

Collective Punishment

BRIEFING CARD

- The punishment imposed on a **whole group** of people in response to a **crime committed by one group member** constitutes “collective punishment”.
- This is **prohibited** under international humanitarian law.
- Israeli **checkpoints, home demolitions, curfews and military incursions** are all forms of collective punishment.
- *“No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited”*
- Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Checkpoints

Israel has set up checkpoints and roadblocks to **control and restrict Palestinian movement**. A checkpoint can be a large permanent structure or a temporary roadblock. There are over 700 checkpoints and roadblocks across the West Bank.

Checkpoints **fragment Palestinian society**. They impact every aspect of Palestinian life, from seeing loved ones to visiting the shops, going to work, accessing healthcare, and education.

They impact each and every Palestinian living under Israeli occupation whilst Israelis move freely.

Examples:

■ **Bethlehem**
Movement in and out of Bethlehem consists of metal turnstiles, security fencing and loudspeakers barking orders. These conditions are comparable to the entry and exit into high-security prisons. These checkpoint restrictions and violations have significantly impacted the lives of Palestinians in Bethlehem. They have also

- **Up to 700+ checkpoints and roadblocks across the West Bank**
- **131,000+ Palestinian homes demolished since 1948**

dramatically reduced the number of tourists visiting, causing an economic downturn.

■ Qalqilya

The Wall surrounds Qalqilya with only one entry point controlled by Israeli soldiers. Qalqilya is cut off from the rest of the occupied West Bank, punishing all its residents.



Bethlehem Checkpoint at 4am [The Advocacy Project]

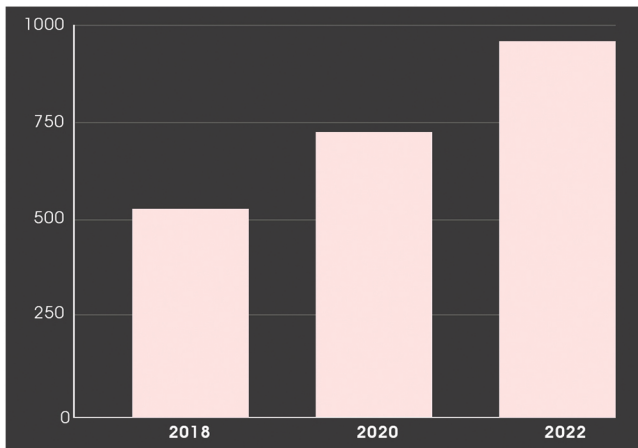
“Israeli forces routinely delay, turn away or humiliate Palestinians at checkpoints without explanation, obstructing commutes to school, work, or appointments of all kinds”

– Human Rights Watch, 2021

Home Demolitions

Israel has a track record of demolishing the homes of Palestinian political activists and stone-throwers, regardless of the number of people living there or their involvement.

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions estimates that since 1948, over 131,000 Palestinian homes in the West Bank have been demolished by Israel.



Number of Palestinian buildings destroyed by Israel

Israel uses unjust excuses to demolish Palestinian homes to make way for illegal Israeli settlements, for example claiming that Palestinians do not have a ‘permit’ for land they have lived on for generations. Israel has demolished 5000 Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem since 1967.



Palestinian homes demolished in East Jerusalem [Wikimedia Commons]

Israel routinely refuses Palestinians building permits. Palestinians are then forced to build without permits. Once the building is completed, Israel demolishes it. Some families have had their homes demolished by Israel **4 or 5 times**.

To make matters worse, sometimes Palestinians are forced to demolish their own homes or pay for the demolition.

The distress suffered by Palestinian families due to Israel’s unlawful home demolitions is untold. The whole family faces hardship, particularly children.

Curfews

Curfews are used by Israel to punish **whole Palestinian villages or towns for the actions of one individual**.

Curfews prohibit Palestinian movement for long periods of the day and night, and restrict Palestinian access to work, education and medical services.

The punishment for breaking curfew includes arrest, beatings and sometimes being fired on by Israeli occupation forces.

Military incursions

Military incursions are when Israeli occupation forces enter Palestinian areas. This often leads to Palestinian **injuries, material destruction and deaths**.



Nablus [Flickr]

References:

- 1) ‘List of military checkpoints’, B’Tselem, https://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/checkpoints_and_forbidden_roads
- 2) Statistics on House/Structure Demolitions, 1947-2021, The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, <https://icahd.org/2021/04/26/statistics-on-house-structure-demolitions-november-1947-march-2021/>
- 3) ‘Hope Under the Rubble’, Save the Children, June 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Hope-Under-the-Rubble-4th-pp.pdf>
- 4) ‘A Threshold Crossed’, Human Rights Watch, April 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

Information accurate (April 2023)

