NEWS RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
Occupied Palestinian Territory

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory
Ramallah
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The UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory calls on Israel to immediately lift discriminatory movement restrictions and ensure Palestinians' access to basic services in the H2 area of Hebron

For the past month and a half, at the peak of the summer heat, the Israeli water authority has reportedly reduced water supply to the south of the West Bank by 40 percent. Particularly, the water restrictions in Palestinian communities in H2 area of Hebron are exacerbated by movement restrictions, as Palestinians in the old city (Al Shuhada, Tel Rumeida, Wadi al Hussein areas) are prevented from buying and bringing water tanks to their houses.

Since 7 October 2023, Israel has escalated existing severe, discriminatory movement restrictions on Palestinian residents of H2 in Hebron, denying them effective access to basic services including water, food and other necessities of life, health services and schools. These restrictions, which do not apply to the 700 Israeli settlers in the city, make life in H2 unbearable for around 33,000 Palestinians living there, exacerbating the existing coercive environment, and appear designed to force them to leave.

Since 7 October, Israeli forces have ordered the closure of most shops in H2 and imposed a curfew, currently in place from 22:00 to 7:00 hours, during which Palestinians are not allowed outdoors, under threat of detention, violence and abuse by Israeli forces.

Movement restrictions have been accompanied by apparently gratuitous violence. For example, on 21 August, ISF stopped a Palestinian man and his wife were stopped in their vehicle inside in the Jabal Johar area of H2 at 22:00. After searching the car and allowing it to leave, ISF threw a sound grenade into the car, injuring the driver. In another example, on 10 August a man, who had taken his sick infant to a hospital in H1 and was returning to his home in H2 thirty minutes after the start of the curfew, was detained at a checkpoint where he was assaulted, blindfolded, and forced to kneel on the ground for two hours.

Israeli authorities have reportedly prevented the delivery of health services by humanitarian organizations in several neighborhoods, including through imposing restrictions on the movement of ambulances in and out of H2. Additional obstacles imposed by settlers exacerbate the effects of the ISF enforced movement restrictions. In one of many cases, in Haret Jaber area in H2, a 36-year-old Palestinian woman with chronic health issues and a disability affecting her movement has been forced to use the window to leave and enter her house due the fact that settlers have barricaded her doorway with barbed wire. On another occasion, on 27 March 2024, the ambulance transporting her to hospital for treatment was delayed for 10 hours at checkpoints, during which time she suffered from multiple life-threatening strokes. The trip would normally take only 20 minutes without movement restrictions.

ISF have also arbitrarily restricted access by students and teachers to the three Palestinian schools in H2, forcing the schools to operate remotely for most of the academic year, effectively denying the children's right to education, given that many students do not have access to computers and internet.

Before 7 October, Palestinians in the restricted area of Hebron H2 were already living in a highly coercive environment, forbidden from receiving visitors, and having to cross Israeli checkpoints several times a day to access basic services, while being constantly exposed to violence and abuse by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

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