

## **Palestine School Report: Education Under Military Occupation September 2020 to January 2021**



### **Christian Peacemaker Teams**

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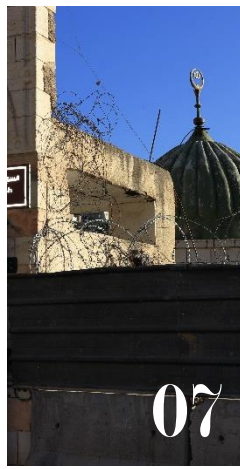
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## Overview

Christian Peacemaker Teams ([CPT](#)) is a human rights organization committed to building partnerships that transform violence and oppression. CPT envisions a world of communities that together embrace the diversity of the human family and live justly and peaceably with all creation. CPT Palestine is a faith-based organization that supports Palestinian-led, nonviolent, grassroots resistance to the Israeli occupation and the unjust structures that uphold it. By collaborating with local Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers, and educating people in our home communities, we help create a space for justice and peace.

CPT Palestine provides accompaniment to Palestinians who face daily human rights violations living in Al-Khalil: children when they walk to school, farmers during times of harvesting, and local activist communities at nonviolent protests and demonstrations. CPT collects data at four military checkpoints in the H2 area of Al-Khalil: Qitoun Checkpoint/209, Salaymeh Checkpoint/29, Beit Hadassah (a-Shuhada), and Ein Al Hamra Checkpoint. CPT documents and

reports human rights violations committed against the Palestinian community in Al-Khalil, including violations from both the Israeli military and Israeli settlers.

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## Introduction

CPT provides presence at three military checkpoints staffed by Israeli Border Police and soldiers: Qitoun Checkpoint/209, Salaymeh Checkpoint/29, and Mafia checkpoint near the Saraya kindergarten.

Eleven schools, three kindergartens, and a medical center are located in the old city in proximity to the checkpoints where CPT monitors. The specific violations recorded in this semester include bag searches, teacher ID checks, detention, and the use of force. This report is based on data gathered over the fall semester between 5 September 2020 to 15 January 2021. CPT mainly monitored two checkpoints, Qitoun/209, and Salaymeh/29, in the morning and

afternoon based on the capacity of the team.

Teachers and students faced many challenges this semester. In a conversation with the principal of the Al-Khalil school, he noted that “this year was hard on different levels. On one hand, there is COVID 19 and virtual teaching and learning was not easy for both teachers and students. The internet coverage is not good in Palestine, and not all students have access to the internet, smartphones or laptops.”

Israeli checkpoints are the main form of oppression against teachers and students who are forced to cross them several times per day. “I used to pass four checkpoints on my way to Al-Faihaa school near the Ibrahimi mosque,” said sixteen-year-old Aya. “I don’t have an ID yet, but they wouldn’t believe me, and they detained me for 15 minutes to check everything I have. Every day I was getting my bag checked, I had to empty everything in my bag to prove that I’m not carrying something “prohibited”. So, we were careful and we didn’t even bring some stuff we needed for the school or the soldier will accuse us of trying to hurt them”.

The use of direct force from the Israeli military decreased during this semester, but the soldiers' provocation was very clear. "This year the Israeli army didn't use tear gas very much, but they were trying to provoke the students" noted the Al-Khalil school principal. "From 7:15 am until 7:55 am—the time when the largest number of students pass the checkpoint—at least three soldiers come out of the checkpoint almost daily and stand on the street corner pointing their weapons at the children. Fortunately, though, due to the hybrid learning system<sup>1</sup>, only half the number of the students are going to school on any given day, so there is less tension between the students and the soldiers." [Watch CPT's video of school monitoring at the checkpoints.](#)

Based on the data collected during this reporting period, CPT raises fundamental concerns about the continued violation of the rights of Palestinian children and adults.

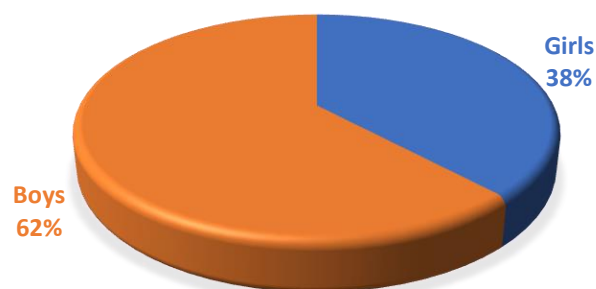
The presence of checkpoints, military personnel, and settlers, along with the daily threat of violence and degradation, have a constant and

continuous negative impact on both the right to movem.

## Checkpoint Statistics

Based on documentation from CPT presence at the checkpoints from September 2020 - January 2021, we found at Qitoun Checkpoint/209 and Salaymeh Checkpoint/29 that on average a total of 34 boys and 21 girls cross the checkpoints daily. The graphic below illustrates the numbers.

### THE AVERAGE NUMBER (DAILY) FOR BOYS AND GIRLS WHEN THEY PASS THE CHICKPOINTS



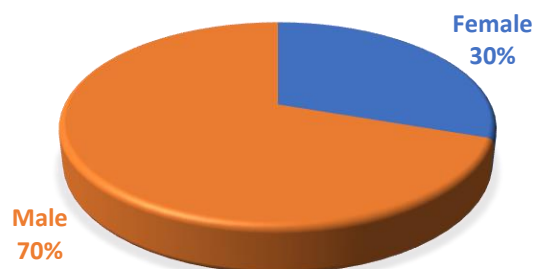
During this same time period, the average number of teachers who cross the checkpoints daily are one female and two male teachers. Also,

<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian schools are currently using "hybrid learning" a mix of in-person and online progra/410787414256282m. The students were

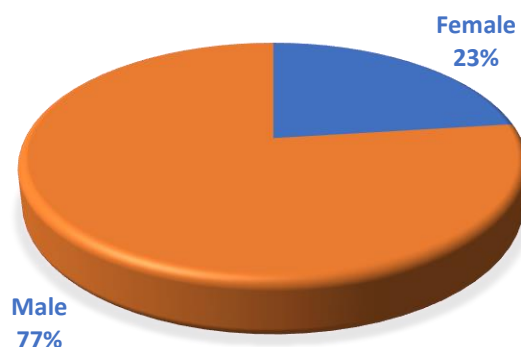
divided into two groups, half of them go to school and that changes every other week.

the statistics show the number of other adults on average to cross the checkpoints daily are ten females and 34 males. The graphic below illustrates the numbers.

### THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF TEACHER WHO PASS THE CHECKPOINT (DAILY) BASED ON GENDER



### THE NUMBER OF OTHER ADULTS WHO PASS THE CHECKPOINT (DAILY) BASED ON GENDER



The violations are not limited to school students as teachers are also subject to ID checks, body searches (either from a distance or physical), and in some cases denied entry to or exit from the checkpoints.

Based on the above documentation, it is clear that men cross through the checkpoints at a higher rate than women, for the following reasons. First, some female teachers and women try to avoid checkpoints by going from a different route. Second, according to customs and traditions, men are responsible to cover the financial needs of the family, while wives are responsible for the house and children, therefore women do not move within the city as much as men. But still, there are working women and in 2019, women's participation in the Palestinian labour force reach 19% based on statistics from the Minister of Labour Dr. Nasri Abu Jaish<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Alwatanvoice. (2019, 10 27). Minister of Labor: The percentage of working women in Palestine is about

19%, which is low.  
<https://cutt.us/sAoTV>(Alwatanvoice, 2019).

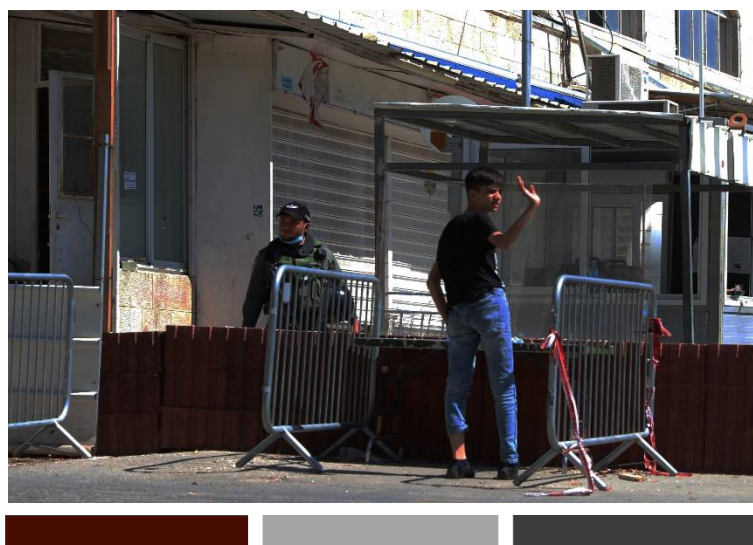
## Child Arrest

Article 37 of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child states that children accused of violating the law should not be subjected to murder, torture, cruel treatment, life imprisonment, or imprisonment with adults. Imprisonment should be the last option for the shortest possible period of time. Children have the right to legal aid and the ability to stay in contact with their families.

According to statistics from WAFA Palestine News and Info Agency, Israeli occupation forces have arrested one million Palestinians since 1967, in which more than fifty thousand detentions were Palestinian children (under the age of 18 according to the agreement).<sup>3</sup>

Thirteen-year-old Yamen al-Ajlouni was handcuffed and dragged in a painful and humiliating manner to the checkpoint. When we spoke to him, he told us that all he did was pass the checkpoint until he got to his home.

Children are subjected to imprisonment and the worst methods of torture. They are sometimes imprisoned for several years, and they are also imprisoned with adults in the same prison. Sometimes the charges against them are fabricated and unfounded, when they are only trying to live naturally in an unnatural and unfair reality of surveillance and checkpoints. The only accusation against these children is that they are Palestinians and they are engaged in normal action and defence of their land from the occupier.



<sup>3</sup> <https://wafa.ps/>

## Soldier and Settler Violence

In Palestine, school generally starts at 8:00am and students should arrive at school before 8:00am. In the H2 area where CPT monitors, the students need to cross at least one Israeli checkpoint in order to reach their schools.

Sometimes families will accompany the students to cross checkpoints to make sure that they will be safe on their way to school. Often, provocation by soldiers guarding the checkpoints will take place before the beginning of the school day. Soldiers will leave the checkpoint and walk closer to the school areas next to the checkpoint.

Provocations by soldiers can take different forms, starting with brutally dealing with children by searching them physically or searching their belongings and bags.

After students cross the checkpoints heading towards their schools, the soldiers continue their provocation and humiliation of these children, provoking a reaction by leaving the checkpoints and entering the street or

areas near the school. They take photos and film the children and they also point their weapons at them. This results in some children throwing stones, to which the soldiers intensify the situation by running after them and throwing gas or sound bombs towards them. These actions happen almost daily.

This provocation does not only come from soldiers but also from settlers. Settlers come to the checkpoint to provoke children, taking pictures and videos of them, like in the image below which shows an Israeli settler living in Al Khalil taking videos of children while they are on their way to school. Every time he is present at the checkpoint there is a lot of tension.



Aside from the checkpoints, the walk to school in H2 is also very dangerous because the students must walk on streets where only settlers are permitted to drive their cars. On 29 November 2020, a 40-year-old woman and her five-year-old nephew Ahmad were attacked by an Israeli settler in the early morning. The Israeli settler accelerated his car toward them and hit the woman. The woman and her nephew were transferred to a Palestinian hospital where the woman was treated for an injury to her shoulder. The Israeli police who responded to the incident later determined that the incident had been a car accident. Two CPTers witnessed this case and documented that the settler waited for the woman and her nephew while they were crossing the street, and then he accelerated his speed and hit her.



## **Violation against Human Rights Observers**

While passing the checkpoint, a soldier yells:

"Hey, Where are you from?"

"From Here!" I say.

"Where from here do you mean?"

"From Hebron," I say.

"Okay, give us your ID."

Then the female CPTers are subjected to a bag check and ID check, and male CPTers empty their pockets, take their jackets and belts off.

This is an example of the daily experience of CPT observers every time they pass a checkpoint, often more than once per day. CPT members have always faced challenges, but as a full team of local Palestinians, these challenges and fears are increased. As foreign monitors, CPTers might be deported to their country, but as Palestinians they are more likely to be assaulted physically and verbally or arrested.

On one occasion, at Abed checkpoint, A Border Police stopped us, asking "Where are you from?" "From here,"

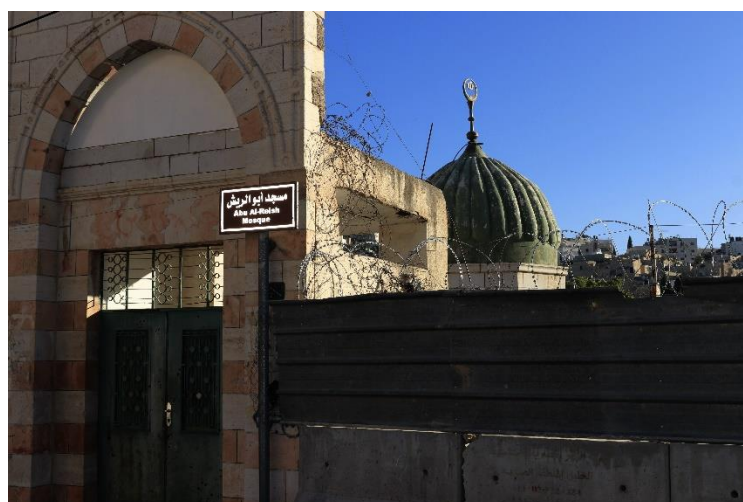
we said. Then he showed us that sinister smile, and replied, “so you all stand here and give us your IDs.”

As a Palestinian you are always a suspect. On another occasion, a CPTer was stopped at the mosque checkpoint. The CPTer was having a hard time breathing and the Border Police thought that was suspicious, so we were stopped for five minutes while he called an Arab Border Police to check if the CPTer was carrying something “prohibited”.

At 7:00am on a very cold morning in January, 17th three Border Police were inside the warmed cabinet at Abed checkpoint downhill from the Ibrahimi Mosque. The CPT team was stopped and one CPTer was asked to take off his jacket and he refused. “It is very cold and there is no need for that after I emptied everything I had in my pockets,” he responded. However, the Border Police would not allow anyone to pass without him removing his jacket, so eventually he did.

For new team members who have not experienced passing through checkpoints before, it can be a very traumatic experience. “It was my first time getting stopped, we were at Mafia checkpoint near al Sayarah Kindergarten. The Israeli Border Police

asked me to put my bag on the table and stand back, then they asked my teammate to take off his jacket, belt and empty everything from his pockets. We were questioned, it felt like we were in an investigation, and it was only on our way to the old city, it was terrifying”.



## Collective Punishment



One of the hundreds of ways that Israeli soldiers persecute Palestinians is through collective punishment. These measures push families to leave their houses in the old city of Hebron in search of another place to live. This phenomenon is not only occurring in Hebron, but used across Palestine.

According to Oxford Public International Law, “collective punishment is a form of sanction imposed on persons or a group of persons in response to a crime committed by one of them or a member of the group. As noted by the

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the concept of collective punishment does not refer to sanctions imposed pursuant to the application of penal law characterized by respect for due process, but rather to ‘penalties of any kind inflicted on persons or entire groups of persons, in defiance of the most elementary principles of humanity, for acts that these persons have not committed’<sup>4</sup>.

One clear example of collective punishment documented by CPT monitors is the abuse of checkpoints by Israeli military. Soldiers closed the checkpoint many times when some students threw rocks against the checkpoint, they closed it and not allowing for anyone to pass for a matter of time, even for the school students which they have classes to attend.

<sup>4</sup> Peters, A. and Wolfrum, R., 2021. Collective Punishment. [online] Oxford Public International Law. Available at:

<<https://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e269>> [Accessed 12 February 2021].

## Incident Report of Violations

CPT Palestine observed and recorded the following incidents of violence by the Israeli military against students and families, from September 2020 - January 2021.

**15 September 2020** - A student was stopped at the checkpoint and they searched his school bag, on this day it took 1-2 minutes for each person to pass the checkpoint.

**24 September 2020** - At the checkpoint, the soldiers delayed almost everyone who passed for 3-4 minutes and one of the locals told us that they were strictly checking everyone.

**20 October 2020** - Soldiers approached the schools at 7:39am to intimidate students.

**3 November 2020** - Soldiers closed the checkpoint for more than 25 minutes as collective punishment towards all Palestinians for the actions of several children who threw stones.

**16 November 2020** - At 7:30am, an adult Palestinian passed through the checkpoint and they asked him to put any metal materials with him aside. The man put everything he had with

him on the table but despite that, the metal detector kept ringing. They kept him for ten minutes and around 15 people including students were waiting outside the checkpoint for the Border Police to let them through.

**21 December 2020** - Soldiers went down to the school area, chased the children, then they stepped back after 20 minutes.

Most of the violations CPT observed were delays at the checkpoint for Palestinian adults and students using the collective punishment method. Soldiers also used intimidation methods against students by patrolling close to their schools and ascending rooftops aiming guns at students while they were going to their schools.

