



UNITED NATIONS  
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

## THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN HEBRON CITY NOVEMBER 2013

### KEY FACTS

- Pursuant to a 1997 agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Israel has continued to exercise full control over 20% of Hebron City, known as H2.
- The population of H2 includes approximately 40,000 Palestinians living alongside several hundred Israeli settlers, who reside in four separate settlements.
- Current legal proceedings may lead to the establishment of a fifth settlement (the "Rajabi House") in one of the most sensitive areas of H2.
- Over 6,000 Palestinians live in neighbourhoods adjacent to the four settlements, including the bulk of Hebron's Old City (hereafter: the restricted areas).
- There are over 120 physical obstacles, deployed by the Israeli military, which segregate the restricted areas from the rest of the city, including 18 permanently staffed checkpoints.
- Several streets in the restricted areas that lead to the Israeli settlements are prohibited for Palestinian traffic and some also for pedestrian movement.
- 512 Palestinian businesses in the restricted areas have been closed by Israeli military orders and at least 1,100 others have shut down due to restricted access for customers and suppliers (Hebron Rehabilitation Committee).
- More than 1,000 Palestinian homes in the restricted areas, over 40% of the area's residences, had been abandoned, according to a survey (B'Tselem & ACRI).
- Since the beginning of 2012, approximately 700 Palestinians have been injured by Israeli forces or Israeli settlers in Hebron city, and 44 Israelis were injured by Palestinians.

1. **Access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities in H2, compounded by systematic harassment by Israeli settlers and, occasionally, by Israeli forces, have resulted in the displacement of thousands of Palestinians and the deterioration of the living conditions of those who stayed.** Support provided by Palestinian authorities and NGOs in recent years, however, has enabled the re-population of some parts of H2 that were abandoned in the past.
2. **Palestinians living in the restricted areas face serious challenges in accessing basic services, including schools, emergency health services and water and sanitation.** For example: water tankers are unable to reach many households, denying people a main coping mechanism for water shortages; access of ambulances is often delayed due to coordination requirements; some schools can be reached only on foot and require children to undergo daily searches at checkpoints.
3. **The Israeli authorities justify the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian population as a means to protect the Israeli settlers** residing in the city, as well as other Israeli visitors, and to allow settlers to lead a normal life. However, as with all other Israeli settlements, **the settlements in the heart of Hebron City are illegal under international humanitarian law.**<sup>1</sup>
4. **There are serious gaps in the enforcement of the rule of law on Israeli settlers involved in violence and intimidation against Palestinians.** Incidents include acts of vandalism, property damage, physical attacks, verbal abuse, and the harassment of children on their way to school. The large majority of complaints about settler attacks filed in recent years have been closed by the Israeli Police without indictment.
5. **As the occupying power, Israel is obligated to ensure that the humanitarian needs of Palestinians living in Hebron are met and that they are able to exercise their human rights,** including their right to freedom of movement and their right to be free from discrimination. Israel also has an obligation to ensure that those responsible for violence and intimidation are held accountable under Israeli law.

<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary General report to the General Assembly on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, A/68/513, 9 October 2013.

