



Cordoba School children go on foot towards Checkpoint 55 in H2, Hebron, which they must access to get home, while an Ecumenical Accompanier provides protective presence. (Photo Credit: EAPPI)

H2 Hebron Fact Sheet

3 August 2023

Overview

H2 is the name given to the eastern part of Hebron City, the only Palestinian city center which remains under full Israeli military control in the West Bank. Hebron City has been divided ever since the Wye Plantation Accords of 1997 were signed, with H1 designated under Palestinian Authority control. H2, which amounts to 20% of Hebron City,ⁱ is home to 42,000 Palestinians and 700 Israeli settlers. It is also home to 43 schools that accommodate 17,421 students (7,538 males, and 9,883 females).ⁱⁱ

Palestinians in H2 are living behind metal-screened windows, and at any given moment soldiers may detain and arrest them. A UN survey estimates that 75% of Palestinian households in H2 were searched by Israeli forces between 2015 and 2018, and in one-third of these cases, a member of the family was physically assaulted.ⁱⁱⁱ The Palestinians remaining in the Old City suffer systematic harassment also at the hands of the Israeli settlers who are supported by the security forces.^{iv}

Whereas the Israeli settlers move unrestricted everywhere in H2, Palestinian movement is severely restricted. In order to enter their homes, go shopping or to school, the Palestinians must cross fortified checkpoints on foot. There are 21 permanent checkpoints operated by Israeli forces and that can be closed any time with no warning.

Unless Palestinians obtain a special permission, they are also forbidden from driving vehicles in H2, which has serious implications for people with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with urgent conditions who need to reach medical assistance. The restrictions on vehicles include emergency services such as fire trucks and ambulances.^v

Due to the harassment, violence, and restrictions, thousands of Palestinian residents left their homes, the bustling center of Hebron collapsed economically, and approximately 500 Palestinian shops in H2 are now closed.^{vi}

Shuhada Street, inside H2 Area, was the vibrant economic center of Hebron City, the second largest city in the West Bank. The Ibrahimi Mosque is only 300 meters away from Shuhada Street. The street has been closed to Palestinians since the massacre of the Ibrahimi Mosque in February 1994. Shopkeepers have left the area, and Palestinian families whose homes are on the street have their entrances welded shut by the Israeli military. Israeli settlers inside the City of Hebron are living in four compounds adjacent to Shuhada Street, and the closure in H2 is meant to keep the path safe for them.^{vii}

Noam Sheizaf, Israeli film maker who documented life in H2, sees the settlers “as an arm of the state,” and he says: “they are extreme, they are radicals, but they could not have done it on their own... if wasn’t for the army, they wouldn’t stay.”^{viii}

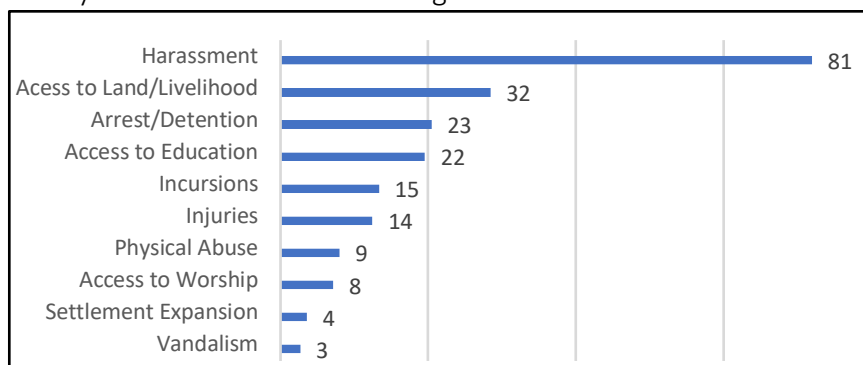
Consequently, UN data indicates that in 2023 there are 17,000 Palestinians in H2 that need humanitarian assistance; 44% of the population that needs such assistance in the West Bank.^{ix}

Violence During the Previous Five Years^x

According to OCHA Protection of Civilians Online Database, during the period between 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022, there were 2017 violent incidents against Palestinians in H2 by Israeli soldiers and or settlers. During the same period, there were 9,443 incidents in the entire Hebron Governorate. Violence in H2 amounted to 21% of that in the Hebron Governorate, with most of it taking place in 2019 during COVID when the residents were quarantined in the area and there was more time and friction with soldiers and settlers.

EAPPI Reporting on Human Rights Violations in H2

During the one-year period between 1 January to 31 December 2022, the ecumenical accompaniers documented 230 human rights violations in H2. Here is a list of the largest 10 violation types they documented in descending order:



During the first quarter of 2022, between 1 January to 31 March 2022, ecumenical accompaniers reported 40 incidents in H2. During the first quarter of 2023, between the 1st of January to 31st of March 2023, the Ecumenical Accompaniers reported 80 incident. The number of incidents increased by 100% from the first quarter of 2022 compared to 2023.

EAPPI Testimony on Harassment and Violence in H2

- On the morning of the 8th of May 2023, Israeli soldiers arrived twice at Ziad Hammouri Jaber School and attempted to enter, but the teachers prevented them from doing so. The soldiers were looking for a boy in a blue and yellow jacket who threw rocks. When the school finished and the boys were returning home through a nearby checkpoint, one boy of approximately 11 years old was detained. A school teacher arrived at the scene and remained with the boy until his father arrived. The boy was arrested at a police station for nearly four hours before being released. The soldiers realized from video recording that while the boy was wearing a blue and yellow jacket, the one they were looking for had a different height and build.
- On 9 March 2023, while on his way home, a Palestinian man was arrested at Checkpoint 56. The soldiers asked the man to go through a metal detector, but he refused and explained to the soldiers that he had heart problems. The soldiers said they were stopping him because he disseminated pictures of the soldiers, which he took. Eight soldiers arrived at the scene and began pushing away the people who had gathered. The man was released after being held at the checkpoint for one hour and a half.
- On 23 January 2023, no less than five soldiers near Bab Al Badeyye area went around shouting and asking shopkeepers to close their businesses. The soldiers accused children of throwing rocks—a claim disputed by the shopkeepers. The soldiers threw six sound grenades from the side of Beit Romano settlement, and caused damage to goods in one shop. A shopkeeper refused to close down, and therefore one soldier threatened to arrest him. When all the shops were closed, the soldiers returned to their base inside Beit Romano.

ⁱ The Humanitarian Situation in the H2 Area of Hebron City, OCHA. April 2019
[OCHAHEBRONRPT_240419.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

ⁱⁱ Information obtained by EAPP from Palestinian Ministry of Education, Directorate of International and Public Relations. 20 June 2023.

ⁱⁱⁱ Palestinians in Hebron Suffer from Lack of Healthcare and Psychological Distress. July 2022
[Palestinians in Hebron suffer from lack of healthcare and psychological distress | MSF](#)

^{iv} Hebron- A City Turned into a Jail, Machsom Watch
[Hebron – A City Turned into a Jail | Machsomwatch](#)

^v Same as reference number 3

^{vi} EAPPI phone inquiry from Bilal Muhtaseb, Head of the Public Relations Section, Hebron Municipality. 14 June 2023

^{vii} Breaking the Silence video “Shuhada Street in Hebron: Dead-end Street”
<https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/media/68031>

viii H2: The Occupation Lab Examines How Occupation Transformed Hebron’s Business City Center Into Dystopian Nightmare. September 2022

<https://variety.com/2022/film/directors/h2-the-occupation-lab-israeli-occupation-hebron-zurich-film-festival-1235381069/>

ix Same as reference number 1

x OCHA Protection of Civilians Online Database

<https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>

¹¹ Same as reference number 6