

PALESTINE

Escalation of violence in Jenin

KEY FIGURES

+3,500

FLED THE CAMP
DURING THE ISRAELI
MILITARY OPERATION

+14,000

AFFECTED CAMP
RESIDENTS

12

DEATHS

+100

INJURED

OVERVIEW

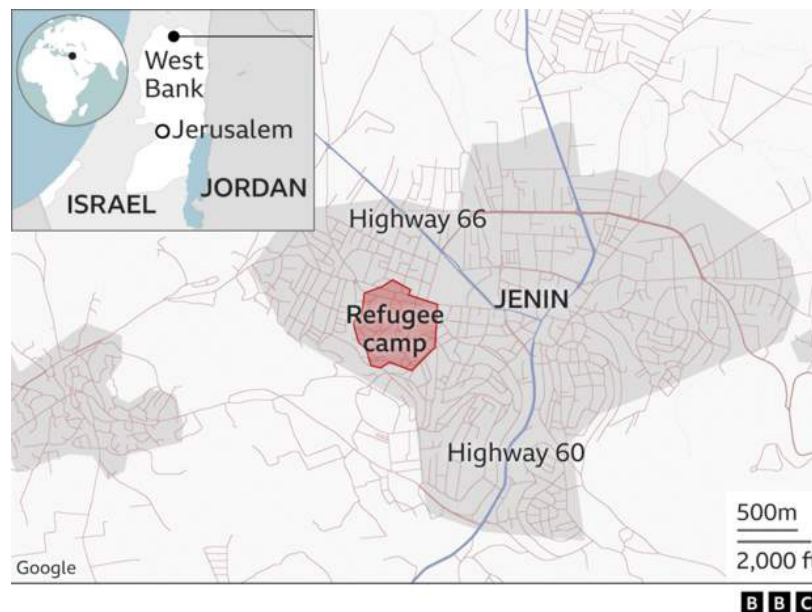
On 3 July 2023, Israeli forces conducted a two-day large-scale air and ground operation in Jenin Refugee Camp and its surroundings. This is the largest Israeli operation in the occupied West Bank since 2002 (The Guardian 04/07/2023; OCHA 04/07/2023 and 03/07/2023). The objective of the operation, as stated, was to counter the presence of armed Palestinians in Jenin (Reuters 05/07/2023).

During the operation, civilians were affected. Over 3,500 of the estimated 14,000 camp residents fled and found refuge in governmental buildings, hospitals, mosques, and churches in neighbouring villages (OCHA 04/07/2023; Al Jazeera 04/07/2023 a; The Guardian 04/07/2023). Most of the displaced were able to return to the camp, but about 40 families remain displaced (OCHA 10/07/2023).

During the raid, the Israeli forces killed 12 Palestinians, including four children. The operation injured more than 100, and more than 120 were detained (Al Jazeera 04/07/2023 a; The Guardian 04/07/2023; BBC 06/07/2023).

The raid caused extensive damage to roads, homes, cars, and public infrastructure. The main water pipeline and three main electric transformers were damaged, leaving camp residents without drinking water and electricity during the operation. As at 10 July 2023, the camp was largely without water (OCHA 10/07/2023, UNRWA 09/07/2023; OCHA 03/07/2023; OCHA 04/07/2023).

The Israeli forces restricted access to the camp during the raid by bulldozing many of the roads leading to it and setting a checkpoint at the only remaining entrance. Medical responders reported that Israeli forces prevented and delayed ambulances from entering the camp, forcing some paramedics to enter on foot to provide medical assistance (OCHA 03/07/2023).



Source: BBC (05/07/2023)

JENIN REFUGEE CAMP

- Jenin Refugee Camp is a crowded 0.42km² camp housing more than 14,000 people. The camp is in Jenin governorate in northern West Bank, just three miles from the demarcation line separating the West Bank from Israel (Al Jazeera 04/07/2023 b; NYT 04/07/2023; UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023).
- The refugee camp was established in 1953 to accommodate Palestinians expelled by Israeli forces from around 54 villages and cities in Haifa and Nazareth in 1948 (UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023; UNRWA 03/2015; Al Jazeera 04/07/2023 b). Jenin Refugee Camp is one of 19 Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank (UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023).
- At the height of the second Intifada in 2002, the camp witnessed a ten-day battle. 52 Palestinians died, and 400 houses were destroyed, leaving one quarter of the camp's residents without shelter after the military operation (NYT 04/07/2023; UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023).

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Health

The three main hospitals in Jenin governorate (Khalil Sleiman Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, and Al Razi Hospital) managed medical cases in Jenin Refugee Camp during the Israeli military operation (OCHA 04/07/2023). Over half of the injuries resulting from the military operation were a result of shrapnel following the Israeli airstrikes (OCHA 03/07/2023).

There were reports of damage to health facilities during the military operation, including from a tear gas canister and sound grenades that landed on the Al-Amal Hospital and in the courtyard of the Khalil Sleiman Hospital (OCHA 03/07/2023 and 04/07/2023).

There is one health centre in the refugee camp that provides primary healthcare, including reproductive health, infant and childcare, immunisation, screening, medical check-ups, and treatment. The health centre building is old and unsuitable for patients (UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023; UNRWA 07/2023). Damage to the centre during the operation left large parts unusable (UNRWA 06/07/2023).

UNRWA is using the grounds of a nearby Palestinian authority school as a temporary health facility with minimal healthcare support (UNRWA 06/07/2023).

During previous raids, needs have included medicines, medical supplies, and blood units (Wafa 19/06/2023).

Protection

The response capacity for gender-based violence in Jenin is limited. Groups displaced by the Israeli military operation are exposed to a higher risk of gender-based violence, especially with the lack of privacy in the hosting settings. Dignity kit stocks are depleted in the West Bank, worsening this situation (OCHA 04/07/2023).

Displacement particularly affects people with disabilities, especially when they leave their assistive devices behind as they flee, increasing their dependence on family members (OCHA 04/07/2023).

Mental health and psychosocial support

The frequent military operations in Jenin deploy live ammunition, tear gas, and other forms of weaponry. These operations often result in fatalities, injuries, and property damage,

generating fear, anxiety, and high stress levels and affecting the emotional and psychosocial wellbeing of Palestinians, especially children (UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023; UNRWA 07/2023).

WASH infrastructure and shelter

The camp has poor WASH and electricity infrastructure, which leads to water and electricity shortages. These shortages are especially seen in the summer and among shelters on the camp's hillside. Many residents of Jenin Refugee Camp continue to live in substandard shelters that lack ventilation, lighting, and other requirements necessary for an adequate living space (UNRWA 07/2023).

The Israeli operation destroyed nearly 8km of water piping and 3km of sewage lines (UNRWA 09/07/2023).

The camp's lack of water and electricity affects the residents' wellbeing and safety, limiting access to drinking water, sanitation facilities, and proper hygiene practices and increasing the risk of waterborne and other health diseases (UNRWA 06/07/2023).

Four UNRWA schools sustained minor damages (UNRWA 06/07/2023; Al Jazeera 05/07/2023). The water network and WASH facilities in UNRWA schools must be repaired and restored before reopening (UNRWA 06/07/2023).

Education

The two UNRWA girls' schools in Jenin Refugee Camp suffered minor damages. Both schools were already old and unsuitable for students, requiring extensive rehabilitation (UNRWA 2023).

Violence and socioeconomic conditions during the occupations contribute to poor student performance and psychological distress (UNRWA 07/2023; UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023; UNICEF 15/03/2023).

There is a need for awareness campaigns on the acute risk from unexploded ordnance, particularly for children, following the use of explosive weapons and airstrikes in the operations (UNRWA 06/07/2023).

Access to education for many children in the West Bank is precarious. Multiple events of violence and raids by Israeli and Palestinian forces in the refugee camps have led to the recurring temporary closure of schools and, in some instances, the injury and death of children (UNRWA accessed 14/03/2023; OCHA 14/12/2018).

JENIN ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN 2023

During 2023, there has been an increased frequency of military operations by Israeli forces and confrontations in Jenin. Israel declared that the raids were conducted as a result of the increase in attacks by armed men in Jenin and pointed to a strong presence of paramilitary organisations affiliated with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in the area (Reuters 05/07/2023). The 2023 raid on Jenin was the largest recorded since 2002 (The Guardian 04/07/2023).

In the first half of this year, over 112 Palestinians and 17 Israelis have been killed in the West Bank, including more than 19 Palestinian children. 39 of the Palestinians killed were from Jenin governorate, including six children. Most of the fatalities in Jenin governorate occurred in Jenin Refugee Camp, where 12 people were killed (OCHA accessed 06/07/2023; MAP 03/07/2023).

During the same reporting period, occupation and conflict related-violence has injured over 4,100 Palestinians and 69 Israelis in the West Bank, including at least 495 Palestinian children. Live ammunition caused more than 10% of the injuries, and rubber bullets around 6%. Over 124 injuries happened in Jenin governorate, affecting at least seven children. Most of the injuries in Jenin governorate occurred in Jenin Refugee Camp and the city of Jenin, with 69 and 25 people injured, respectively (OCHA accessed 06/07/2023).

DRIVING FACTORS

Consolidation of the far-right in Israel

Since the beginning of 2023, there have been heightened tensions and increased violence, demolitions, and military raids in the West Bank. Some have connected this increase in violence with the position of the new Israeli Government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who returned to power on 29 December 2022 (TWP 28/02/2023; NYT 28/01/2023; CBS 03/02/2023).

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel from 1996–1999 and 2009–2021, returned to power as part of a coalition with some ultranationalist parties. This coalition has since promoted policies of annexing the West Bank and legalising and militarising Israeli settlements in Palestine (UN News 24/02/2023; NPR 29/12/2022; ACAPS 23/03/2023).

Emergence of new Palestinian armed groups

In response to the current political landscape in Israel and frustrated by traditional political parties' and factions' inability to address the Israeli occupation, a new generation of Palestinian armed groups not aligned with the larger political factions that govern the West Bank or Gaza Strip is emerging. These groups are not militarily strong but are more likely to act violently and less likely to seek negotiated solutions. This development has also allowed

Israeli forces to argue that there are new threats that need to be controlled (ICG 17/04/2023; Al Jazeera 22/03/2023).

Increase in settlements and settler violence

2022 was the sixth consecutive year the number of Israeli settler attacks increased in the West Bank (Euro-Med Monitor 30/01/2023). 2023 is on course to surpass 2022, with 388 attacks resulting in property damage and 137 resulting in casualties (OCHA 08/07/2023). Israeli military forces often accompany and protect the attackers (Al Jazeera 27/02/2023; OCHA 08/07/2023).

The current Israeli Government has openly vowed to annex the occupied territories of the West Bank and gave approval for thousands of settlements in the West Bank in June 2023 (UN SG 28/06/2023; Reuters 27/06/2023; NPR 29/12/2022; JP 28/12/2022).

The occupation of areas that Palestinian citizens mainly inhabit and that are mainly under Palestinian authority increases the risk of escalating tensions between Palestine and Israel, which could result in violent outcomes (FP 02/03/2023).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Severe socioeconomic conditions

COVID-19 still affects the Palestinian economy. In 2021, the country's GDP was 5.1% below pre-pandemic levels (VOA 14/09/2022). In 2022, the unemployment rate in Jenin governorate reached 16.9% (Wafa 15/02/2023). Jenin Refugee Camp has one of the highest unemployment and poverty rates among the 19 West Bank refugee camps (Al Jazeera 04/07/2023 b). High unemployment and poverty contribute to high rates of school dropout among young children (UNRWA accessed 06/07/2023).

As the Palestinian economy is weak and there is insufficient investment to create job opportunities, many Palestinians work in Israel (Palquest accessed 14/03/2023).

In 2023, an estimated 2.1 million Palestinians (of the total 5.3 million population) need humanitarian assistance, including 800,000 people residing in the West Bank and 1.3 million in Gaza (OCHA 25/01/2023).

Palestinians face serious protection challenges, including threats to life, liberty, security, property, and freedom of movement. The lack of accountability or effective remedies compounds these protection challenges (OCHA 12/2020). In the West Bank, OCHA categorises the humanitarian situation for one-quarter of households as 'catastrophic', 'extreme', or 'severe', and 31% of households reported challenges in meeting basic needs, such as food and health (OCHA 29/06/2022 and 25/01/2023).

Demolitions

During the first six months of 2023, Israeli authorities demolished, forced people to demolish, or seized 449 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank, including 123 inhabited residential structures and 76 livelihood structures. Of these structures, 20 were in Jenin governorate, including six inhabited residential structures and 11 livelihood structures (OCHA accessed 06/07/2023). The demolitions affected over 20,500 people and forcibly displaced 689 (OCHA accessed 16/02/2023). In Jenin governorates, demolitions affected more than 160 people and displaced 23 (OCHA accessed 06/07/2023).

In 2022, over 950 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished or seized in the West Bank – the highest number since 2016 – including 194 inhabited residential structures and 190 livelihood structures. 50 of these structures were in Jenin governorate, including 11 inhabited residential structures and 32 livelihood structures (OCHA accessed 06/07/2023). In 2022, the demolitions affected over 28,450 people and forcibly displaced 1,032. In Jenin governorate, those demolitions affected 215 people and displaced 80 (OCHA accessed 06/07/2023).

Settlers usually promote and carry out demolitions to expand their illegal settlement areas. These actions force Palestinian landowners to move, usually to places where they have little access to humanitarian assistance and lose their main sources of income (UNRWA 2013; OHCHR 07/05/2021).

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

During military operations, Israeli forces often block or delay ambulances from reaching people needing assistance. During the operation in Jenin, medical responders reported that Israeli forces prevented and delayed ambulances from entering the camp (OCHA 03/07/2023 and 04/07/2023; Al Jazeera 04/07/2023 a; MAP 08/07/2022 and 18/12/2018).

Palestinian patients from the West Bank and Gaza require permits to reach hospitals in East Jerusalem or Israel. The approval rates have been declining since the beginning of 2023, and approval rates for Jenin are lower than the average 74% rate, at 69% (WHO 03/07/2023).

The first five months of 2023 saw at least 124 attacks on health facilities, equipment, or staff in the West Bank and Gaza. These attacks injured 39 health workers and resulted in the detention of nine. The attacks also damaged 15 ambulances, of which four were directly targeted, and three were used as a shield during fighting (WHO 03/07/2023).

RESPONSE CAPACITY

In the West Bank, there is a multiplicity of humanitarian responders, including UN agencies (OCHA, UNCF, UNPF, UNPS, UNRWA, WFP, and WHO), INGOs (Doctors Without Borders, International Committee of the Red Cross, Norwegian Refugee Council, and Save the Children), and local NGOs (Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, and Palestinian Medical Relief Society). These organisations face physical and bureaucratic challenges in assisting affected people.