband organizations promoting it;**

(f) **Allow unhindered access for the Commission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel to conduct investigations;**

91. **The Commission recommends that the Government of the State of Palestine:**

(a) **Investigate and prosecute, to the extent possible, crimes committed by armed groups in Gaza against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Gaza;**

<sup>46</sup> A/HRC/56/26, paras. 74 and 90.

<sup>47</sup> A/79/232, para. 112.

(b) Take all possible measures to prevent attacks against Israelis by Palestinian armed groups in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and ensure accountability;

(c) Ensure that the judicial and law enforcement system complies fully with international standards of justice;

92. The Commission recommends that the de facto authorities in Gaza:

(a) Immediately stop all extrajudicial punishments of civilians, including executions, torture, and mental, physical and sexual violence, and ensure accountability and restitution to victims and their families;

(b) Disband all armed forces that were established in order to carry out such punishments and remove all videos and photos of punishments published online;

(c) Ensure that the judicial and law enforcement system complies fully with international standards of justice;

(d) Refrain from using civilian objects, including hospitals, for any purpose incompatible with their humanitarian and civilian functions.

93. The Commission recommends that all States Members of the United Nations:

(a) Comply with all obligations under international law, including the advisory opinion of July 2024 of the International Court of Justice, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, in particular common article 1, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(b) Cooperate with the investigation of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court;

(c) Cease aiding in the commission of violations of international law, including by ending arms transfers and the provision of financial support to settlements;

(d) Take all appropriate, legislative, regulatory and policy measures to prevent, investigate and address the involvement of all third parties, including business enterprises and third-party States, in providing assistance by way of financial support and the supply of arms, security equipment and logistic support to all non-State actors, including settlers and Palestinian armed groups, in violation of international human rights law, international criminal law and international humanitarian law;

(e) Conduct investigations under domestic or universal jurisdiction of individuals or organizations suspected of having participated in unlawful acts of violence against Palestinians and in the sustaining of the settlement enterprise, including dual nationals, and sanction those found to be responsible;

(f) Ensure that any peace plan in Gaza includes the full engagement and participation of Palestinians and accountability for domestic and international crimes committed by all parties, including Palestinian armed groups.

94. The Commission recommends that the Secretary-General list Israeli settlers as an extension of the State of Israel, in the annexes to the next annual report on children and armed conflict, as “persistent perpetrators” for child killing, maiming, sexual violence and recruitment and use.