

1967-2017  
**50 YEARS  
OF OCCUPATION**



Demolition in Susiya 20 June 2016 Wadi Juhesha, © Photo by OCHA

# OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY **FRAGMENTED LIVES** HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW 2016

MAY 2017

[www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory

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Coordination Saves Lives





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# FOREWORD

This is the sixth year in which the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has detailed the key humanitarian concerns in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The purpose of the report is to provide a trend analysis of some of the key indicators underlying humanitarian vulnerabilities in the oPt in a given year.

The humanitarian context of oPt is unique amongst today's humanitarian crises and remains directly tied to the impact of the Israeli occupation, now in its 50th year. The occupation denies Palestinians control over basic aspects of daily life, whether they live in the Gaza Strip or in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Their ability to move unimpeded within their own country, to exit and return, to develop large parts of their territory, build on their own land, access natural resources or develop their economy is largely determined by the Israeli military. The prolonged occupation, with no end in sight, cultivates a sense of hopelessness and frustration that drives continued conflict and impacts both Palestinians and Israelis.

Israel's occupation is a key driver of humanitarian need, to which the international community responds. At the end of 2016, 4.8 million Palestinians were estimated to be affected by this situation, with 2 million

in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The vast majority of Palestinians in need are exposed to conflict and violence, displacement and restricted access to livelihoods and essential services, such as water, healthcare, shelter and education. To fund a range of interventions to meet these needs, the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the oPt, launched in December 2016, appealed for US\$ 547 million.

As in previous years, the Humanitarian Overview for 2016 is structured around the key concerns and advocacy priorities identified by humanitarian partners in the oPt: *Life, Liberty & Security*, which includes Palestinian and Israeli casualties from conflict-related violence, settler violence and the detention of Palestinians; *Forced Displacement*, driven by escalations of hostilities in Gaza and by a coercive environment generated by Israeli policies and practices in the West Bank; *Movement & Access*, focusing on the physical and administrative restrictions placed on the movement of Palestinian people and goods throughout the oPt; and *Humanitarian Space*, detailing the obstacles that restrict the access of personnel and materials needed for humanitarian projects. *Accountability*, a cross-cutting theme, essential to reduce future vulnerability, is addressed throughout the report.



# OVERVIEW

## LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY

Palestinian civilians across the oPt continued to be subjected to threats to their lives, physical safety and liberty from conflict-related violence, and from policies and practices related to the Israeli occupation, now in its 50th year. In the Gaza Strip, the 2014 ceasefire has largely held, as reflected in the relatively low number of Palestinian, and no Israeli, casualties. In the West Bank, the violence that erupted in late 2015 continued at a reduced level. In total, Palestinian fatalities from conflict-related violence in the oPt and Israel declined by 37% compared to 2015 (107 vs. 169); the decline in Israeli fatalities was 48%. Palestinian injuries declined by about 80% compared to

2015 (3,247 vs. 15,477), with about 95% of the injuries recorded in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Security considerations notwithstanding, concerns remain over possible excessive use of force and extra-judicial executions by Israeli forces in their response to certain Palestinian attacks or suspected attacks, particularly after the threat has been neutralized.<sup>1</sup> Accountability is essential to ensure justice for victims and to prevent future violations.

## FORCED DISPLACEMENT

The forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinians across the oPt takes place in the context of Israel's prolonged occupation, compounded by recurrent rounds of violence in the Gaza Strip, where an estimated 47,000 people remained displaced at the end of 2016 from the 2014 hostilities. Throughout the West Bank, many Palestinians are at risk of displacement and/or forcible transfer due to a coercive environment generated by Israeli policies and practices, which create pressure on residents to leave their communities. These practices include the demolition or threat of demolition

of homes, schools and livelihood structures, on the grounds of the lack of building permits, which are almost impossible to obtain; plans to relocate Palestinian Bedouin communities to urban townships; restrictions on access to natural resources; the denial of basic service infrastructure; and the lack of secure residency, among others. They are often implemented against the backdrop of the expansion of Israeli settlements.

## MOVEMENT AND ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Citing security considerations, Israel restricts Palestinian movement within the oPt, including between the Gaza Strip and West Bank, through a combination of physical obstacles (such as the Barrier and checkpoints) and bureaucratic constraints (particularly permits and the designation of areas as restricted or closed). Combined, despite recent easings, these restrictions impede access to services and resources, disrupt family and social life, undermine livelihoods and compound the fragmentation of the oPt. The number of Palestinians allowed to leave Gaza by the Israeli authorities, which increased after the 2014 hostilities, has been in decline

since the second half of 2016 although the volume of produce leaving Gaza has risen significantly since late 2014. The isolation of Gaza has been exacerbated since 2014 by Egypt's closure of the Rafah crossing, which, combined with restrictions on the Israeli-controlled crossings, leaves the 1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza 'locked in', unable to access the remainder of the oPt or the outside world.

## HUMANITARIAN SPACE

In 2016, humanitarian organizations continued to face a range of obstacles from the Israeli authorities. These include physical and administrative restrictions on the access and movement of humanitarian actors, especially national employees; restrictions on the delivery of materials needed for humanitarian projects; and limitations on the implementation of projects that involve building, expanding or rehabilitating infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, Area C, and East Jerusalem. Such obstacles have hampered

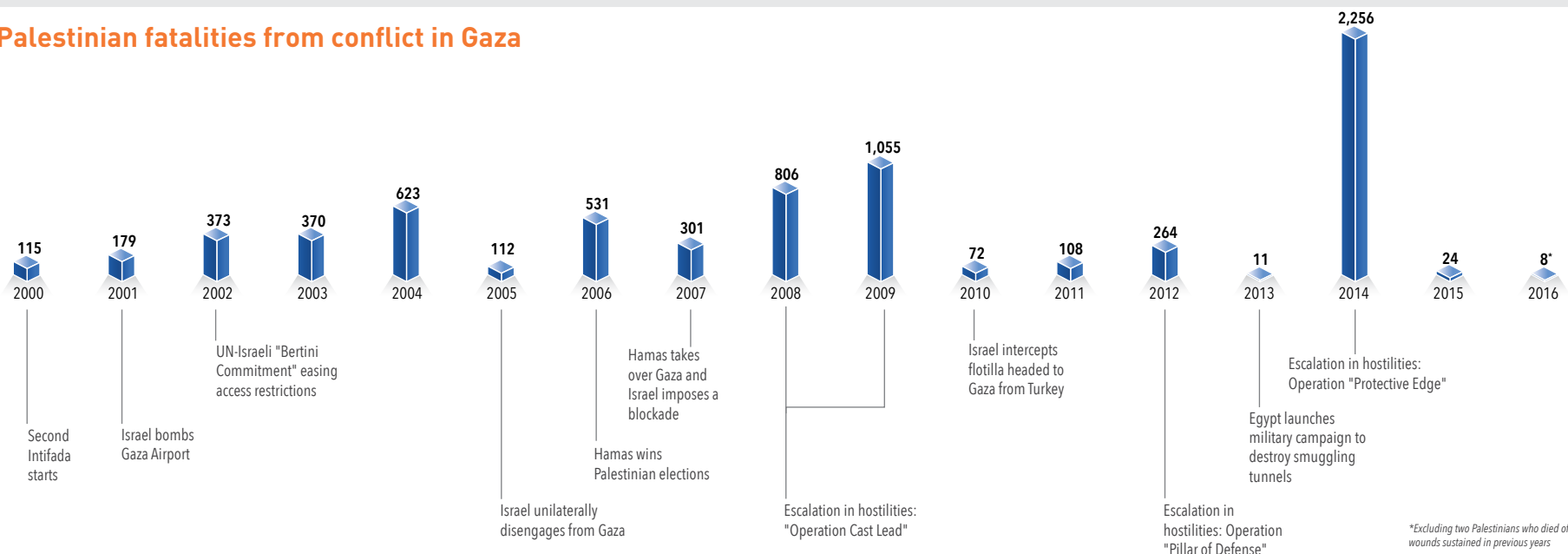
the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide assistance and protection to Palestinians throughout the oPt. Humanitarian operations in Gaza were also impeded by restrictions imposed by, and the prohibition on contact with, the Hamas authorities, in addition to the continuing closure of the Rafah crossing with Egypt and the ongoing internal Palestinian divide.

# Main trends in LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY

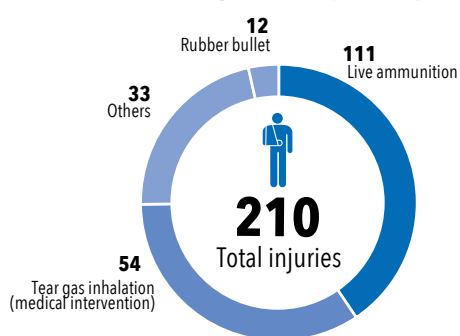
## GAZA STRIP

Conflict-related casualties in Gaza remained relatively low in 2016, the lowest since 2000, although pervasive insecurity and the threat of violence continued. 8 Palestinians (all civilians), including 4 children, were killed by Israeli forces, as a result of incidents in the Access Restricted Areas (6), the majority of casualties occurring during clashes, and airstrikes (2). Injuries were also significantly lower at 210 compared to 1,424 in 2015. According to Israeli sources, there was also a decrease in rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza towards Israel, 15 compared to 25 in 2015 and no Israeli casualties or significant damage were recorded.<sup>2</sup> The Protection Cluster continues to identify accountability for violations during the Gaza hostilities in 2014, by all sides, and for violations during the daily enforcement of restrictions in the Access Restricted Areas (ARA) as an urgent priority.

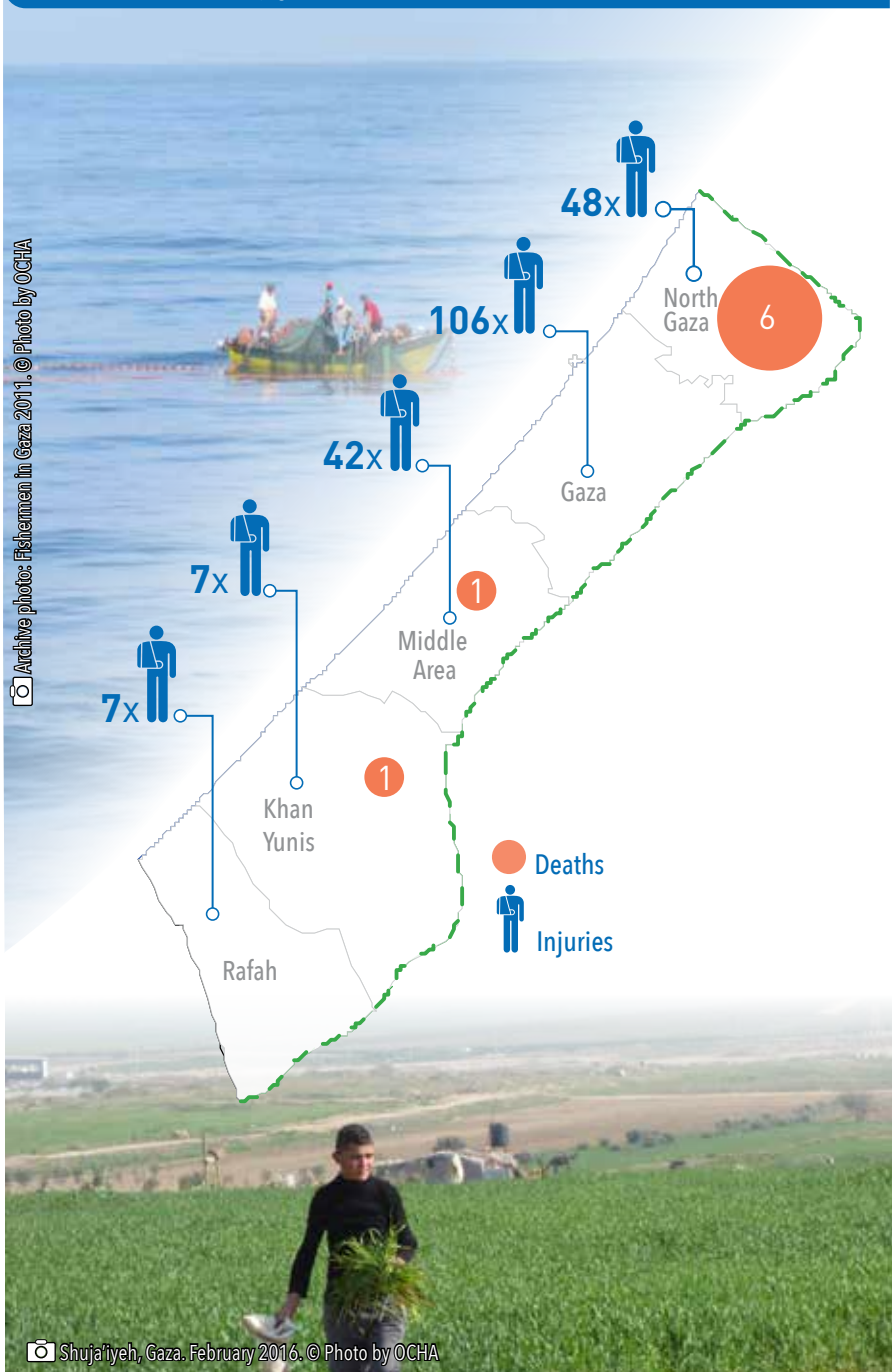
## Palestinian fatalities from conflict in Gaza



## Palestinian injuries by weapon

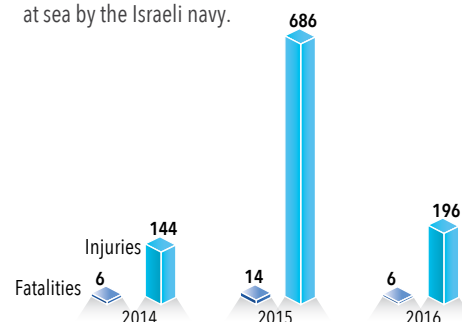


## Palestinian casualties by governorate



## Access restricted areas (ARA)

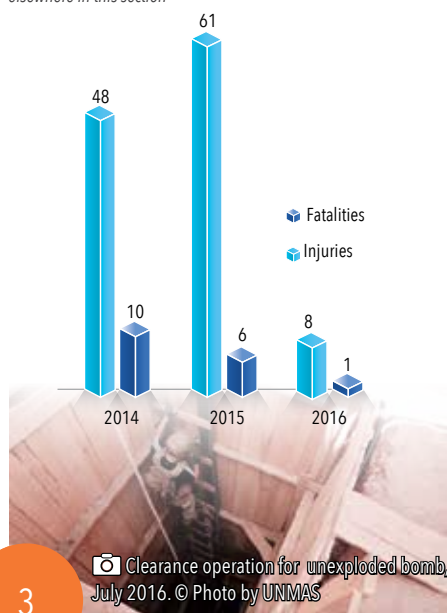
Israel continued to enforce a buffer zone by land within 300 metres from the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel, including through direct or indirect firing towards any one present or approaching this area, citing concerns about the firing of rockets and the digging of tunnels. Fishermen also continued to be affected by shooting and confiscation incidents in the context of the enforcement of access restrictions at sea by the Israeli navy.



## Explosive remnants of war (ERW)\*

Although almost 4,000 ERW items have been cleared since the 2014 hostilities,<sup>3</sup> suspected ERW remain hidden throughout Gaza, mostly in the form of unexploded aircraft bombs, tank shells, and other munitions, among the rubble of destroyed structures or buried below the surface. ERW continue to pose a serious threat to the life and physical integrity of the population and also impede the clean-up and reconstruction of vital housing and infrastructure.

\* Casualties from ERW are not included in the totals mentioned elsewhere in this section



## Accountability

Accountability for violations of international law during the hostilities remains elusive. The Israeli authorities have opened 31 criminal investigations, of which at least 13 were closed without any measure taken and 1 has resulted in the indictment of 3 soldiers for a case of looting. Palestinian organizations taking cases to international judicial fora have faced constraints and have reported anonymous threats. No meaningful investigation into alleged violations has been announced by Palestinian authorities. Impunity denies victims and survivors the justice and redress they deserve, and prevents the deterrence of future violations.<sup>4</sup>

### ACCOUNTABILITY BY ISRAELI AUTHORITIES

~360 Incidents raising allegations of IHL violations

31 Criminal investigations

1 Incident triggering indictments

### ACCOUNTABILITY BY PALESTINIAN AUTHORITIES

0 Criminal investigations

0 Convictions

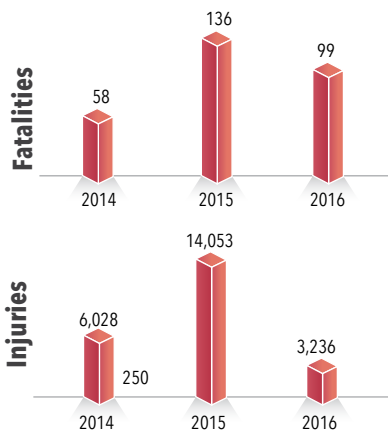
0 Convictions

## WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

In the West Bank, the violence that erupted in late 2015 continued at a reduced level, characterized by attacks by young, politically-unaffiliated Palestinians against Israeli forces and civilians. There was an approximately 31% decrease in Palestinians killed in conflict-related violence in 2016 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, compared to 2015. Palestinian injuries declined by almost 80% compared to 2015, the majority during clashes, demonstrations and search and arrest operations. 13 Israelis were also killed and 210 injured compared to 25 and 304 respectively in 2015 in the West Bank and Israel. Concerns continue regarding Israeli forces' excessive use of force,<sup>5</sup> both in the context of clashes and in response to Palestinian attacks, including cases where perpetrators and alleged perpetrators were killed on the spot by Israeli forces.<sup>6</sup>

### Palestinian fatalities

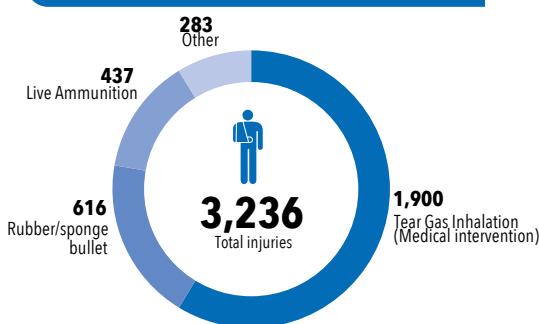
99 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel in 2016 in the context of attacks/alleged attacks, demonstrations and clashes. Of these, 80 were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks are attempted attacks against Israelis. 33 children were killed by Israeli forces and settlers during the year in the West Bank and Israel, compared to 31 in 2015. Of these, 26 were involved in attacks and alleged attacks. As of end-2016, the bodies of 9 alleged attackers were still being held by the Israeli authorities.<sup>7</sup>



### Palestinian injuries

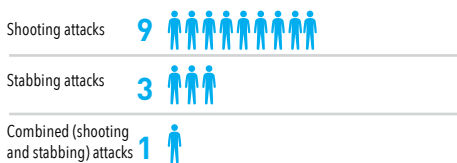
Palestinian injuries by Israeli forces in 2016 decreased by 77% compared to 2015. The majority occurred during clashes that erupted during protests and search and arrest operations and resulted mainly from tear gas inhalation requiring medical treatment (59%); and rubber, rubber-coated or sponge bullets (19%). The proportion of injuries from live ammunition was 14% compared to 10% in 2015, including cases involving life-term disability, raising concerns about the use of firearms in contravention of international standards.<sup>8</sup>

#### Palestinian injuries by weapon

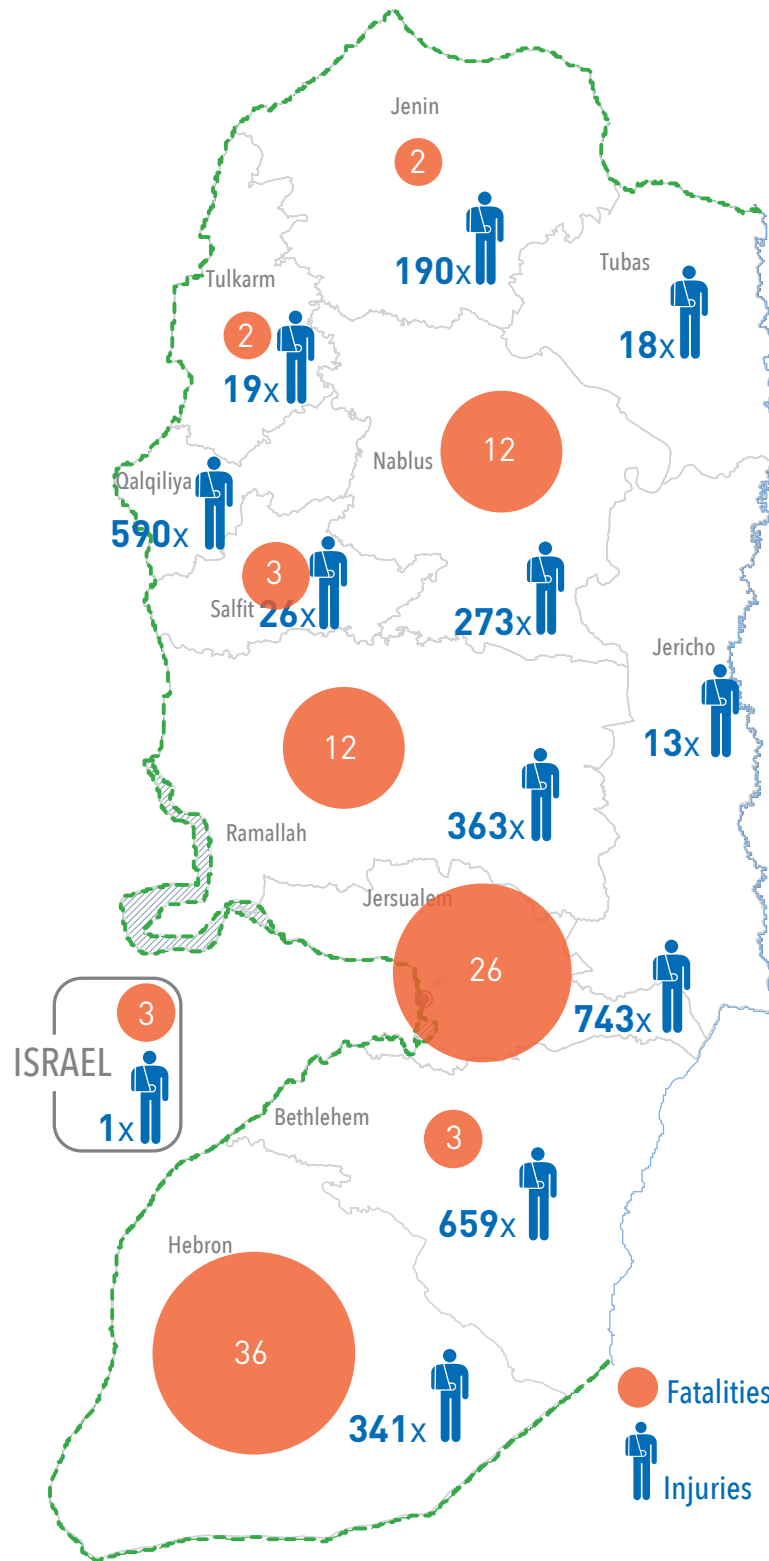


### Israeli fatalities by type of attack

9 civilians and 4 members of Israeli forces<sup>9</sup> were killed in 2016 in attacks by Palestinians, including 8 in the West Bank and 5 in Israel, compared to 25 Israelis killed in total in 2015.<sup>10</sup> Of the Israeli civilian fatalities in 2016, 4 were women.

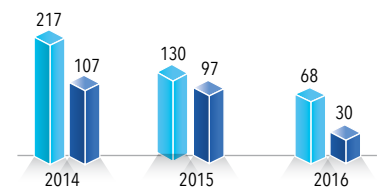


#### Palestinian casualties by governorate



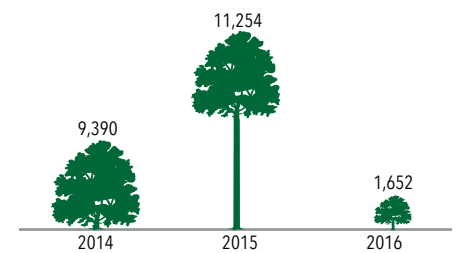
### Violence by Israeli settlers

The number of settler violence incidents resulting in Palestinian injuries or damage to property declined in 2016 for the third consecutive year. The recent decline has occurred in the context of additional preventive measures adopted by the Israeli authorities although concerns remain regarding the lack of accountability for complaints that are registered.<sup>11</sup>



\*Incidents resulting in both casualties and property damage are counted only under casualties

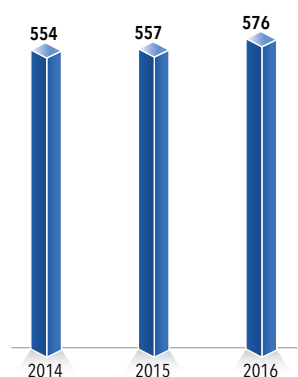
#### Trees vandalized in settler-related incidents



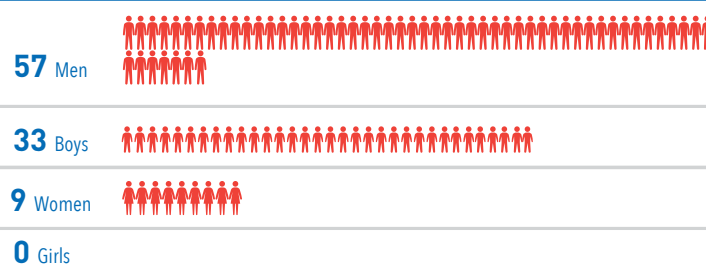
### Detention

As of August 2016, there were 5,988 Palestinians held by the Israeli Prison Service on 'security' grounds, compared to 6,066 at the end of 2015.<sup>12</sup> 644 Palestinians, including 1 woman and 10 minors, were held in administrative detention without charge or trial, compared to 584 at the end of 2015.<sup>13</sup> At the end of August 2016, 319 Palestinian children were held in Israeli prisons, including 10 administrative detainees, compared to 428 children at the end of 2015.<sup>14</sup> In East Jerusalem, an average of 700 children have been detained every year for the past 3 years, including in administrative detention, in addition to those placed under house arrest.<sup>15</sup>

#### Detainees by monthly average



#### Palestinian fatalities by gender

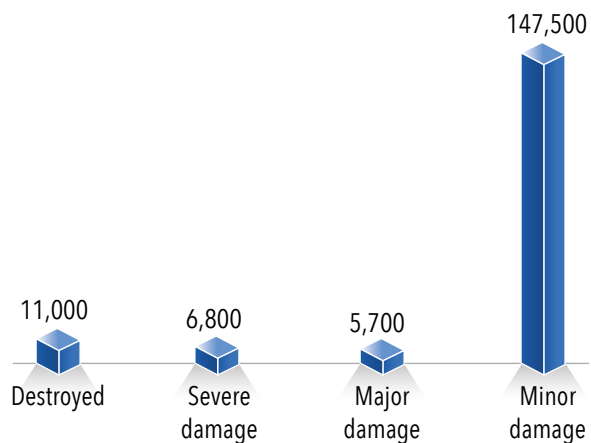


# Main trends in FORCED DISPLACEMENT

## GAZA STRIP

In the Gaza Strip, forced displacement is primarily driven by escalations in hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups, with the July-August 2014 conflict resulting in the highest rate of internal displacement since 1967. With the August 2014 ceasefire largely holding, no new displacement occurred during the course of 2016. Over 9,000 families (47,200 people) remain displaced at the end of 2016, down from approximately 16,000 families (90,000 people) at the beginning of the year. Most displaced families remain dependent on temporary shelter assistance provided by humanitarian organizations.

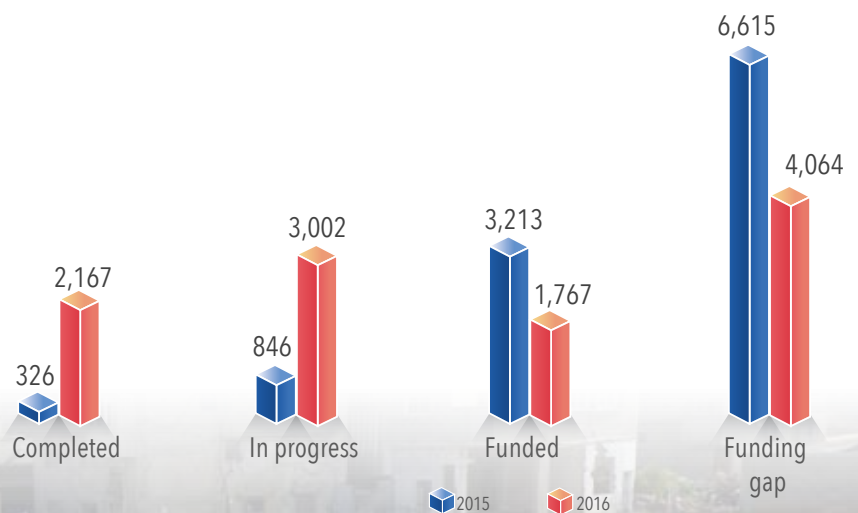
Final home damage assessment from 2014 hostilities



## Obstacles to reconstruction

Although the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) has facilitated the controlled entry of vital construction materials, the quantity of cement allowed in during 2016 has been insufficient to match the increasing needs for reconstruction, resulting in delays in rebuilding and prolonged displacement. As of end 2016, some 2,474 (22%) of the 11,000 housing units that were totally destroyed in the 2014 hostilities have been reconstructed, construction of another 25% is in progress but a funding gap remain for 37%. 87,220 (54%) of the 147,500 homes that suffered varying degrees of damage have been repaired, work is in progress on another 9% and a funding gap remains for 37%.<sup>16</sup> Durable solutions for displaced families have also been delayed by slow access to funds and a lack of assistance to end displacement, such as technical support, planning and intra-Palestinian land ownership issues. In addition, chronic housing shortages and the dire economic situation have compounded concerns for adequate shelter protection for acutely-vulnerable families.

Reconstruction status of destroyed homes



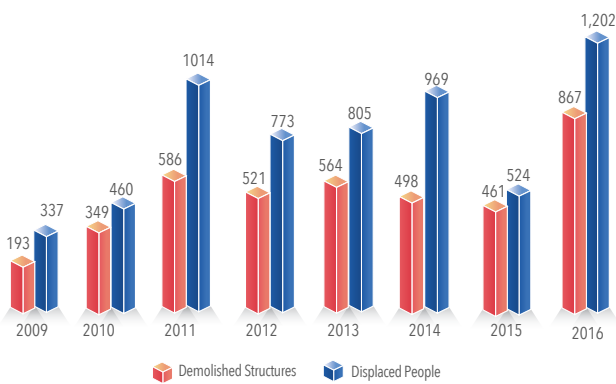


## WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

In the West Bank, demolitions - along with a broad range of other official Israeli practices and policies — contribute to creating a coercive environment, which is leading to forced displacement and the risk of forcible transfer, particularly in Area C, East Jerusalem, and the Israeli-controlled H2 area of Hebron. 2016 recorded the highest number of Palestinian-owned structures demolished or seized throughout the West Bank, since OCHA started recording this trend in 2009. 1,094 structures were affected, displacing 1,601 people, including 759 children. The vast majority were for lack of building permits, primarily in Area C: tens of thousands of Palestinians in Area C endure fear and insecurity due to approximately 12,500 final demolition orders outstanding against their structures.<sup>17</sup> The number of donor-funded, humanitarian assistance structures demolished or confiscated in 2016 is also unprecedented (see *Humanitarian Space* section). Punitive demolitions targeting the family homes of perpetrators of attacks against Israelis also continued in 2016, as did legal action by settler groups to evict Palestinians in East Jerusalem from their homes.

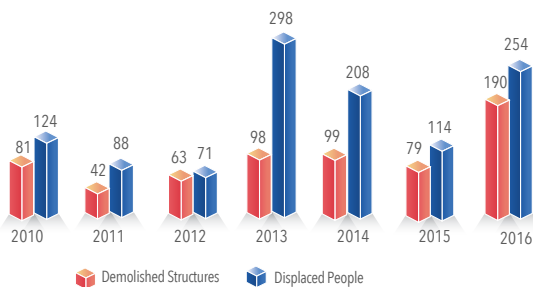
### Area C: Demolitions for lack of building permit

A key component of the coercive environment is a restrictive and discriminatory planning regime which makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain the requisite Israeli building permits. In Area C, less than 1% has been planned for Palestinian construction. To date, 110 local outline plans for 119 communities in Area C have been prepared, which, if approved, would significantly enhance the ability of community residents to obtain building permits. However, as of end-2016 only 3 have been approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA), out of the 95 submitted.<sup>18</sup> During the first half of 2016, there were 428 applications for building permits in Palestinian communities in Area C, of which 391 (91%) were rejected. The majority of the 37 applications approved were reportedly issued independently by the Israeli authorities for one of the "relocation" sites planned for Palestinian Bedouin communities rather than a response to a Palestinian application.<sup>19</sup>



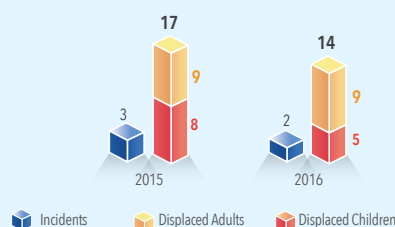
### East Jerusalem: Demolitions for lack of building permit

In East Jerusalem, only 13% of the municipal area is zoned for Palestinian construction, most of which is already built-up. Up to a third of Palestinians in East Jerusalem live in unlicensed homes and face the risk of demolition and displacement. In 2016, East Jerusalem recorded the highest number of demolitions since 2000.

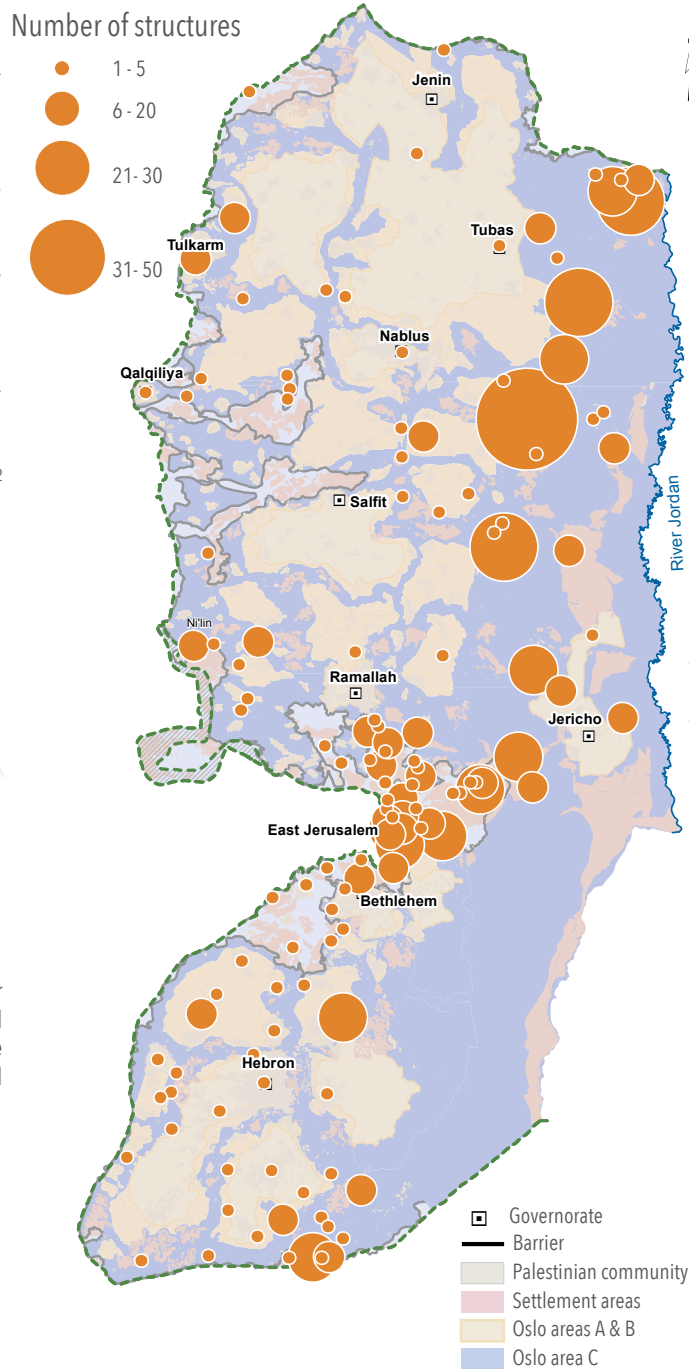


### Settler takeover of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem

In 2016, following the implementation of eviction orders and judicial review, Israeli settlers continued to take over Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem. A mapping exercise carried out by OCHA in 2016 indicates that at least 180 Palestinian households in East Jerusalem have eviction cases filed against them, the majority initiated by settler organizations. Israeli law allows Israeli individuals and organizations to pursue claims to land and property they owned in East Jerusalem prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, while most Palestinians are unable to do the same regarding land and property in what is now Israel.

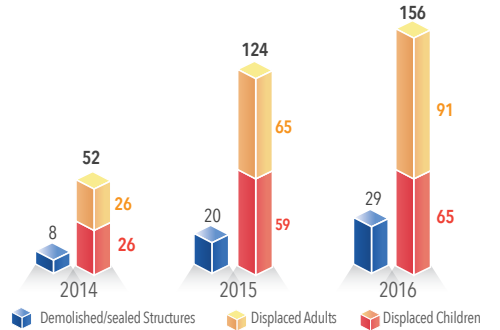


### Demolitions in the West Bank as of 2016



### Punitive demolitions/sealings

During 2016, the Israeli authorities continued to demolish or seal residential structures on punitive grounds. This practice targets the family homes of perpetrators of attacks against Israelis, including those killed during the attacks.<sup>20</sup> The Israeli authorities resumed this practice in mid-2014, after an almost complete halt for the previous 9 years, and expanded its application since October 2015, citing the need to deter Palestinian attackers. In several cases, apartments adjacent to those targeted have been also destroyed or severely damaged and their residents displaced (included in the total).



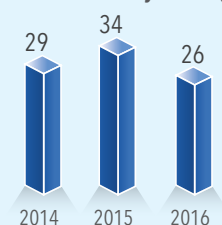
### Herding communities at risk of forcible transfer due to "relocation" plans

Most Bedouin and herding communities across Area C (total population estimated at 30,000) are at risk of forcible transfer due to a coercive environment, which includes: the destruction and threat of destruction of homes, schools and animal shelters on the grounds of lack of building permits; restrictions on access to grazing land; lack of basic infrastructure; and intimidation and attacks by Israeli settlers.<sup>21</sup> In some areas, the Israeli authorities have advanced explicit plans to remove the communities from their current locations.<sup>22</sup>

### Military training exercises

The temporary displacement of entire communities located in areas designated as "firing zones" in the context of military exercises has become systematic in recent years. Despite the entry prohibition by military order, there are at least 38 herding communities with more than 6,200 residents currently located in these "firing zones", which cover approximately 18% of the West Bank, or 30% of Area C.<sup>23</sup> Many of these communities were present in these areas prior to their being designated as closed during the 1970s.

### Incidents of temporary displacement due to military training



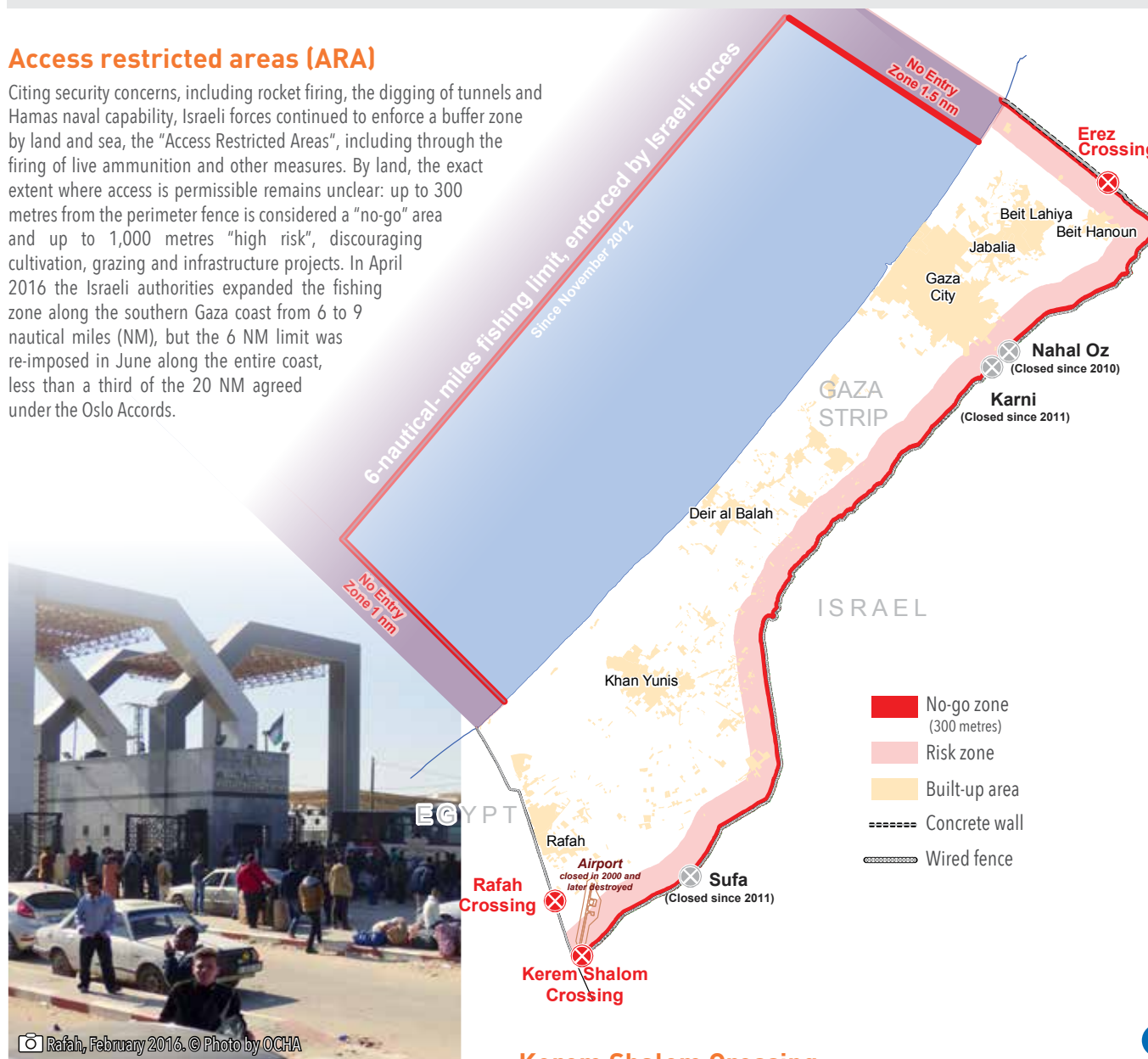
# Main trends in MOVEMENT AND ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

## GAZA STRIP

In June 2007, following the Hamas takeover of Gaza, Israel imposed a land, sea and air blockade, which intensified earlier restrictions on the marketing of goods in the West Bank and Israel; on the import of certain goods; and on the access of people to agricultural land and fishing waters. According to the Israeli authorities, the access restrictions they impose on the Gaza Strip are security measures addressing a range of threats, including the smuggling of weapons, the firing of rockets and the digging of offensive tunnels.<sup>24</sup> Imports have been increasing since the 2014 hostilities, with 2016 recording the highest volume since the imposition of the blockade in 2007. However, restrictions on the entry of goods considered as having a "dual" military-civilian use continue to impede the delivery of basic services and efforts to address critical housing needs. The passage of Palestinians in and out of Gaza is prohibited, with exceptions made for certain categories — businesspeople, medical patients and employees of international organizations - who must apply for a permit from the Israeli authorities: the number of those permitted to leave has been in decline since the second half of 2016. The situation has been compounded by the ongoing internal Palestinian divide and the restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities on the Rafah Crossing.

## Access restricted areas (ARA)

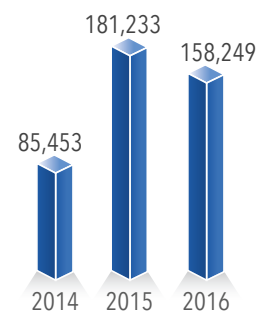
Citing security concerns, including rocket firing, the digging of tunnels and Hamas naval capability, Israeli forces continued to enforce a buffer zone by land and sea, the "Access Restricted Areas", including through the firing of live ammunition and other measures. By land, the exact extent where access is permissible remains unclear: up to 300 metres from the perimeter fence is considered a "no-go" area and up to 1,000 metres "high risk", discouraging cultivation, grazing and infrastructure projects. In April 2016 the Israeli authorities expanded the fishing zone along the southern Gaza coast from 6 to 9 nautical miles (NM), but the 6 NM limit was re-imposed in June along the entire coast, less than a third of the 20 NM agreed under the Oslo Accords.



## Erez Crossing

The increase in Palestinians allowed to leave Gaza through Erez, which started after the 2014 hostilities, continued into 2016 but was reversed in the second half of the year. 2016 recorded a 13% decrease vs. 2015, including a 16% decline for businesspeople.<sup>25</sup> There was a 4% increase in the total number of medical patients permitted to cross Erez but a decline in the overall approval rate, 64% vs. 77% in 2015. On average, some 517 Palestinians exited Gaza via Israel every day in 2016<sup>26</sup>, less than 2% of the 26,000 who exited daily in 2000, prior to the second Intifada.

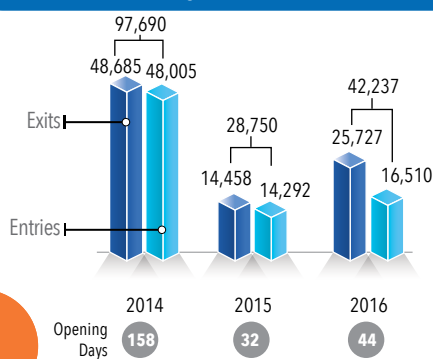
## Entries to Israel



## Rafah Crossing

Rafah has been largely closed, including for humanitarian assistance, by the Egyptian authorities citing security concerns, since October 2014. In 2016, only 1,713 patients were permitted by the Egyptian authorities to cross Rafah for health care. Prior to the 2014 closure, more than 4,000 Gaza residents travelled to Egypt monthly for health-related reasons. Over 20,000 people, including humanitarian cases, are pre-registered to cross.

## Movement through Rafah



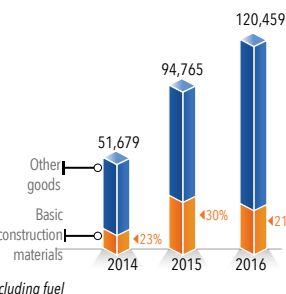
## Kerem Shalom Crossing

**Imports:** In 2016, there was a 27% rise in imports vs. 2015; 2015, in turn, registered an 83% increase vs. 2014. Construction material – needed for post-2014 reconstruction and repair – also rose, although the volume fell short of current needs due to population growth and the devastation from recurrent hostilities. Overall, the monthly average of 2016 was 97% of that in the first half of 2007, prior to the imposition of the blockade.

**Exports:** The volume of produce leaving Gaza has risen significantly since late 2014, following the easing of Israeli restrictions on the exit of goods to the West Bank and Israel. In 2016, there was a 58% rise in exits vs. 2015; 2015, in turn, registered a 500% increase vs. 2014. Total exits are still only 23% of a wider range of exports that left Gaza for Israel, the West Bank and the external world in 2005, prior to the imposition of various restrictions, culminating in a full blockade in 2007. Restrictions on the type and amounts of goods exported to Israel, as well as delays and constraints at the Kerem Shalom crossing, remain.

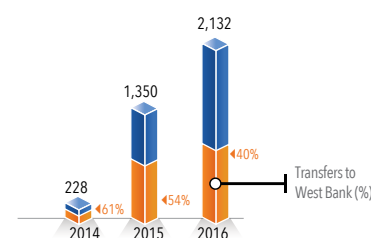


## Imports/transfers to Gaza (Truckloads)\*



\*Excluding fuel

## Exports/transfers from Gaza (Truckloads)

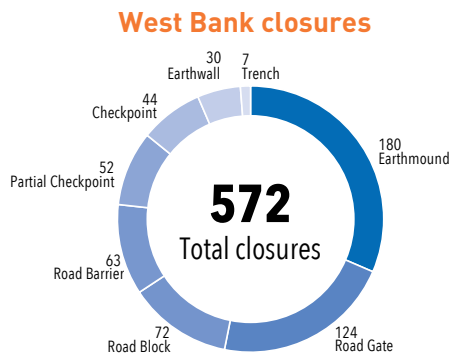


## WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

In recent years, the Israeli authorities have eased some long-standing restrictions in the West Bank, improving Palestinian access to key urban hubs. However, physical and administrative obstacles restrict Palestinians from entering East Jerusalem, areas isolated by the Barrier, 'firing zones', the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2), and land around or within Israeli settlements.<sup>27</sup> The escalation of violence since late 2015 has also resulted in increased Israeli restrictions, citing security concerns, on Palestinian movement throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, disrupting access to educational and health services, places of work, and holy sites. In addition, temporary travel restrictions were imposed, whereby Israeli forces blocked one or more of the main entries of communities where the perpetrators of attacks against Israelis lived (regardless of the actual location of the attack), or where stone and Molotov cocktails are regularly thrown at Israeli vehicles.<sup>28</sup> During 2016, approximately 96,000 Palestinians from the West Bank were employed in Israel on average, representing a 7% increase compared to the previous year.<sup>29</sup>

### Closure obstacles as of December 2016

OCHA recorded 572 movement obstacles inside of the West Bank as of mid-December 2016. The year witnessed a further shift towards more flexible obstacles, which can be opened or closed depending on the circumstances, including the replacement of roadblocks with road gates. There were 15 fewer permanently staffed checkpoints than by end-2015, most of which were turned into partially staffed checkpoints, including the checkpoints controlling access to the northern Jordan Valley (Hamra and Tayasir), and to Ramallah city (DCO checkpoint). Additionally, by the end of 2016 there were 110 obstacles deployed within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2).



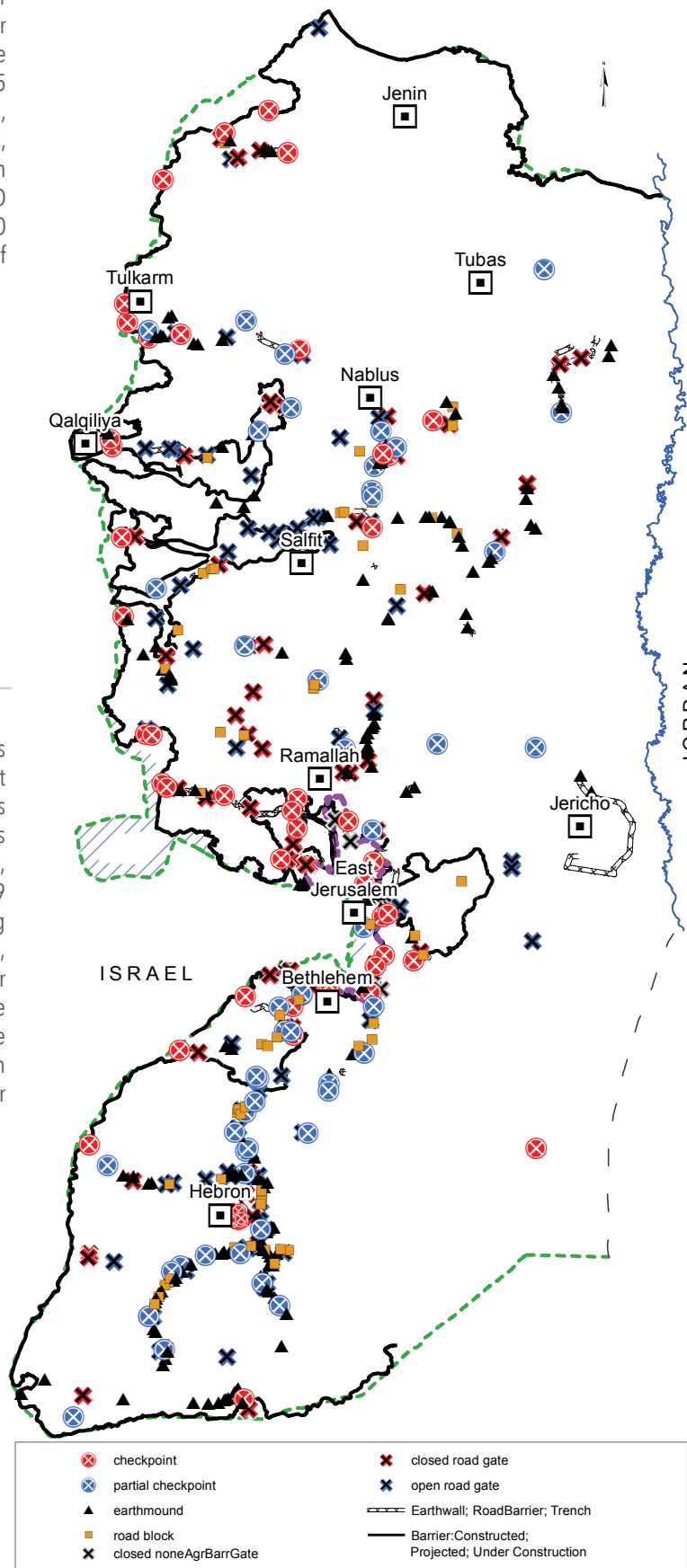
### The Barrier

The Barrier, in conjunction with its gate and permit regime, is the main obstacle to Palestinian movement within the West Bank. Most Palestinian farmers need special permits to access their land between the Barrier and the Green Line, which has been declared a 'closed area'.<sup>30</sup> For those granted permits, access is channelled through some 84 gates, of which only 9 open daily; 10 open some days during the week and during the olive harvest; and 65 only open during the olive harvest, prohibiting year-round access. Data collected by OCHA over the last three years in the northern West Bank show that the yield of olive trees in the area between the Barrier and the Green Line has reduced by approximately 65% in comparison with equivalent trees in areas which can be accessed all year round.<sup>31</sup>

#### Barrier agricultural gates by type



### Closure obstacles as of 31 December 2016

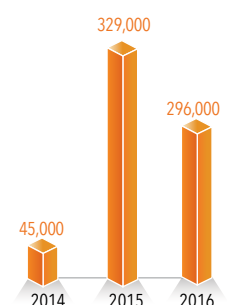


### Restrictions on entry to East Jerusalem

Permit requirements and the Barrier continue to restrict the access of non-Jerusalem Palestinians to the city, including for health care.<sup>32</sup> Since 2008, the Israeli authorities have introduced aged-based criteria during Ramadan which allow Palestinians holding West Bank ID cards to access Al Aqsa Mosque for Friday prayers in lieu of the normal permit requirements.<sup>33</sup> Family visitation permits have also been issued to allow West Bank ID holders to access East Jerusalem during Ramadan and the feast of Eid Al Fitr: on 9 June these permits were frozen following a shooting attack in Tel Aviv, which killed 4 Israelis.



### Palestinian access to East Jerusalem during Ramadan



# Main trends in HUMANITARIAN SPACE

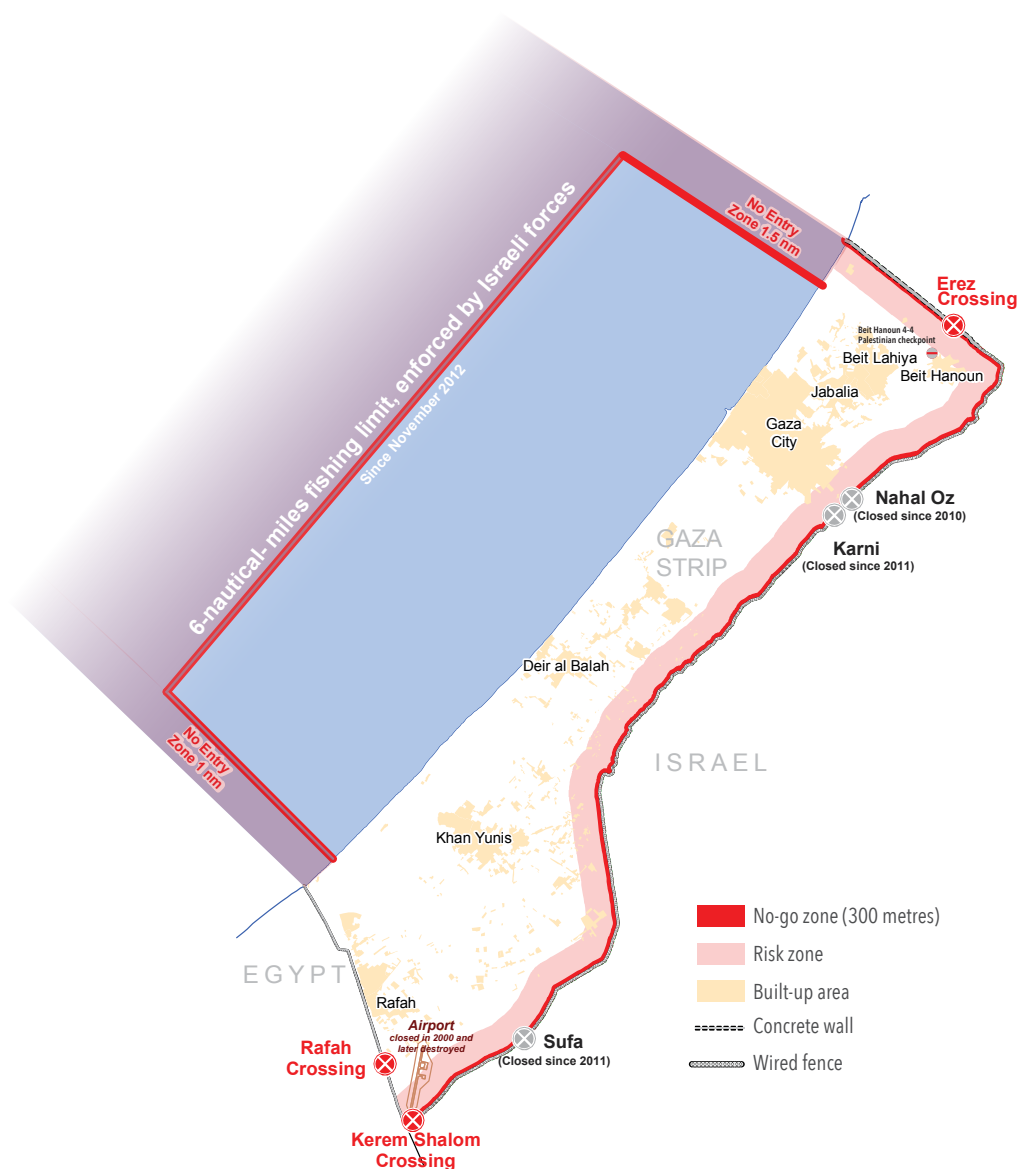
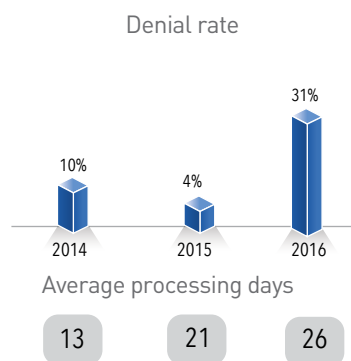
## GAZA STRIP

In 2016, the national staff of aid organizations faced increasing difficulty in obtaining permits to enter and exit the Gaza Strip from the Israeli authorities, who cited increased security concerns. With the blockade still in place, the UN-brokered temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) continued to facilitate the entry of restricted goods to Gaza, primarily building materials, to address continuing reconstruction and recovery needs from the 2014 hostilities. Within Gaza, the de-facto Hamas authorities increased pressure on INGOs through audit requests, denials of residency permits and new procedures at the Arba-Arba checkpoint. Restrictions imposed by counter-terrorism legislation and the “no contact” policies with Hamas posed further challenges on the operational environment of humanitarian actors. Two local Gaza-based employees of humanitarian and development organizations were indicted in Israeli courts in August on charges related to misusing their employment to provide funds and material assistance to Hamas.<sup>34</sup> Israel-imposed restrictions were compounded by the prolonged closure of the Rafah crossing by Egypt. 2016 also witnessed continuing pressure on human rights actors, including civil society, by both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities (in Gaza and the West Bank) and included reports of arrests, detentions and harassment.

## Humanitarian personnel

Israeli restrictions on the entry of national staff of aid organizations to and from Gaza intensified in 2016. For Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem ID holders, 31% of permit applications to enter or exit Gaza were denied compared to an average of 4% in 2015.<sup>35</sup> The average time for processing permit applications increased from 21 days in 2015 to 26 in 2016. Additional access obstacles included lengthy interrogations of national staff and instances of permit withdrawal, with at least 10 permits of UN and INGO staff cancelled or confiscated at the Erez crossing. Restrictions on the movement of East Jerusalem ID holders into Gaza on an “urgent/exceptional basis” also remained in place while Israeli ID holders continue to be prohibited. Such restrictions are hindering the ability of aid organizations to operate and restrict Gaza-based operations by hampering planning, programme development and communication between West Bank and Gaza offices.

Gaza entry and exit permits for national UN staff



## The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM)

The GRM is a temporary mechanism agreed by the parties following the 2014 conflict to facilitate the entry into Gaza of materials considered by Israel as ‘dual use’. The GRM has facilitated the import of more than 2 million tons of construction material, including nearly 1.5 million tons of cement. In May, the Israeli authorities suspended the import of cement to the private sector in Gaza for 45 days following a diversion from the legitimate intended beneficiaries. The ceiling imposed by Israel of 90 trucks of cement per day through the GRM was subsequently raised to 100 in December 2016, significantly reducing the time estimated to address the backlog of reconstruction needs. The entry of other restricted materials through the GRM remains a challenge, in particular, those required for water and sanitation projects.

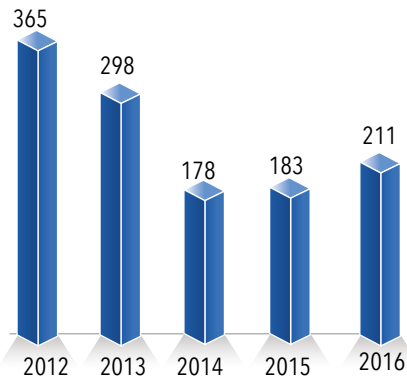
## WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

In the West Bank, incidents where humanitarian and development personnel are delayed or denied access in the course of their official duties have declined since 2010. However, UN and INGO staff holding West Bank IDs continue to require Israeli-issued permits to enter East Jerusalem and are subject to restrictions on driving in the city since 2005, although many Palestinian businesspeople and doctors have obtained such permission in recent years. The implementation of humanitarian projects continued to be impeded by Israeli restrictions on access to East Jerusalem and limitations on projects that involve the provision / expansion/ rehabilitation of shelters and other structures in Area C, which in 2016 witnessed an unprecedented number of donor-funded structures demolished or seized, on the grounds of lack of building permit.

### Delays at checkpoints

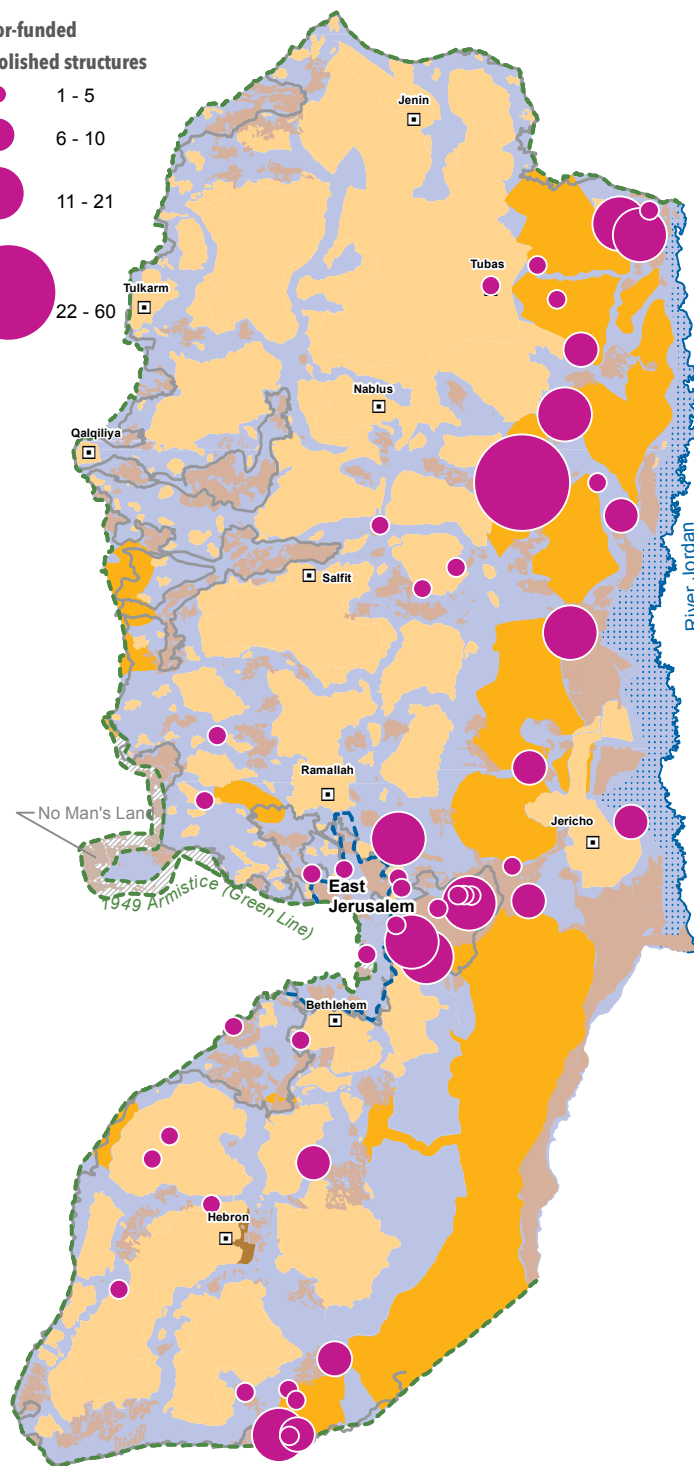
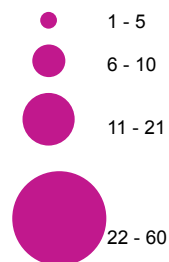
The number of incidents obstructing or delaying the movement of UN and international organization employees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, increased compared to 2015 but remains below the figures recorded in previous years. This trend can be attributed to a number of factors, including humanitarian staff's systematic avoidance of the most difficult checkpoints, at the expense of reliance on longer and more expensive routes. Obstruction at checkpoints, which the Government of Israel maintains are for security reasons, however, continues to hamper humanitarian personnel due to violations of the UN's Privileges and Immunities, sudden closures and restrictions on humanitarian staff accessing certain areas, including areas behind the Barrier and 'firing zones'.

#### Incidents at checkpoints



#### Demolitions, confiscations/ dismantlement of donor-funded assistance on grounds of lack of permit

##### Donor-funded demolished structures

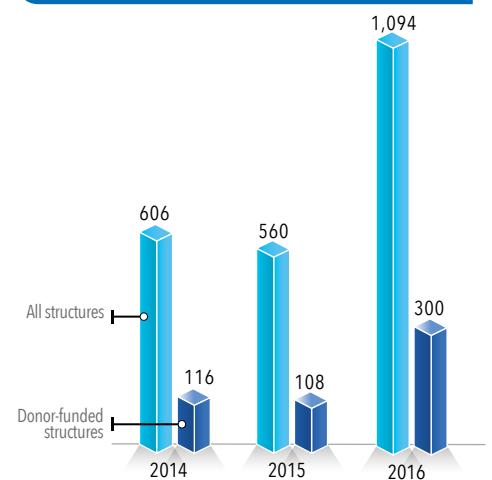


- Barrier: Constructed / Under Construction
- Barrier: Planned
- Israeli settlement (inc.cultivated land)
- Area A / B
- Area C & "Wye River" nature reserves
- Firing Zone (closed military area)
- Buffer Zone (closed military area)

### Destruction of humanitarian assistance

The implementation of humanitarian projects in Area C and East Jerusalem, involving activities such as the delivery of emergency shelters or the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, continued to be severely hampered by the discriminatory zoning and planning policy applied by the Israeli authorities in these areas. In 2016, the Israeli authorities demolished, or seized 300 donor-funded structures provided as humanitarian assistance to Palestinians, 27% of the total structures demolished (1,094), significantly impeding the ability of humanitarian actors to provide assistance to vulnerable Palestinians. This figure is nearly three times higher than that for 2015, with the value of the assistance destroyed or seized estimated at over €655,000. Almost all such structures were located in Area C, with around 47% located in the Jordan Valley and areas designated as closed military zones. In 2016, more than 100 donor-funded aid structures also received demolition, stop-work, and eviction orders, or verbal warnings, placing them at risk.

#### Donated structures vs overall structures demolished



# ENDNOTES

1. Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, A/HRC/34/38*, para. 47. According to the Government of Israel, in the event of a death occurring during the course of military activity, an examination of the circumstances surrounding the incident is conducted. If a determination is made that there was a deviation from the regulations, such as the Rules of Engagement, a thorough investigation will be performed by the relevant authorities who will take action accordingly, and when necessary, will pursue a criminal indictment. For further information about Israel's investigation mechanisms, please see <http://www.justice.gov.il/Units/YeutzVehakika/InternationalLaw/MainDocs1/Mechanisms.pdf>
2. Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *Palestinian Terrorism against Israel, 2016: Types, Trends and Data*, February 2017, pp.45-47. "The year 2016 has been the calmest year along the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip since Israel's disengagement (2005) and Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip (2007)."
3. As of 28 February 2017. The United Nations Mine Action Service has assessed 135 locations in Gaza as having a high likelihood of containing buried aerial bombs.
4. Latest figures from Military Advocate General 24 August 2016 (in Hebrew only): <http://www.law.idf.il/163-7588-he/Patzar.aspx?pos=7>
5. "In a number of instances monitored by OHCHR, Palestinians were killed as a result of the use of force that appeared to be unnecessary and unwarranted." *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of Human Rights Council resolutions S-9/1 and S-12/1, A/HRC/34/36*, 25 January 2017, para. 8.
6. Since the escalation of violence in September 2015, only one case among more than 200 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces following an attack or alleged attack has led to an indictment and subsequent conviction. One incident led to the indictment of a soldier and his conviction for manslaughter in January 2017.
7. According to the Government of Israel, the reason for retention of the bodies is concern that funerals may be used as an opportunity for incitement to more violence, and may lead to more clashes with Israeli security forces and more bloodshed.
8. "Such extensive use of firearms raises doubts as to whether the acts of Israeli Security Forces are consistent with their obligation to exercise restraint and minimize injury." *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of Human Rights Council Resolutions S-9/1 and S-12/1, A/HRC/34/36*, 25 January 2017, para. 13.
9. This includes one fatality by "friendly fire".
10. This excludes incidents not involving Palestinians who hold West Bank ID cards.
11. During the 2013-2015 olive harvests, the Israeli organization Yesh Din documented a total of 53 harvest-related offenses. Of these, 26 complaints were filed with the Israeli police, but only one resulted in an indictment. In 18 cases, the investigation was closed without an indictment, the majority (15) on the grounds of "offender unknown". Yesh Din, *Disruptions to the Olive Harvest in the West Bank*, November 2016.
12. According to B'Tselem. [http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees\\_and\\_prisoners](http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners) Since May 2016, despite repeated requests, the Israeli Prison Service has not conveyed figures to B'Tselem on a regular basis.
13. [http://www.btselem.org/administrative\\_detention/statistics](http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/statistics)
14. [http://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors\\_in\\_custody](http://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody)
15. The High Commissioner has previously raised concern about changes in law and policy that have sought to increase the time that Palestinian children in East Jerusalem spend in prison – both during pretrial detention and after conviction. In at least eight cases documented by OHCHR, children between the ages of 14 and 16 years received an average of more than 2 years in prison for throwing stones, with sentences ranging from 12 to 39 months. Prior to the changes in Israeli legislation and policy guidelines between 2014 and 2015, they would have been sentenced to between 2 and 4 months for the same offence. *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of Human Rights Council Resolutions S-9/1 and S-12/1, A/HRC/34/36*, 25 January 2017, para 28.
16. Shelter Cluster Palestine, *Fact Sheet*, January 2017. <http://www.shelterpalestine.org/Upload/Doc/5d585d51-afc7-4f6c-93ee-0e4f92edb1d7.pdf>
17. Information based on a GIS layer obtained by Bimkom, Planners for Planning Rights, from the Israeli Civil Administration, based on the Israeli Freedom of information Act.
18. UNSCO, *Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee AHLC*, September 2016, p. 11.
19. Israeli official data obtained from Bimkom. According to the Israeli authorities, the demolition of Palestinian property in Area C of the West Bank is a legitimate law enforcement measure used against structures built without the required permit.
20. *Humanitarian Coordinator calls for end to punitive demolitions in the occupied West Bank*, Press release, 16 November 2015.
21. Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, A/HRC/34/38*, para. 22-28.
22. The authorities have justified the plan claiming that the residents lack title over the land and that the relocation will improve their living conditions. The residents, however, have not been genuinely consulted about the plan; they firmly oppose this plan and insist on their right to return to their original homes and lands in southern Israel.
23. Research indicates that nearly 80% of "firing zones" are not used for training. See: Kerem Navot, *A Locked Garden*, March 2015.
24. "On January 15 (2017), the Israeli Defense Ministry announced a 165% increase of goods in 2016 – compared with 2015 – that are smuggled from Israel into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing in southern Gaza and the Erez crossing in the north." *Al Monitor*, Smuggling activities more than double at Israeli-Gaza border, 1 February 2017.
25. These figures reflect the number of "exits" from Gaza, not people, with those granted permits allowed to make multiple exits during the validity period of the permit.
26. Based on the 306 days in which the Erez Crossing opened in 2016.
27. The presence of settlements restricts access to Palestinian land for cultivation purposes. Over 90 Palestinian communities in the West Bank which have land within, or in the vicinity of, 56 Israeli settlements and settlement outposts can only access their land, if at all, only through 'prior coordination' with the Israeli authorities, generally only for a limited number of days during the annual olive harvest.
28. The 3 main entrances of the village of Bani Na'im in the Hebron governorate were closed off between 30 June and 10 August 2016, after a Palestinian resident killed a child in a nearby Israeli settlement.
29. Some 36% of these workers entered Israel illegally, while the rest had either a work permit or an Israeli ID document. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine*, 2016.
30. In the northern West Bank where the majority of Barrier gates (44) are located and are the only crossings which open on a daily basis, the approval rate for permit applications increased from 46% in 2015 to 58% in 2016 to total 6,707 approvals. 4,700 applications by farmers for this olive harvest were rejected. See: *The 2016 olive harvest: OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin*, December 2016.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Applications by patients who hold West Bank ID cards, and their companions, for permits to access East Jerusalem and Israel showed a 17 % denial rate on average for the years 2011-2015, affecting between 30,000 to 40,000 individuals. World Health Organization, *Right to Health: Crossing barriers to access health in the occupied Palestinian territory 2014-2015*, p.30.
33. The criteria differ slightly every year but in 2013, 2015 and 2016 all Palestinian women, irrespective of age, were allowed to enter East Jerusalem for Friday prayers. In 2016, access for men was limited to males under 12 and above 45 years of age. West Bank Palestinians outside the declared age limit have also been able to apply for Friday prayer permits but these were frozen following the Tel Aviv attack.
34. One staff member from UNDP was released in January 2017 following conviction and sentence of time-served in a plea bargain, and the other, a World Vision employee, is still awaiting trial. "World Vision condemns any diversion of aid funding and strongly condemns any act of terrorism or support for those activities. None of the allegations against Mohammad El Halabi have been tested in an open court, and we support the ongoing presumption of his innocence. World Vision has not seen any credible evidence supporting the charges." <http://www.wvi.org/jerusalem-west-bank-gaza/pressrelease/statement-world-vision-international-ceo-gaza-staff-member>
35. This decline followed a new policy introduced in June that limited residents of Gaza to 4 one-month permits per year which was later replaced with a 120-day travel limit.



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