

Investigating Human Rights Violations Experienced by Palestinians on the West Bank of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This research was undertaken by researchers and faculty from the Institute of Community and Public Health (ICPH) at Birzeit University (BZU). In pursuit of ICPH's continued and long-term research endeavors in the area of reframing health in wars and conflicts to suit local and regional realities, and likely other conflict affected zones, this research pertains to the development of a metric that measures human rights violations and their effects on life and health. ICPH has already developed metrics to measure humiliation, exposure to violence, insecurity, distress, deprivation, and uncertainty. Currently, given the particular interest in human rights, especially in light of the different forms of violations that surfaced during and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had the opportunity to conduct this study to develop a human rights violations metric. ICPH's team began with a qualitative study investigating local understandings of fundamental human rights and human rights violations in the oPt as reported by a diverse sample of Palestinians in the West Bank. The goal was to develop a scale from the ground up based on the qualitative findings and pilot it before conducting a large survey that links violations of human rights to life and health.

ICPH's approach entails understanding human rights from the ecological perspective. In other words, there are violations taking place at home, in community/society, by the government, be it economic or political, and the Israeli occupation. This report highlights the main findings of the qualitative study and emphasizes what human rights mean to ordinary people, and the different violations of human rights people experience in the different settings.

Introduction

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1) affirms that all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and are entitled to freedoms and security. It bans torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, arbitrary detention or exile, arbitrary deprivation of property. It emphasizes the right to freedom of movement, and ability to leave and come back to her/his country among other provisions, all of which are human rights violations chronically endured by Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is relevant to states of war and occupation, and works to limit the effects of armed conflict. (2) It protects those not involved in the conflict, restricts the means of warfare and bans the use of many weapons including exploding bullets, chemicals and biological weapons; and prohibits causing unnecessary injury and suffering, or causing severe or long-term damage to the environment. IHL also applies to the oPt as it is still under belligerent Israeli occupation (3) with the international community confirming on many occasion that the oPt is occupied territory to which IHL applies. (4)

Yet, Israel annexed East Jerusalem, and acquired land by means of force, and continues confiscating land and building Israeli settlements, and the erection of the Separation Wall on Palestinian land separating Palestinian neighborhoods and villages from each other, from services in cities and from land they till. This too is prohibited under international law, and undermines the establishment of a Palestinian state on 1967 borders. Furthermore, Israel's violations include the unlawful seizure and destruction of property, demolitions and forcible transfer of Palestinians, deportations, collective punishment (such as curfews, home demolitions), torture, administrative and arbitrary detention, arrest and detention of children, among other violations. (4) Yet, Israel's impunity has continued for over 70 years.

There is a considerable amount of literature reporting on the violations of the Universal Human Rights Declaration as well as IHL by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). This global literature also generally emphasizes indicators, measurements and the acquisition of data related to violations of the rights of citizens by government and its human rights practices. (5-13) It is maintained that human rights data is reliant on the annual reports of the US Department of State, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. (14, 15) Such data obtained for the assessment of human rights violations is usually retrieved from public documentation with incomplete coverage of the list of internationally recognized rights, (10) or from events based and obtained from formal legal documents, records of complaints, socio-economic and administrative statistics from government and civil society. (9, 16) This raises questions about the accuracy and completion of collected information, and its relevance, and points to the need for tools and measures to accurately measure human rights violations, including in specific contexts.

The literature also indicates that selected measures of human rights violations have been developed. This includes two measures known as political terror scales, which, once again, uses data from Amnesty International and the US Department of State to examine economic, political and cultural conditions in the level of human rights observance by governments for cross-national comparisons. (15) Another developed scale to rank human rights achievements based on a scale of 0-100 is the Human Index, which focuses on governmental policies and practices focusing on civil and political rights of citizens, that is, civil and political liberties, (17) and their link to governmental performance. The Human Development Index (HDI) assesses people's capabilities as the most important criterion to evaluate development of a country going beyond assessments based on growth. (18) Although the HDI relates to the degree a government secures basic human rights for its citizens to some extent, it lacks an assessment of inequalities, poverty, human security and other indicators, and only indirectly assesses human rights.

Recent attempts at developing human rights measures include the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI), which once again focuses on governmental practices. (10) This initiative points to the lack of attention to economic and social rights and identifies five rights specified in

the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: the rights to food, education, health, housing and decent work. It is however recognized that there are other economic, social and cultural rights as well as other rights contained in several human rights treaties. The authors argued that human rights data is underutilized because of reliance on public documentation alone for information source, and barriers to data access and understanding faced by people outside academia among other reasons. They thus meant to use the human centered design by involving key user groups, which included human rights researchers and practitioners and sought their feedback and engagement in the process of developing indicators. It seems this initiative is currently involved in measuring civil and political human rights. (19) Because objective and comprehensive data do not exist, the Initiative again obtains information from human rights researchers and practitioners who monitor events in their countries using an expert opinion survey. Data is then used to construct measures containing much more information than previously available.

What is clear however is that the concept of human rights is multi-dimensional and should contain different facets, making it difficult to capture (8, 15) and is insufficiently conceptualized. In addition, global indicators do not take into account the developmental stage of different countries appropriately, where human rights can be understood as in a spectrum of contexts rather than a uniform concept applicable to all countries. (15) Some authors are also concerned with the bias of source materials used in human rights measures. This includes reporting bias related to access to data and how data is coded, and bias due to changing standards, as definitions of human rights changes over time, which can change monitoring and reporting capacity, which can also create bias. (20) Overall, human rights indicators need to be measurable. They need to accommodate the local context, and they need to be supported by qualitative data as well.

Human rights violations contravening the Geneva Conventions committed by Israel against Palestinians living under Israeli military rule are monitored and reported by UN agencies, Human Rights Watch and many others. Some such violations are considered crimes against humanity. (4) Yet despite such reports, Israel continues to act with impunity, and Palestinians under Israeli military rule continue to suffer daily. What adds insult to injury are the human rights violations of the Palestinian Authority, which are also beginning to be reported in the literature.



Graph One: Human Rights Violations using an Ecological Framework.

Yet, these are not the only violations of human rights which Palestinians under occupation endure. Human rights are also violated by the family as well as the community/society. This is why this research initiative conceptualizes human rights violations using an ecological framework, which places the person in the family, community/society, and includes governmental practices and finally Israeli occupation practices which can violate their human rights, as shown in Graph One.

This research is part of a long term and ongoing project which conceptualizes health as a continuum between ease and disease, where people oscillate back and forth on this continuum, and depending on the severity, intensity and amount of insults endured, and the resources available to people, can end up being sick, that is, with disease. Objecting to the dichotomy of healthy and sick, we have included the domain of suffering between health and disease, and included also a subjective health domain in our conceptualization. Since 2000, we have been developing measures to assess the suffering of Palestinians under Israeli military rule primarily, and have developed and published measures assessing humiliation and negative health outcomes, exposure to Israeli political violence, distress, and human insecurity. Work on a measure for deprivation is ongoing, and we have recently completed qualitative work, which we will use to develop a measure for uncertainty, as well as this study focusing on human rights violations.

Interestingly, we have in the past and continue to routinely use what is now called the human centered approach. We call this approach from the ground up. We begin with qualitative work asking people to help us identify the most important items, which should be included in any concept we are subjecting to empirical scrutiny. Results usually produce a qualitative paper in the first instance, but are also used to develop a metric and pilot and evaluate its psychometric properties. We then conduct cross sectional surveys, which usually include a representative sample of the Palestinian population to evaluate exposure and outcome with a special focus on effects on health. Exposure indicators capture various types of exposures such as humiliation,

exposure to other forms of violence, or, with this qualitative study as a backdrop with its results soon to be used in conducting a statistical study, the degree of enjoyment of human rights or the lack of it by persons and collectively in a given context. (7) We also emphasize health outcomes to understand how human rights violations affect health broadly defined. Sometimes, if we are lucky to have available panel studies or very lucky to obtain funding to complete panel studies, we also work on comparing results before and after a particularly difficult period. It all depends on the availability of funds to conduct research, or availability of panel studies completed by others.

Key concepts that have guided this research include: freedom, justice, and dignity, three aspects that we believe are fundamental concepts for understanding the human rights violations Palestinians in the West Bank endure. Other key variables we focus on in general include age, not only biological age, but also representing different generational experiences, and ways of knowing, being and doing. There have been dramatic transformations taking place in the world and in the oPt with likely important differences among the different generations. We also routinely focus on gender, class or economic status, which affects social, cultural and environmental context etc. We call this socio-economic characteristics, which includes a whole host of variables.

This report provides the main findings of qualitative work conducted among Palestinians in the West Bank soliciting views of what constitutes human rights violations from an ecological perspective. Violations include those exercised by families, community, school, university, work, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israeli occupation. The results will be used to construct a quantitative metric to investigate the degree to which Palestinians on the West Bank are exposed to human rights violations the way such violations are understood locally, and their outcome on health. Although this report focuses on the results related to what human rights violations constitute in the local setting, the remaining portion of this study focusing on justice and dignity will be included in another research report in the future.

Methods

In total, 26 interviews were conducted with adult Palestinian women and men from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, urban, rural or Palestinian refugee camp locations, the various West Bank areas (A, controlled by the Palestinian Authority, B with joint Palestinian and Israeli control, and C, which is completely controlled by Israel) and Palestinian East Jerusalem. Participants were recruited through professional, personal and institutional contacts and with the use of snowballing sampling technique. A semi structured interview schedule was developed by the team based on a critical reflection of available literature on human rights in the oPt and available English language internationally published articles and reports (Table One, Appendix One). Interview questions were then piloted and adjusted in line with pilot results. Participants were asked about what they considered as human rights violations, and the type they are

exposed to at home with family, whether nuclear or extended, in their community and neighborhood (with community-level referring to the surrounding neighborhood where interviewees live which includes their villages, refugee camps, or neighborhoods in the city), where they have/had their education and at work (if relevant), by the PA, and by Israeli occupation. Participants were also asked if they considered the World Health Organization's basic rights (food, education, health and health-care, adequate work and adequate shelter) as essential components of their understanding of human rights. Questions were slightly modified as interviews progressed in line with findings. Informed consent, including consent to record the interviews, was obtained orally as required by the Birzeit University Research Ethics Guidelines. Interviews were then conducted in colloquial Palestinian Arabic from remote using zoom, WhatsApp and phone calls, depending on the participant's preference. Interviews lasted from three to six hours. The length of the interviews may have been due to the fact that they were completed during lockdown which was called for by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in response to the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. During this period, participants were mostly at home and it seems that some felt the interview was an opportunity to share some of their thoughts and experiences of human rights violations. The research team went along with participant wishes, especially that some of the participants explained to the team that they felt good after the interviews. It was like a venting session to participants on one hand, and on the other hand it was a way for the research team to give back to participants/community. All interviews were recorded and saved in a special place under lock where only the research team had access. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed using thematic analyses. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institute of Community Health's Research Ethics Committee.

Findings

Sample Characteristics

Of a total of 26 interviewees, twelve were men and fourteen were women. Six were 18-25 years, ten 26-35 years, five 36-45 years, and five 46 year old and above. Six participants lived in the north of the West Bank, fifteen in the central West Bank including East Jerusalem, and eleven in the south of the West Bank. Seventeen of our participants-reported having had at least a bachelor degree, six a high school diploma and three an elementary school degree. Less than half the participants were single, almost half were married and four were divorced (three divorced women and one divorced man). Most married or divorced reported having one and up to four children and three participants reported having five or more children. Less than half of our participants were refugees and held an UNRWA refugee card (Table Two, appendix two).

Rights at home

We asked participants about what they considered fundamental rights at the family level, regardless of whether they have attained this right or not. Our results revealed that fundamental rights at home were categorized into four categories: physical rights, personal rights and freedoms, and the right to have a supportive family environment.

Physical Rights

Most participants emphasized physical rights such as their right to food, shelter and health. All participants from financially modest families recalled stories of how they needed to spend an entire day without food or having to give up food to keep it for their children or siblings. A 37-year woman from Balata Palestinian refugee Camp near Nablus city reported that she gives up food and dinner to feed her five children and that she is the breadwinner of her family since her husband was imprisoned by the Palestinian Authority (PA):

“We are six people in the house... in some days I only have three pieces of bread so I tell my kids I have eaten to save it for them...I skipped many meals for them to eat.”

Another 36-year man from Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank recalled that during his childhood he felt responsible to withstand hunger because his family could not afford food:

“...Even when I was hungry, I knew that my mother couldn’t feed me and that I had to wait from the morning until the night to eat... I also felt responsible to not tell my mother that I am hungry; because I knew she couldn’t do anything.”

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that “the right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.” (21) However, according to the World Food Program, one quarter of the Palestinian population needs food, nutrition, and livelihood assistance. (22) The responsibility to protect the right to food, especially for children, rests on various actors. Parents, for example, are primarily responsible to ensure the adequate nutrition of their children; however, this needs to be supported by the local community, civil society, the PA, and the international community. Obstacles to realizing the right to food in the oPt include the high unemployment rates among Palestinians which results in poverty and limited access to adequate food, the limited and overstretched budget of the PA that undermines its ability to provide comprehensive and adequate support to families in need, the substantial decline in international aid, and the Israeli occupation which restricts people’s access to their land and water. (22)

Most participants emphasized the right to have decent shelter equipped with basic amenities and services and is large enough to provide some level of privacy to all who live there. Residents of

East Jerusalem referred to their right to have shelter that is protected from demolition by Israeli forces. Few of those participants described their demolished houses and their *baraksat* (make shift pre-fabricated shelters) as their only shelter. A 34-year woman residing in Area C of Hebron in the south of the West Bank reported that she spent 15 years of her marriage living in a tent until a humanitarian fund provided *baraksat* for them in place of tents:

“We used to live in tents, but last year, they built us *baraksat* in place of tents...it is good, there are rooms for us, but I have always dreamed of having a kitchen. Like the kitchens you know.”

Another 37-year woman living in Balata Refugee Camp near Nablus city in the north of the West Bank explained that she had to live in an unfinished house as that was their only shelter and they lacked financial resources to finish it:

“I had to live in a house with no windows, doors, tiles, electricity or water... I lived there with my children and husband for five years”.

OCHA reports that 73,000 Palestinians, primarily in Area C, East Jerusalem, and the H2 area of Hebron which are controlled by Israel, are in need of shelter assistance in the West Bank. (23) The discriminatory regime applied by the Israeli occupation in Area C and East Jerusalem makes it impossible for Palestinians to obtain building permits, which restricts the development of adequate housing and infrastructure in those areas. Large portion of land in these areas is defined as public (or state) land, originally confiscated from Palestinian families, and is exclusively allocated to Israeli settlements or for military training. In addition, there is an increased risk of demolition for homes in these areas. According to OCHA, 214 residential structures were demolished in 2020, forcing 747 Palestinian, half of them children, into homelessness. (23) OCHA also reports that as of September 2021, there were 18,711 Demolition Orders against Palestinian owned structures across the West Bank, 92.3% of them are in Area C. (23) Furthermore, OCHA states that as of September 2021, 200 Palestinian families in East Jerusalem are at risk of eviction as a result of court cases filed by Israeli settler organizations. The same report explains that at least 3200 residential shelter in Palestinian Bedouin and herding communities in Area C are substandard and in need of urgent rehabilitation. This includes tents, metal shacks, and caves. The report continues to emphasize that 70% of homes in the H2 area of Hebron require urgent renovation but residents report difficulties in obtaining entry permits of building material and labors through the checkpoints. In addition, 46% of households in this area reported that they need shelter protection measures such as fences and window steel as a protection of Israeli soldiers and settlers violence. (23)

Most of our study participants, men and women equally, reported that the right to quality education is a major right that their families (namely parents) should provide and support. Participants were referring to post-secondary education to allow for good job opportunities in the future. Participants from urban areas were referring to the ability to study in private schools

where the quality of education is known to be generally better than public schools. One 28-year man from Bethlehem city explained that he wished his parents had registered him at a private school because he believed it would have helped him grow academically and intellectually:

“I always wished my parents had registered me at a private school, I used to compare my education to that my neighborhood friends (who attended private schools) received, they used to speak good English and had extracurricular activities I never had at my school. They were much prepared to college than I was, I used to ask my parents but their answer was always ‘we can’t afford it’”

All participants agreed that the right to access health and healthcare is a fundamental right that families should provide and support. Here, participants were referring to the right to be taken to the doctors and health facilities if they are suffering from health conditions, as well as having enough money to afford healthcare in times of need. While the right to health is a right that should be provided by states, as is the case with education as a matter of citizen’s rights, most participants still thought that their families should have enough funds to support healthcare of family members as part of their responsibilities, and an indication that the notion of citizen’s rights is still to be developed locally. Almost half the participants reported a lack of accessible healthcare provided by their families due to economic and physical restrictions. Almost half the participants also noted the limited financial resources of their families, which forces them to seek public/governmental health facilities only. This implies that they have to accept the long waiting lists to see doctors, specialists, have an x-ray, or even have an urgent surgery, let alone the issue of the quality of services in governmental health care services.

Personal Rights and Freedoms

Most participants whether men or women emphasized that personal rights such as privacy, ability to make decisions regarding oneself, and the right to free expression are fundamental rights at home that their families should support and nourish. This included their right to decide about the educational level they want to reach, degree(s), major, place of residency, the age of marriage, partners, and even the way they dressed. A 22-year woman from Dura, a town near Hebron in the south of the West Bank, reported that she was forced to wear a head scarf (*hijab*) to accommodate her family’s instructions:

“Since I am a girl and live in a conservative family, I wore hijab even though I am not convinced of it or the religious background behind it”.

Another 21-year man from Ramallah city in the center of the West Bank said that his long hair used to be criticized by his parents (mainly father) because having long hair does not fit the image of a man according to his father:

“I used to have long hair when I was 19, and my father criticized it all the time and asked me to cut it and look like a man.”

Most women participants recounted that their right to freedom of movement was constrained by their immediate and extended family members to accommodate what was called traditions and values. All participants coming from a humble economic background, especially those residing in Palestinian refugee camps, stated that they lacked privacy inside their homes as they live in small houses/apartments and share rooms with their siblings. This was a major point which they raised, especially as they progressed to puberty where they found no private place where they could explore this transitional period physically or emotionally. The right to free expression was reported as violated at home by most participants during their childhood. This was especially reported by men and women from the Hebron rural areas in the south of the West Bank who told us about persistent violations of this right by their parents and the elderly in their families.

When asked if a denial of their fundamental rights at home is a violation of human rights, most participants agreed. About half of the men and women participants reported that people with authority at home, such as parents, brothers, in-laws, partners, and extended family members, violated their rights. Some women specifically reported that husbands violated their rights especially by using physical abuse and marrying a second wife while continuing to be married with the first. One man with a West Bank identity card unable to get to East Jerusalem reported that his wife and in-laws, who hold an Israeli identity card violated his rights by preventing him from seeing his children for more than two years. Similarly, less than half of men and women respondents reported that their rights are violated by their extended family members pointing to societal norms and traditions as an explanation of this intrusion.

Almost half the sample of both men and women noted that they violated their own rights by choice as a result of their poor financial conditions and for the sake of their family members such as children, siblings, or parents. According to them, this was mainly because of the general deteriorating economic, social, and political conditions and the PA’s inability to perform as expected in relation to the economic, social, and political situation as well as the protection of Palestinians and their rights in general. A number of our participants recalled that they had to work as children to support their families financially. As a 36-year man from Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank recounted, he had to work as a construction laborer at the age of 15:

“When I was 15 years old, I was responsible for my work, myself, and family. I didn’t feel that I am a child, or that I need someone to take care of me. There was pressure on me, and I had to work with other laborers inside Israel to support the family... it did affect me and my future.”

Participants coming from large families with minimum financial resources reported similar deprivations and noted extensively the absence of fathers when had to leave home to work and to

support the family. A 36-year man from Jenin refugee Camp in the north of the West Bank told us that he longed to have family time and feel the presence of his father as he was growing up, yet this was not possible, as his father had to work for extensive hours:

“I have always wanted to have a sense of family, my dad was working throughout the day and when he came home, her had his dinner and then slept...I wished he had been involved in raising us more than providing money.”

More than half of the participants, both men and women, agreed that the Israeli occupation significantly influences the violations of rights at home. This was especially true for participants who live in refugee camps, experienced home demolitions, or detention of their family members, or were exposed to excessive violence by the Israeli military such as night raids, tear gas or sound bombs. A 21-year man from Ramallah city in the center of the West Bank explained that he had to work when he was ten years old to support his family as his father was imprisoned by Israel and that he continued to support his family after his father was released because his father could not find a job:

“My father was detained for a long time, and I shared the responsibility of our family with my mother... I was the main provider for my family even after he was released. I was 10 years old and worked in supermarkets, in construction, and as a dustman.”

How Violations of Human Rights at Home are Exercised

When discussing how rights were violated at home, less than half reported that physical abuse (beating) and verbal and emotional abuse and humiliation were means of violation. Almost half, men and women equally, explained that financial dependency on partners and parents is used as a means of violating rights. This holds especially true for women who depend on their partners or parents for financial support. As expected, almost half of men and women participants reported that they have limited control over their financial resources due to financial commitments and obligations towards their families and children. More than half, mostly women, reported that societal norms and traditions are used as a means of controlling/ limiting their rights in relation to personal decisions and choices including what to wear, or say, or how to behave, when or where to go out, and even the level of education they receive or the time of marriage.

Rights and Freedoms in the Community

We asked participants about their fundamental rights at the community level regardless if they have attained these rights or not. We categorized the reported rights into: personal rights, infrastructure and environmental rights, and right to safety.

Personal Rights and Freedoms

Personal rights refer to privacy, right to free expression, right to freedom of movement and living according to one's desires without interference or judgment from the surrounding community. Almost all participants, men and women, agreed that the right to privacy inside and outside the house is a fundamental right to be enjoyed in one's community. Just above half the participants reported that the right to decide about the way they dress or speak, their group of friends, the activities they undertake inside and outside the house is a fundamental right to exercise at the community level and without constraints imposed by the community. We were surprised to hear that men lacked the right to decide about personal matters such their clothing, friends, and actions due to the pressures of the community. A 36-year man from Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank told us that he never wore shorts because it is socially unacceptable by his community:

“I am 36 years old now and I still have never worn a short and I can't wear one no matter how hot it gets, because I am a man and I can't look different from other men in the neighborhood I also can't have girlfriends or speak in a way different from their way of speaking, it is socially not OK.”

More than half the participants, men and women and mostly from rural areas believed that the right to behave and live according to one's beliefs and values while adhering to common norms and traditions is a fundamental right. Similarly, more than half, men and women, agreed that the right to free expression in the community is a fundamental right. Some participants elaborated that freedom of expression included political and social views regardless of age and gender and mentioned the possibility of being threatened by neighbors, extended family, and in some cases the PA when practicing the right to speak freely. A 33-year woman from Tulkarm city in the north of the West Bank emphasized that:

“You are not allowed to express your opinion, whether political, social or anything, not as a child, as a grown up, not as an elderly, and if you think of expressing yourself, then you are exposing yourself to danger and no one knows to what extent it can get.”

Half the participants, with an almost equal number of men and women, reported that the right to freedom of movement and mobility is fundamental at the community level. As expected, this right was especially emphasized by participants living in rural areas and sometimes Palestinian refugee camps, both of which are confined spaces with heavy community monitoring, interference, and lack of privacy. Just below half the participants indicated that the right to be respected by the community in a general sense is fundamental. These participants were equally men and women and came mostly from rural areas where communal respect and expectations has an important bearing on behaviors and decisions especially for women.

Participants who completed their university education and work with non-governmental organizations thought that gender equality and equity rights are fundamental and need to be honored by community. In addition, some participants reported that the right to live in a supportive community is also a fundamental right. A supportive community refers to neighbors who care genuinely about those around them in the community and wish them good and do not discriminate between people based on gender, disability, or background including where they come from originally.

Some participants, especially from the Southern West Bank, talked extensively about the right to play as a fundamental right regardless of gender and age without judgment or pressure from the surrounding community, especially neighbors. This is expected, as the communities in the Hebron area in the South, especially villages, are known to be conservative communities where women and girls are particularly monitored in public spaces as soon as they transition into puberty. An 18 years old woman from Sair, a village in the southern West Bank, noted that girls in her community could not play in public spaces or ride bicycles:

“Our society is very masculine. If a girl plays football or rides a bicycle in the street, they (community) turn the world upside down, because this is not acceptable in society.”

However, some men from the same areas in Hebron in the south West Bank also reported that they experience similar constraints when it come to their actions and behaviors including playing outside their homes in their own communities.

Infrastructure and Environmental Rights

The majority of participants agreed that the right to obtain basic services such as water, electricity, and waste management is the most fundamental right at the community level while less than half maintained that having well paved streets including good lighting and sidewalks is a major right. We noticed that participants from Palestinian refugee camps, villages, and cities talked extensively about the basic services like water and electricity while only participants from refugee camps and villages discussed the overall condition of streets, referring to street pavement, sidewalks and lighting. This was expected as streets in cities are generally in better conditions compared to villages and refugee camps.

In addition, access to basic facilities including health and educational facilities came up often in the interviews when discussing fundamental rights to be achieved at the community level. Less than half of participants emphasized that having a nearby health facility is a fundamental while only three participants thought that having a nearby, accessible, and suitable school for children from primary to high school is a basic right to be enjoyed in communities. This was especially the case for people living in Area C and remote villages. Although unexpected and also commendable, two participants insisted that public and private spaces such as schools and health facilities should be equipped and designed to support persons with disability.

The space outside homes was reported as important. Participants wanted public spaces that support recreational and empowerment activities for women, youth, and children especially. More than half of the participants affirmed that the right to have centers for children in the community such as a library or a garden is a fundamental right. Less than half of the participants thought spaces, organizations, or centers for youth in the community are also fundamental rights. Only six participants, all women from rural areas, believed that having a women's center empowers women to financially support themselves, and offers a space for them to exchange ideas and experiences and participate in social activities and networks. Such places seemed to be essential especially for people living in rural areas and Palestinian refugee camps where living conditions are well below standards due to economic and political constraints. A 36-year man from Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank told us that they lacked all basic and recreational services inside the refugee camp:

“I mean, we in the camp, there is no garden for children, there is no space, sewage runs in the streets, there is no electricity, there are no paved streets, I’m telling you this because I hope you would understand what it means for a child or young man to be raised in such conditions...”

Study participants included in environmental rights issues related to crowding, green areas, pollution, and noise in the neighborhoods where participants live. Half the participants from rural, urban and refugee camp areas indicated that the right to low noise levels and absence of sound pollution especially at night is a fundamental right to enjoy at the community level. They generally referred to noises from cars, neighbors, parties, weddings, and street arguments. All participants from refugee camps stated that there are high noise levels inside camps, mainly from weapons, to the extent of this problem interfering with their right to sleep when they want, even at night. A 36-year man who resides in Jenin camp, north of the West Bank emphasized the the problem of the spread of what he describes as unsupervised weapons inside refugee camps as follows:

“We have weapons in the camp for 24 hours a day, you wouldn’t know why they are shooting and you stop worrying about it, because if someone is happy they shoot, if one is upset they shoot, if Real Madrid wins they shoot, if Barcelona wins they shoot, if the PA raids the camp they shoot, and if the Israeli occupation enters the camp they shoot, if there is a wedding they shoot. The problem is that they are all young men and they all have weapons and no one controls them.”

Uncontrolled weapon possession and use in the West Bank is an increasingly alarming phenomenon, especially since weapons are widely used with the absence of legal accountability. A televised report by the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights warned of the increased armament race between Palestinian families in the West Bank, provoked by their feeling of insecurity, weakness, and lack of protection. (24) According to the Oslo Accords, only

the PA security apparatus personnel are allowed to carry arms in the West Bank; however, weapons are widely spread among families in the West Bank areas under the control of the PA and the protection of PA influential figures, according to PICHHR. In 2020, PICHHR documented 33 cases of murders in the West Bank as a result of using firearms, which is a 49% increase compared to the year before. (25) While there is no official data on the sources of these weapons, reports and activists from PICHHR point to Israeli occupation for facilitating their entry into the West Bank to spread chaos. (25)

About half the participants indicated that having a clean neighborhood free of waste and trash is a fundamental right, and a few indicated that scenic views in their surrounding neighborhood as a fundamental right as well. Almost half the participants, from urban areas and refugee camps emphasized that having spaces between houses and buildings is a major right to enjoy in their neighborhoods, while only seven thought that having green areas in their community is a fundamental right. Interviewees highlighted the need to have a quiet and supportive community, which is essential for people regardless if they live in urban, rural, or refugee camp environments. Participants viewed their surrounding neighborhoods as an extension of their personal space where they need to have a sense of privacy, and be able to rest, and feel comfortable.

Right to Safety

Participants pointed to multiple layers influencing their experiences and feelings of safety. This included safety in a general sense from Israeli occupation, safety from bullying, sexual harassment, and unsupervised weapons. More than half reported that feeling generally safe is a fundamental right to life in the community. Almost half of the participants stressed that the right to not be exposed to excessive force and violence from the Israeli occupation such as tear gas, house invasions, and night raids is a fundamental right. This was especially emphasized by participants from refugee camps across the West Bank who are regularly, and sometimes on a daily basis, exposed to Israeli military invasions of their communities. In addition, a little less than half the participants indicated that the right to not be exposed to unsupervised weapons in social events is a fundamental right as well. Participants from refugee camps and rural areas reported that they are exposed to unsupervised use of weapons during various social events including weddings, celebrations, high school graduation celebrations, and even during watching of football games. Some participants noted that protection of children and adolescents from (illicit) drugs and weapons is a fundamental right to life in the community as this 36-year man from Jenin camp in the north of the West Bank highlights:

“In our camp, Jenin, half the youth between the ages 13-16 years have an obsession of owning a written off car, and the other half is obsessed with drugs and weapons, and they would do anything that comes to your mind to accomplish this.”

Almost half the participants reported that the right to not experience bullying, especially from neighbors and extended family, is a fundamental right to life in the community. Men and women were referring to verbal bullying from neighbors and family members in relation to how they dressed, styled their hair, their friends, and their actions in general. Furthermore, most women from refugee camps and rural areas, reported that feeling safe while walking alone in late hours of the day is a fundamental right. A few men and women noted that the right to be protected from sexual harassment and abuse for children and adolescents is also a fundamental right. We were surprised to hear three male participants from refugee camps and urban areas reporting on their experience with sexual harassment and rape as children and adolescents by people in their neighborhood and extended family while playing in the neighborhood.

How Violations of Human Rights at the Community are Exercised

When asked if denial of their rights as described above by the community was a violation of human rights, the majority of men and women, agreed. More than half of the men and women noted that people, including extended family members, municipalities, older people, and people with 'high social status', or those who assign themselves as the controlling authority over the neighborhood, violate the rights of people in communities and neighborhoods. The majority of women and more than half of respondents noted that neighbors limit and violate their rights especially their privacy and right to freedom of movement outside the home, and decision making regarding the way they dress, look, or behave in public spaces. As expected, those who reported violations by neighbors came mostly from rural areas and refugee camps where people live in socially confined communities characterized by close social relations among residents. Similar results were reported by participants who came from urban areas in places where neighborhoods are cohesive and social relations are tight and restrictive. This includes the old city of Ramallah and the village of Shufaa't in the East Jerusalem metropolis. More than half the sample, the majority of men, reported that the PA violates their rights and a little less than half, mainly men, noted that the Israeli occupation violates their rights in their communities.

We asked participants how their rights are violated inside their communities. More than half of men and women indicated that gossiping in the form of talking to and complaining to one's guardians (such as fathers and uncles) and bullying on social media platforms are means of rights violations. Complaints are usually uttered by neighbors and extended family members. This was surprising as we expected more women to report such a finding given the strict control of patriarchal structures over women; however, men too, especially those living in the south of the West Bank reported such intrusions. Indeed, these results indicate that patriarchal structures not only discriminate against and control women, they are also relevant to men as well, especially younger men, precisely because seniority is fundamental to the definition of patriarchy. Men elders dictate and control, and younger men and women abide by the dictates.

A little less than half of the participants, mainly from rural areas and refugee camps, viewed having a destroyed and insufficient infrastructure in the community as a violation of rights. Less than half and the majority living in refugee camps, pointed out that their rights are violated by the over crowdedness of camps and the lack of spaces between houses. More than half of participants saw that the use of settler-colonial laws and regulations by the Israeli occupation including closures, penalties against Palestinians living in Jerusalem and Area C, and land confiscation, and consequently, living in fear, were means of violations of their rights in the community. Less than half of the sample, the majority from refugee camps and rural areas, noted that the use of excessive force by the Israeli occupation and exposure to unsupervised weapons by Palestinians violates their rights as well.

Rights at Schools and Universities

We asked participants to let us know their views about what they consider fundamental rights at schools and universities that should be ensured by the educational system. Participants reported on fundamental rights regardless if they attain(ed) them or not, and they spoke extensively about the deprivation and violations of their rights at schools and universities. Participants discussed rights in the context of treatment by teachers, professors, staff, and administrators as well as fellow students. They also discussed the surrounding environment and infrastructure of schools and universities. Most surprisingly, they discussed the school and university curriculum in the context of rights. Our results showed that fundamental rights are grouped into three categories: the right to quality infrastructure, and the right to have a supportive and understanding schooling environment, and schooling system/approach/style.

The Right to Quality Infrastructure

Infrastructure here refers to services in general at schools and universities including heating and cooling systems, adequate and spacious classrooms and playgrounds, and adequate bathrooms and cafeterias. About half the participants, mostly women, highlighted that the availability and accessibility to clean bathrooms is a fundamental right at schools. More than half the participants emphasized that having a spacious classroom that has a reasonable number of students where every student has a seat to sit on is a fundamental right. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) reports that the average classroom size is 30.4 students per classroom and 22.6 students per teacher, which is considered high for quality education. (27) Some interviewees from urban and rural areas and refugee camps reported that having heating in the winter and cooling in the summer in classrooms in public and private schools and universities is a fundamental right. Some participants, mainly from refugee camps and urban areas, noted that having schools with green areas is important as well. One participant, a 37 years old man from Ramallah city in the center of the West Bank noted that having schools with no fences or window bars around them as a fundamental right. He envisaged schools with fences and window bars as a prison, not educational buildings.

The Right to Have a Supportive and Understanding School Environment

Discussion of the need for a supportive and understanding school environment took considerable interview time indicating the importance of peoples' educational experience in their view as a matter of right. This was expected since people spend a long period of their lives at schools, universities, and other educational institutions. The majority of participants emphasized that being treated with no discrimination is a fundamental right at school. They explained that being treated with respect at school or university should be the norm regardless of background, financial situation, family position, intellectual ability, how one looks and or what they wear.

The majority of participants also reported on the significance of the right to question and discuss the material they learn at school as well as events taking place in their lives, especially socially and politically, with their teachers and professors without being threatened or judged. A 28-year man from Bethlehem city in the south West Bank who attended a private school during part of his schooling years, told us of an incident in eighth grade where he was expelled from school for a week because he asked his biology teacher if there is such a thing as penis cancer:

“In 8th grade, my science teacher was telling us about the biology of cancer, I got really worried and wanted to know if there is penis cancer, but when I asked my teacher, she thought I was making fun of her and reported me to the school principal who decided to expel me for an entire week from school and reported me to my parents... how can I ask any question in class after this incident?!”

In general, our interviews described the educational culture in the West Bank as one characterized by subjugation, silence, and obedience. Institutional practice in Palestinian schools and universities obstruct the advancement of critical thinking and social and political awareness of student by the practice of standardized assessment within a culture of submissiveness. (26) We also noticed that there was an overall sense that participants were deprived from learning and growth during their youth. This critical stage in their life, especially intellectually and socially, was characterized and directed by top-down forms of teaching that developed passive, obedient adults stripped of their agency and capacity to change, even change in their oppressive conditions.

Schooling System

Almost half of the participants reported that education and teaching should be based on student understanding not memorization. This came up as participants discussed school curricula in general on the West Bank which emphasize memorization and rote learning. They also criticized how students are streamed after 10th grade. In the oPt there are three streams students can take: arts, science, and industrial. The vocational streams offered by the Palestinian governmental school system (hospitality, agricultural, and industrial) are limited to certain cities (mainly Ramallah) in the West Bank. Participants called for including these streams in other districts of

the West Bank. Some participants thought that having the option of studying practical or professional streams like carpentry and having vocational schools available in different geographical places is a fundamental right they should enjoy at school.

Overall, there was an overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction with the educational system especially given the deteriorating levels of students performance in both primary and secondary phases, as reported by our participants and supported by literature on the schooling system in the oPt. A study of school and university teachers, and students and their parents revealed that the majority of Palestinian schools lack the type of education that facilitates critical thinking and independent, self-directive learning. (26) A university faculty member noted the following:

“The vast majority of my students can’t do a research paper. They’re so used to memorization that they can’t think for themselves. There is no self-confidence or ability to think critically. How can they advance in life or contribute to society? How did we let things get so bad?”

It was noted that some private schools, mainly in Ramallah, Bethlehem, and East Jerusalem cities, offer critical thinking approaches to education but that these schools are expensive to attend and can only be attended by those from a select socio-economic class. (26) This maintains and reinforces inequalities of educational opportunities and can contribute to widening socio-economic disparities in Palestinian society.

How Violations of Human Rights at Schools and Universities are Exercised

When asked if denial of the rights mentioned above at schools and universities is a violation of their human rights, most of the sample agreed. In terms of who violates their rights at schools and universities, most of the participants, explained that the educational system in all its components including the ministry of education and higher education violate their right to supportive and intellectual education. Surprisingly, more than half the sample reported that parents violate and limit their rights, in relation to respect and way of disciplining them. According to our respondents, this is because parents re-enforce a culture of abuse and dominance over students so that their children can learn and obtain good grades and perform well. One of our participants, who is a 22 year old man from Ramallah city in central West Bank reported encouragement of abuse by teachers as a form of discipline:

“My parents encouraged my school principal and teacher to hit me, because they thought this way I will get high scores and be an ideal student.”

In addition, half the sample noted that people in the school and university community including students, peers, teachers and professors, staff, and employees violate their rights. Expectedly, half the sample emphasized that Israeli occupation violates their rights at schools and universities due to restrictions of the right to freedom of movement and mobility as well as student detention

and imprisonment. Surprisingly, participants who attended Birzeit University as students noted that student unions violate their right of free expression.

Half of the sample, mostly men, explained that expelling students out of class is one of the punishment methods that violates their rights. Similarly, half the participants noted that asking students to stand next to the garbage bin or stand facing the wall are also punishment methods that violate their rights. In addition, less than half the participants, mainly men, reported that changing a student's seat in class or depriving them from a particular seat in class is one of the punishment methods used at Palestinian schools. More than half the sample, mainly men, reported that physical abuse using wooden sticks and hoses is a method of violating their rights at school, and similarly, half the sample, mainly women, pointed out that using verbal abuse is a method of rights violation. On a similar note, less than half the sample, mainly men, informed us that verbal and written warnings are used as a means of violating rights at this level. More than half the sample, almost equally men and women, highlighted that discrimination with either grading or marks or treatment is a method of human rights violations at school. Less than half the participants, mainly men, pointed out that the PA's corruption and cronyism (*Wasta*¹) are used to violate students' rights at school or university. This includes deprivation of employment opportunities and scholarships. Less than half the sample, all men, reported that imprisonment and summoning for investigation by either the PA or Israeli occupation is a means of rights' violation at school and university. More than half the sample, mostly men, emphasized that limiting their right to free expression in terms of the questions they ask, points of views, hair and clothing style is a method used in violating their rights. Some participants, all men, noted that parents' encouragement of teachers for using physical abuse to discipline is a way of violating their rights.

Rights at Work

We asked participants who experienced working outside their homes about their views on rights. This included the work they did as children, school or university students, or after they graduated. This also included contracted and un-contracted, part time and full time work. We classified rights into the right to work and to job security, adequate and supportive work environment, and financial rights.

The Right to Work and to Job Security

Half the participants, mostly women, reported that the right to work and be employed is a fundamental right. This was expected especially given the high unemployment rate among Palestinians of 26% in 2021 according to PCBS. The PCBS also reports a large disparity in the

¹ *Wasta* is a phrase that has elements of cronyism and nepotism, it is the practice among those with power or influence of favoring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs

unemployment rate between men and women (22% versus 43% respectively). (28) Similarly, half the participants, men and women, emphasized that the right to have job security is a fundamental right. Less than half of the participants, equally men and women, reported that the right to have an official and legal work contract is fundamental. One woman, who lost her job and income during the COVID-19 pandemic, explained that governments should provide unemployment benefits to support people in cases of pandemics or sudden unemployment. Another 37-year woman from Balata refugee camp in the north of the West Bank who is the breadwinner of a family of six lost her job during the COVID-19 pandemic and had to borrow money from her family and friends to feed her children:

“I lost work during Corona; I used to work as a cleaner at UNRWA schools in Balata camp. The salary was nothing but I was able to cover my children. When I was fired, I depended on my family and people I know to buy food for my children and make sure they have something to eat... I swear sometimes I used to ask my mother to give me a few loaves of bread.”

Men participants in the main noted that having a representative and supportive work union for the various professions is an important right, especially given that the public and private sectors violate workers' rights. A little less than half of the participants, mostly men, emphasized that having a transparent, clear, and fair process of employment is essential. This referred to having employment based on qualification and experience, not cronyism (*wasta*), having clear and transparent employment criteria outlining the required qualifications, and having equal opportunities, especially in the governmental sector. Some participants maintained that knowing one's rights at work is an important right as well. This might be due to lack of education and information about regulations and labor law when accepting employment.

Financial Rights

More than half the sample, mostly women, reported that having financial rights is a fundamental right at work. A number of our participants, mostly women and young men, indicated that they work more hours than what was agreed, for no compensation at all. They continued by noting that they could not complain about this given the high unemployment rates, which makes them easily replaceable. A 29-year private school teacher explained that she does not get the salary she deserves but that she has to accept this problem because there are no other employment options:

“I work way more than what I get paid, I’m a teacher and I only receive the minimum wage for my salary, when I complained at the time of signing my contract, the principle told me that people are waiting in line for job offers with salaries less than this... I couldn’t respond because it is true and I accepted the offer.”

The Right to Have Adequate and Supportive Work Environment

Some participants, mostly women, reported that having a safe, private, and comfortable working space that has heating and cooling facilities, and clean separate restrooms for men and women is an essential right at work. Women talked extensively about work rights related to motherhood such as access to daycare. Some women noted the importance of having access to daycare at or near their workplace, and being able to obtain leaves from work for attending children's school meetings. Almost half of respondents emphasized that the right to have daily breaks and sick and annual leaves are fundamental rights at work. In addition, half the participants, mostly women, emphasized having a supportive, understanding, and flexible work environment where supervisors understand employees' conditions and allow for flexible work schedules and hours without affecting one's compensation or salary cuts.

Less than half of the participants, mostly men, reported that being treated equally and not experiencing any form of discrimination or racism at the workplace is a fundamental right. More than half of both men and women maintained that the right to be respected and not be abused physically or verbally is a fundamental right at the workplace. Similarly, half the men and women participants thought that the right to have right to free expression without being threatened with losing their job is an important right. Few participants, mostly men, highlighted that the right to have their dignity preserved and not violated at the workplace is a fundamental right. Treatment and respect also meant that people are also able to complete their tasks as they see fit. Some participants, mostly men, noted that the right to carry out their daily tasks and make decisions without micro-management constraints that limit their authority over their work is a fundamental right. Similarly, some participants, mostly men, reported that the right to develop and grow professionally and at an interpersonal level is important at the workplace.

How Violations of Human Rights at Work are Exercised

When asked if denial of the rights mentioned above is a violation of their human rights, the majority of participants agreed. Most participants reported that those with authority at the workplace including employers, directors, and business owners violate their rights. More than half the sample, mostly men, reported that the PA and the ruling party on the West Bank violate their rights at work. This is seen to be due to PA corruption, absence of legal accountability, and dominance over Palestinian workers' unions, as well as lack of implementation of the Palestinian Labor Law.

More than half the participants explained that financial compensation is used as a means of violating rights at work. This includes deprivation of promotions, overtime pay, salary cuts, denial of sick and annual leave and breaks, overworking employees without compensation, and paying employees' salaries that are not compatible with the tasks they perform. More than half the sample indicated that cronyism and corruption are important methods of violating rights at

work. More than half the sample reported cases such as threatening to fire, treating in a disrespectful and dehumanizing way, and asking employees to complete tasks that are not part of their job description. Almost half of the men and women in our sample noted that verbal abuse and humiliation in front of colleagues, and/or customers, is one of the ways used for violating rights. Additionally, some participants, who were referring to having worked as children as unskilled laborers reported that physical abuse is used as a way to violate rights. A 21-year man from Ramallah city in the center of the West Bank told us that his work supervisor beat him up when he worked as a construction laborer at the age of 14:

“I was working with my uncle’s friend and he didn’t like my work, I was only 14 and it was my second experience of construction work... we argued and then he hit me in my face, I left work after that and looked for another boss to work with.”

Rights at the PA level

We asked participants about fundamental rights that the PA should consider, provide, and protect. Our results revealed that fundamental rights the PA should provide and protect were divided by participants into four categories: physical rights, right to safety, political rights, and the right to dignity.

Physical Rights

Most participants maintained that the PA is responsible to provide fundamental rights such as rights to health, education, shelter, food, and employment. More than half the participants believed that the right to adequate shelter should be fulfilled by the PA. This includes services provided to households (adequate water and electricity and waste management) as well as structural planning when it comes to providing home permits to ensure enough distance between buildings and houses. Many participants reported violations of the right to adequate shelter as a result of their financial status. Some reported missing an adequate shelter as they live in two-room houses or make shift pre-fabricated houses (*baraksat*) or in unfinished houses. More than half spoke of the proximity of homes to each other, which limits their privacy. About half the participants reported missing home services such as water and electricity and waste management. Almost half of participants from all three locales reported that the right to justice especially in the distribution of rights and services is a fundamental right the PA should provide and protect.

More than half the participants noted that the right to health and healthcare were essential and that they felt that they are deprived of this right by the PA. Participants living in Area C and remote areas of major cities like Hebron reported the lack of health facilities available in their areas and the long distance they have to go to seek medical care even in cases of emergencies. Participants from Area C and remote rural areas in the South explained that they receive basic health services like vaccination and general checkups from mobile clinics provided by local and international non-governmental organizations. A 34-year woman residing in Area C of Hebron in

the south of the West Bank noted that they have no clinic serving her community and receive basic services from mobile clinics of one of the local non-governmental organization:

“We don’t have clinics or hospitals here, we only have the movable clinic of the Health Work Committees, which comes once every week or two weeks for half a day... they can’t do all the checkups and they don’t have many of the medications we need.”

Some participants who come from humble economic backgrounds indicated that they find the cost of doctor visits and medication expensive and that public facilities are overcrowded so they have to plan for being at public facilities for a number of hours only to visit a doctor for few minutes.

The principal reason behind the crippling health care situation for Palestinians in the oPt is well reported as the Israeli occupation. However, the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank also plays a role. In 2017, financial strains led the Palestinian Authority to cut a program that had provided health insurance to unemployed citizens since 2000, which continues to date. (29) With an unemployment rate of nearly 27% throughout the oPt, an estimated 250,000 people benefited from the program. (29) Data from 2018 shows that approximately 40% of health financing in the oPt is paid out-of-pocket. (30) As poverty and unemployment rise, and the constant cuts to aid and strangulation on development, strains on the public health insurance system will grow.

International funding cuts present a major challenge to the healthcare sector. Even though stakeholders such as the WHO and Medical Aid for Palestinians are filling some of the gaps created by cuts; the PA must shift its thinking about its priorities toward its people if the benefits of aid are to reach them. For example, of the PA’s \$5 billion budget approved for 2018, 30-35% went to the security sector, while only 9% was allocated for health. (31) This raises question about the way in which the budget is distributed, as the shares for the health sector did not cover the health needs of the Palestinian population. The situation was further exposed and amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most participants believed that education it is a fundamental right that the PA should fulfill and protect from primary and up to college or university education. However, more than half of the participants emphasized that their right to quality education provided by the PA is violated. They referred to the crowded classrooms, an outdated curriculum that does not match the current developments in the professional or academic market as well as a curriculum that is based on memorization, and an educational environment that does not support intellectual or personal growth. Employment was seen by most of our participants as a fundamental right that the PA should protect and fulfill. However, many participants reported a deprivation and a violation of their right to employment since employment in the West Bank is limited and the governmental sector is known to be a cite of high level corruption as reported by most participants.

The Right to Safety

The right to safety was brought up regularly during interviews with more than half the participants reporting the right to live in a safe environment; to feel safe at home, in streets, and public spaces without any threats of being kidnapped or arrested without cause. Many reported violation of their right to safety by the PA itself. Half the participants felt unsafe when exercising their right to free expression, especially in relation to political matters. About half the participants explained that they lack feeling safe in a general sense including feeling safe about their near or far future or feeling safe inside their own home even under a ruling authority (the PA). A 30-year man from Halhoul, a town in the southern West Bank, mocked the PA's high security budget as it fails to assure or maintain safety for Palestinians:

“If the security budget is 37.5% and it doesn't protect me...why do they take 37.5% of the country's budget? They don't and they can't protect us, they even threaten us if we don't behave as they want us to or if we don't accept their corruption, what safety am I expecting from them? And why do we have to allocate so much money towards a failed and disable system?”

The Right to Dignity

Almost all participants reported a violation of their right to dignity as a result of their overall living conditions under the rule of the PA. This included deteriorating economic conditions, absence of basic services such as water and waste management, and deprivation of their fundamental personal rights such as the right to free expression. A 36-year man living in Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank reported that the living conditions there violate his dignity on a daily basis:

“In our camp, there is no children's garden, no space, sewage is in the streets, no water, no electricity, no roads...Add to this that we are exposed to gunshots, tear gas, and detention, on a daily basis either from the PA or Israel. So what rights and what dignity are you talking about. And of course, add to all of this that you can't express yourself in social or political matters.”

Some participants who experienced interrogation and/or imprisonment by the PA also reported that their dignity was violated as a result of the treatment they received from the PA during interrogation which included, according to them, verbal and physical abuse that they sustained even years after the incident(s).

Political Rights

Participants reported on the violations and deprivation of political rights by the PA. All participants noted that they have experienced at least once in their life a violation of their right to

free expression and speech especially when it comes to political matters. Some recalled personal stories of threat and interrogation as a result of expressing their views regarding the PA's performance as a governing body on the West Bank. A man from a southern West Bank city informed us that he was called to interrogation hours after he confronted the Minister of Labor about unemployment rates among youth at a public conference. Most participants reported that they felt violated because of the absence of election and their right to elect a government that represents them. In fact, some of the people interviewed in our sample had never participated in any form of election and reported that as a blatant violation of their political rights by the PA. More than half of the sample also emphasized that their right to adopt any political views or join any political party is violated by the PA, and limited their potential opportunities in education and employment as a result. A 24-year man from a village in the south of the West Bank who studies at Birzeit University in Ramallah city noted:

“I lost a tuition scholarship as a student in university because I was reported to express thoughts against the PA.”

The PA violations of human rights

When asked if denial of their rights by the PA is a violation of their human rights, all participants agreed. In terms of who denies them these rights, more than half stressed that people with power and authority including those with financial capital violate these rights. In addition, more than half noted that the PA as a system, including the president, violate their rights. When discussing reasons behind these violations, almost all participants explained that the PA's aspiration to maintain control over Palestinians through means such as corruption, absence of legal and societal accountability, and cronyism (*wasta*) are main reasons behind the violations of rights. Moreover, Israeli occupation dominance and control over the Palestinians and the PA as well as Israeli regulations contribute to the human rights violations of the PA.

Most men and women reported that the PAs methods of violating these rights include blackmailing, physical and verbal abuse, threats in all forms, including even assassinations career limitations, hurting family members or loved one, imprisonment or summoning for investigation, using monitoring and surveillance tools (especially on social media), denial of travel permits, and tax imposition. Less than half of the sample, mainly women, noted that the PA's corruption, cronyism (*wasta*), failure to provide basic services to the population, and absence of legal accountability are significant reasons behind these violations. It is important to note that both reasons mentioned are related, as corruption and absence of legal accountability allow for a large degree of oppression using various methods. Similarly, oppression is a mechanism used by governments to control and dominate their populations and allow the continuity of corruption and personal gain.

Rights and Israeli Occupation

In the oPt, and as the occupying power, Israel has a range of obligations under International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, and Occupation Law, to fulfill and protect rights of the Palestinian population. In our interviews, we asked participants about their views on the fundamental rights that should be protected and fulfilled by Israeli occupation. All participants denounced even the question and explained that the Israeli occupation, by definition, aims to violate rights. They provided examples of the violations they experience as a result of the Israeli occupation. It is important to note that almost all participants stated that the Israeli occupation violates all rights and negatively influences all aspects of their everyday life.

Right to Live and Safety

Participants talked extensively about violations of their fundamental rights by the Israeli occupation. The first violated right mentioned by all participants was their right to live and exist without daily threats to their lives. Participants reported feeling threatened and unsafe on a daily basis due to the physical abuse, use of force such as tear gas and sound bombs, night raids, and home invasions by the Israeli forces. About half the participants, who have to cross Israeli army checkpoints to go to school, university, and work, reported feeling unsafe and uncertain about their life as they crossed checkpoints daily. All participants residing in refugee camps in the West Bank explained that their life is threatened constantly as Israeli forces raid their camps regularly and use excessive force in the confined space of camps. A 19-year woman from a Bethlehem refugee camp in the south of the West Bank noted that she fears for her life and that of her brothers because she is uncertain about who could survive Israeli violence:

“There is no way I could know if my brothers or even myself can remain alive under the Israeli occupation, I mean we cross checkpoints and have camp raids and intrusions almost daily, who knows? We might be the target next time we cross the checkpoint or Israeli soldiers attack the camp.”

A major violation reported by all participants was the violation of the right to safety. No one among our participants felt safe, which is expected due to the nature of Israeli occupation, which, by definition involves violence and force to suppress people to maintain power and control over the occupied. Most participants reported violations to life related safety and some referred to safety in a general sense of feeling safe about the present and the immediate and distant future. A little more than half reported violations to safety from illegal Israeli settlers on the West Bank who are empowered by the Israeli government to impede the fundamental rights of Palestinians including their right to live.

Physical Rights

All participants reported violations related to their rights to health, education, and work. Some participants reported that the Israeli occupation violated their right to shelter. Few, who live in East Jerusalem and Area C of Hebron in the south West Bank, experienced home demolition and had to either find another home, or build a temporary form of shelter near their demolished house. A 36-year man from East Jerusalem explained that his family house was demolished ten years ago:

“We lost our house, we watched it collapse under the excuse that we had no permission to build on that piece of land. It is my grandparents' land; where else would we have our family home? It is painful, painful to watch your memories collapse without being able to stop it or do anything about it.”

All participants living in refugee camps noted that they suffer inadequate shelters due to small confined homes of one to two rooms per house and camp overcrowding and proximity of houses to each other. Participants living in area C in the south West Bank city of Hebron reported having to live in unroofed houses or tents as the surrounding land where they live has been confiscated and no permanent form of housing is allowed by Israel.

All participants reported that their right to health was violated by the Israeli occupation. A little less than half reported that they have been violated in their right to access health facilities to seek medical care, especially those who have to cross Israeli army checkpoints to reach health facilities and those who live in places where there is a gate erected by Israel that restricts movement in and outside of their neighborhood. A 34-year woman residing in Area C of the southern city of Hebron explained that if she faces a temporary checkpoint in her way to visit a doctor, she has to spend an extra hour to two hours on her way to the doctor:

“It takes half an hour by car to reach the nearest clinic, but if there is a temporary checkpoint in my way then I have to take another route that takes between 1.5-2 hours.”

Participants living in Palestinian refugee camps reported violations of their health due to the excessive use of force, particularly as they experience inhaling large amounts of tear gas during Israeli army curfews and camp raids. Some participants noted the referral system by the PA where people receive a referral to health facilities other than PA operated public services for some medical cases, and reported on the long waiting list and the occasional denial of referrals by the PA to East Jerusalem where complicated medical cases such as cancer are referred. In addition, they told of the experience of crossing multiple Israeli army checkpoints walking, and the lines they have to wait in to get to East Jerusalem no matter the conditions (weather especially) or the severity of their case. Many participants mocked the questions about their right to health under Israeli occupation as they explained the inhuman conditions they endure while crossing Israeli army checkpoints, the limited access to water and services provided due to Israeli

occupation's control over them, the constant exposure to violence and force, and the pressures of living under Israeli occupation in general. They wondered if under these conditions there could be anything other than deteriorating health both physically and mentally.

Almost half reported violations of their right to access educational institutions (schools and universities), especially those who have to cross Israeli army checkpoints to attend their school and universities, or those who live in buffer areas such as Palestinian refugee camps and area C. Some participants (majority men) reported that their right to education was violated as they were imprisoned by the Israel occupation while they were students, including a 36-year man from Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank who was imprisoned as a high school student:

“I completed my Tawjihi (high school diploma in Palestine) when I was 23 years old, I was detained half way through my Tawjihi degree when I was 17 years old. I was only standing with a group of my friends at the entrance of the camp when we were detained early 2002.”

Personal Rights and Freedoms

All participants reported violations of their right to movement and mobility by Israeli occupation. Almost all participants noted how Israeli army checkpoints on the West Bank limit their mobility across cities, villages and refugee camps, and sometimes within the same city. This also includes their movement and mobility to get to their places of work or education as well as to seek medical care in cases of emergencies. A little less than half reported that their right to travel outside of the West Bank has been violated as they were denied access to permits to leave the West Bank via the King Hussein Bridge to Jordan, the only exit allowed for West Bankers with some exceptions. A 28 years old man from Bethlehem city in the south of the West Bank said that he had to cancel his attendance of a conference hours before it started because he was not able to cross the bridge:

“I got to the *Jisr* (bridge) and was asked to remain for interrogation at the Israeli point. I called the conference organizers in Jordan and canceled my participation... I waited there for 10 hours, they questioned me for about an hour and told me I wasn't allowed to leave the West Bank. I went home and still don't know if I can leave now.”

Some participants who reside in places where there is an entrance gate in their neighborhood erected by Israel and locked and opened only when the Israeli military decides report violations of their right to mobility even in emergency cases. Some participants reported on the roads that Palestinians are allowed to travel through (while being banned from traveling on Israeli designated roads which are much easier to travel through) which entails roundabout ways and usually drastically increases the times required to move from one place to another (and is also a form of apartheid).

One of the major personal rights violated by the Israeli occupation is the right to free expression. All participants reported a violation of their right to express their thought or even their own experiences as Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Many participants feared imprisonment or direct exposure to excessive force and violence if they expressed discomfort or openly criticized the actions of the Israeli occupation. Right to free expression also includes the freedom to participate in peaceful demonstrations that call to end the violations Palestinians face and live in. In fact, five of our participants were imprisoned for more than a year due to participation in such peaceful demonstrations. About half the participants reported that their right to belong to a people and a country has been violated as they faced imprisonment, summoned for investigation, or received a call from Israeli intelligence agency due to expressing their belonging to Palestine, Palestinians, or the Palestinian cause, even as Palestinians who live under the struggles of Israeli occupation.

Most participants agreed that Israeli occupation including all its components i.e. the racial and colonial laws, regulations, and system as well as the military system (soldiers, and intelligence agencies) are means that violate human rights. Most participants pointed out that using mobility and movement restrictions is a significant means of rights violations by Israeli occupation. According to participants, movement and mobility restrictions include Israeli army checkpoints, limiting access to health and educational facilities, and closures. Similarly, most highlighted that the use of excessive force such as physical abuse, home demolitions, night raids, threatening children and scaring them, intrusions and inspection of homes, exposure of civilians to tear and sound bombs, beating, and killing and assassination. Additionally, most participants emphasized colonial actions such as land confiscation, building settlement, controlling natural resources and borders, and damaging buffer zones with Palestinian communities by facilitating weapons and illicit drugs transfers and sales among community members to weaken the social fabric and create chaos in these areas where there is direct contact with the Israeli occupation. More than half explained that summoning to interrogation, imprisonment, threatening loved ones, and the continuous presence of Israeli soldiers in Palestinian cities which are supposed to be under the jurisdiction of the PA only are means of rights violation.

Factors Influencing the Enjoyment of Rights

Findings of this study indicate that the experience of human rights violations differs depending on a number of factors in the oPt. We summarized these factors into social, economic, and political factors, gender, location of residency, human rights knowledge/awareness, political context, corruption, and lack of legal accountability. It is important to note that these factors are inseparable, meaning that they exist, interact, and influence each other simultaneously at the different levels to varying magnitudes.

Social, Economic, Position and Political Affiliation

In most interviews, participants explained that “who you are matters” in terms of the types and number of rights one attains and the level of enjoyment of their rights. This was obvious at school, university, work, and in dealing with the PA. For example, a number of participants discussed the level of respect they receive at either their work or education institutions based on the social and economic standing of their families. Some participants noted that students from the upper class were treated differently from the rest of the student body and they were given more privileges as students. An 18-year old girl from a village in southern West Bank recalled that one of her classmates, who was a relative of the minister of health at the time, was treated much better than the rest of the class and was always exempt from punishments or grounding:

“There should be a just treatment to all students at schools. In my school, my classmate was the niece of the minister of health, she was allowed to dress as she wanted, even if it’s against the school roles, and she was allowed to take exams at the principal’s room alone and to have additional time to complete exams, unlike us... we used to be punished for acting in the same way she is allowed to at school, but we are not relatives of ministers!”

Similarly, when discussing the right to health and accessing healthcare, social and economic standings appeared to be major contributors to the waiting time people had to spend to receive the care they seek at public facilities, especially in rural areas. The referral system to private or Israeli institutions operated by the PA was reported as also being influenced by the social, economic and political standing of applicants and their network, especially in relation to one’s political affiliation.

The political affiliation of people seemed to influence a number of rights. Those who belong to the ruling party *Fateh* appeared to have somewhat more access to rights, particularly physical rights (work, education, and health), and a higher level of enjoyment of those rights. On the other hand, participants who belonged to opposing political parties, specifically those who critique the PA’s performance and legality, highlighted limited access to physical rights and a lower level of enjoyment of these rights. In addition, some of those participants shared serious violations of their right of speech, expression, and peaceful demonstration, especially when it comes to political matters and views. A 30-year man from a town in southern West Bank told us that his sister was fired after two hours of her appointment because her husband belongs to an opposing party to the ruling Palestinian party (*Fateh*):

“My sister was appointed as a school teacher, after many many years of waiting off course...she was fired from her position only two hours after her appointment because her husband supports *Hamis* not *Fateh* in our village.”

Gender

Gender appeared as a significant factor that influences the attainment and enjoyment of rights where rights are controlled by structures of powers such as the family and community. For example, mobility in the form of being able to go out or participate in activities was highly controlled and monitored for some women participants; this includes movement for education or work purposes. A 29-year old woman from a central West Bank city told us of an incident where she was only allowed to travel to Jordan for a conference if her younger brother accompanied her:

“I was invited for a conference in Jordan and wanted to travel to attend, my family (mother, father, and uncles) refused to even discuss the idea of me traveling alone and sleeping outside our home alone...after discussions and many attempts, they accepted under the condition my brother (who is four years younger than me) accompanies me, I accepted, can you imagine!!”

Another 18-year girl participant reported that while organizing a folkloric dance (*Dabkeh*) event for both girls and boys at her village in the south of the West Bank, the village community criticized the gender mix especially in a dancing context and stopped the event.

Women participants told us of a number of violations and exploitations influenced by their financial status. This includes hiring women for long hours with small financial compensation, not having day care and childcare support, limited leaves and vacation flexibility, not having gender-separated bathrooms, working in a shared space that does not accommodate women’s needs and privacy, and experiencing verbal harassment. A 30-year woman from a village in the center of the West Bank, who comes from a financially humble background shared that she had to accept a daycare position of eight hours per day for 800 NIS (around 230 USD) a month even though she holds a BA degree:

“I spent four years studying at a private university only to accept working as a babysitter for 800 NIS a month, this includes my transportation by the way. I had to accept, I had no choice, my husband was unemployed and we have two children to feed and take care of.”

Another 45 woman, from a central West Bank city, who works at a municipality complained that her work environment does not accommodate her needs as a working woman, including not having a gender-specific bathroom, and not having daycare near her work, and not being able to take leaves to attend her children’s school meetings.

Location of Residency

Location of residency played a role in attaining and enjoying human rights, especially when it comes to service-oriented rights at the community level and the rights influenced by gender relations. Rural areas, refugee camps, and Area C lacked rights related to safety, infrastructure, and services including electricity, water, and sewage networks, paved and well-lit streets, pollution-free environment, transportation, accessible and quality healthcare, and education facilities and institutions. Participants from the south of the West Bank, especially if residing in Hebron City and its surrounding villages, appeared to have limited access to quality healthcare facilities and have to commute for a long time to access a hospital. In terms of services, a 30 years old man from a town in south West Bank, informed us that they receive water supply one day per week and in some cases more than a weeklong wait without access to tubed water. A 38 years old man from northern West Bank compared the quality of streets in terms of pavement and lighting and width to those in Ramallah and noted that streets in the northern village lacked adequate lighting and pavement and were generally narrow and ill-suited for use in general.

Location of residency seemed to influence the level of control over people and conservatism experienced by women and young men. The lack of services such as transportation combined with the monitoring community environment in rural areas and camps limited women's access to education and work opportunities, especially if such services were far from their location of residence. For example, a 34 years old young woman from a southern West Bank village, disclosed that she had to give up an attractive job opportunity in Ramallah city because it required accommodation in Ramallah because of long commuting time between her village and Ramallah, yet her parents rejected the idea of her living alone in a different city. Another 23 woman from a southern West Bank town explained that in her town, it is common for families to deprive girls from their high school and college education due to the lack of transportation to the closest high school and college and the conservative views of their families.

The right to safety was significantly varied across locations, particularly for those who reside in refugee camps, Area C, and close to Israeli army checkpoints or settlements. Participants from refugee camps explained that they experience frequent raids, closures, and exposure to excessive violence from the Israeli occupation forces including exposure to tear gas, sound bombs, rubber and live bullets, home night raids, and home demolitions. They also complained about the excessive use of unsupervised weapons inside camps, to the degree where they cannot tell if bullets are due to an Israeli invasion or a form of festivity of camp residents. A 36 years old man from a refugee camp, north of West Bank told us that he experiences militarized camp raids multiple times per week; and another 19 years old woman from a southern West Bank refugee camp also explained that she used to have Israeli forces violently check her house every single day during 2019. Another 28 years old woman residing close to an Israeli checkpoint in a northern West Bank city explained that she and her family are exposed to tear gas and sound bombs on a regular basis to the extent that they keep smelling the tear gas days after the

exposure. She also told us that her children suffer from respiratory conditions as a result of this continuous exposure. In addition, she explained that residing close to a checkpoint limited her family's, especially children's, access to recreational activities such as summer camps, gyms, or playgrounds.

Political Context

In general, all participants reported violations of their rights as a result of the Israeli occupation with varying degrees depending on their political affiliation, social and economic position and their place of residency. As noted above, Area C, refugee camps, and areas near checkpoints and settlements experience frequent and constant violations related to their rights to safety. The Israeli occupation controls all aspects of life for Palestinians, especially their movement within and out of the West Bank. Palestinians live with constant uncertainty about their ability to move or cross checkpoints to get to their destination regardless of purpose: education, work, healthcare, or simply visiting family members and friends. A 33-year female social worker from a town in southern West Bank who works with a UN agency explained that she finds the entrance of the camp closed many days during the week by the Israeli forces:

“What can I say, when I find a temporary checkpoint in my way to work, I get delayed and sometimes I have to cancel my work, or when I find the camp gate closed...They close it and open it according to their mood, this is a violation to the right of movement and of safety as well - because I don't know if I can make it through the checkpoint of the gate safely.”

Furthermore, participants noted that the entire Palestinian economy is dependent on the Israeli economy and the permissions provided for people to work inside the 1948 region and in West Bank illegal Israeli settlements. Participants also noted that the Israeli occupation fully controls Palestinian natural resources and borders, including water, land, agricultural resources, and minerals. This results in a structural de-development of the Palestinian economy, with deteriorating living conditions and standards for Palestinians. A 30-year man from a southern West Bank town clarified that Israeli occupation controls all Palestinian resources including water and monetary income and decides on the amount of water Palestinians receive:

“The share of water for a cow in Israel is seven times and a quarter of the share of a Palestinian person in the West Bank, the cow is not the human...it is our water and we can't get it! We have no control, Israel controls our water, electricity, resources, even our borders, we have to pay them 158 NIS to cross the borders, even when we pay goods from other countries, we have to pay them custom and taxes and we have to pay the PA taxes as well.”

Corruption and Fear of Corruption

All participants from all locations, men and women, across all age groups highlighted the overall structural corruption in the PA system and all its institutions. Such reports were particularly evident when discussing physical rights such as the right to health, education, and employment, as well as the right to mobility. There was a general agreement and understanding of how rights are attained within the PA system; this attainment is linked to who one knows, the political affiliation, and more importantly, the social and economic standing of people. Participants recalled corruption in the health referral system, education scholarships, job opportunities, employment in the public sector, even the waiting time for doctors in public health facilities as well as the general treatment of people in all of the aforementioned spheres.

The other aspect of corruption that a number of our participants pointed to was the lack of legal and societal accountability. Absence of legal accountability in the case of corrupt states is common and expected, however, the lack, and in some cases absence, of societal accountability was surprising. This might be explained due to the fear people experience, especially at the political level, if they were to comment or criticize the PA's corruption or performance. There are recent events we know with people punished, to the extent of unlawful killing among those who criticized the PA's corruption. (32) In addition, there have been frequent events of policing Palestinians in public spaces in West Bank cities as they demonstrated against the PA's corruption, performance, and transparency. (33) These events took place around the same time of data collection. Participants reported a general trend of frustration and disappointment of the PA role and performance, and highlighted that this results in surrendering to current conditions, no matter how bad the conditions are, and a lack of willingness to change such conditions as they realize this is of no use.

Knowing What Your Rights Are

Some participants highlighted the fact that people do not include the concept of rights as part of their daily life. This means that children do not know what their rights are at home, students do not know what their rights are in schools and universities, people do not know what their government is obligated to provide as rights. In fact, some people mentioned that violations are accepted as a form of discipline inside families and schools and are normalized for people including those being violated. For example, it is accepted, and sometimes expected, for parents to hit their children to discipline them or for parents to allow school teachers to use hoses to beat them as a disciplining tool to control the classroom. This is an alarming point given the dangerous consequences of normalizing violations at such a young age. Similarly, a number of participants noted that people do not know their rights at the work level or according to the labor law. They noted that employees rarely have the chance to read the law and it is not usually a requirement for employment. There are general findings of overall ignorance of one's rights at all levels, especially within households and at work. If people cannot ask for their rights at the

household level, what kind of individuals are being raised on the societal level. This can be a prelude to people's lack of confidence to ask for their rights or to hold people or states accountable for the lack of rights, violations or deprivations they experience. A 36-year man from a northern West Bank refugee camp who works as a theater teacher mocked this state of ignorance people experience:

“Hahahaha (laughing), I have no idea how can we think about rights, seriously, we are busy thinking and considering conditions that should be provided to us automatically without having to ask for it, by nature I mean.”

Conclusions

Violations of human rights of persons and communities continue in the West Bank. This includes the establishment and existence of dozens of roadblocks, imprisonment of Palestinians including children and elderly by Israel and the PA, unlawful killings, high unemployment rates, deteriorating economic conditions and poverty...etc. Such violations of human rights are engineered and endorsed by structures of power present in the country: Israeli occupation and the PA, and the overall societal system of norms and lifestyles. These violations are coupled with activities that have severe and long-lasting effects on the human rights of Palestinians such as house demolitions, absence of advanced healthcare systems to deal with people's needs, unjust access to public services such as education, and the exercise of different forms of power, dominance, and control over Palestinians by different structures and persons holding power.

Our interviews indicated that people in the West Bank describe the experience of living without or with very little exercise of rights not merely in terms of access to goods or services or having adequate standards of living but also in terms powerlessness over their lives and destinies and those of loved ones. This study indicates that there are multiple structures of power at play which violate Palestinian human rights. Palestinians are under Israeli settler colonialism, which controls all aspects of Palestinian lives no matter how small, or simple. (34) Yet Israel, which is internationally recognized as an occupier of the West Bank, is responsible under International Humanitarian Law and the International Occupation Law and the four Geneva Conventions to assure, provide, and protect the human rights of Palestinians, especially in relation to health and safety. (35) There is the PA, which is also responsible for the assurance, implementation, and protection of the human rights of Palestinians, especially service-oriented rights. (36) This is especially legally binding after the recognition of 'Palestine' as an observatory state in the UN in 2014. (36) Yet the PA lacks sovereignty over land, resources and even citizens in some areas such as Area C. (37) This leaves the possibility and vision of a human rights implementation system directed, monitored, and controlled by the PA vague, and in some cases impossible despite its legally binding status. (37) In some areas, such as Palestinian refugee camps, the legal authority responsible for rights of Palestinians, especially service oriented ones, is also vague and not clear. UNRWA, for example, offers services such as education and health, but it has no

legal authority over refugee camps and hence no legal obligation to continue to provide them. (38) We argue that a pluralist analysis that recognizes the contestation of different legal and social systems in practice in the West Bank is needed to further understand the situation of human rights and human rights violations in the West Bank. (37) (38)

Finally, there is a need to highlight the case of stateless Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and Area C. Treatment of stateless Palestinians by the Israeli government is defined by contradiction. The Israeli government imposes stringent restrictions upon the Palestinians, suggesting a power dynamic where Israel has the jurisdiction to reign supreme over Palestinians. (39)

Simultaneously, Israel denies these individuals as citizens and consequently circumvents any political responsibility towards them. (40) This exposes a gray area for international law, where the protections afforded within the international legal system cannot effectively be applied to individuals under a domestic jurisdiction that fails to abide by international principles of conduct, originating from a lack of political will at the international level to hold Israel accountable. (40) This is especially important to recognize considering the current annexation proposal of villages around Jerusalem (Biddu, Qatanna...etc) and the current annexation of the Jordan Valley and the proposed annexation of Area C of the West Bank. (41) Annexation results in a new set of stateless individuals. These are persons without a defined identity, citizenship and ownership to land and it is unclear who holds legal obligations towards them considering that International Human Rights Law is state binding. (1)

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Appendices

Appendix One: Interview Schedule

Table One: Human rights interview Schedule

General Characteristics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name (confidential) • Age • Education level • Occupation (Job) • Place of residence (Urban, rural, refugee camp) • Locale • Marital Status • Number of children • Refugee status
Household Level	Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental within households? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these rights and freedoms or not. • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms within your household? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental at your community level? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these right and freedoms or not.

<p>Community Level</p>	<p>Human Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms at your community level? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
<p>School & University Level</p>	<p>Human Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental at the school/university level? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these right and freedoms or not. • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms at the school/university level? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental at the work level? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these right and freedoms or not.

Work Level	Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms at the work level? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
At the Societal (West Bank) Level	Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental at the societal level? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these right and freedoms or not. • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms at the societal level? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental that should be fulfilled by the PA? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these right and freedoms or not.

<p>At the PA level</p>	<p>Human Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms at the PA level? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
<p>At the Israeli Occupation Level</p>	<p>Human Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your point of view, what are the main freedoms and rights that you think are fundamental that the Israeli occupation should fulfill and protect? Please answer this regardless if you have personally attained/enjoyed these right and freedoms or not. • If these rights were denied, would this be a violation of your human rights or freedoms/ Why? • Who (people or institutions) denies these rights/freedoms at the Israeli occupation level? • Why do they do this (violate/deny your rights and freedoms)? • What are the ways they use to deny you from such rights/freedoms? • Do you think there are other freedoms not essential for you? If yes, what are they, and why?
	<p>Right to Food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who denies you this right at home? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the community where you live? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the West Bank Level? • Does the PA deny you this right? How? Why? • Does the Israeli occupation deny you this right? How? Why?

WHO Basic Rights	Right to Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who denies you this right at home? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the community where you live? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the West Bank Level? • Does the PA deny you this right? How? Why? • Does the Israeli occupation deny you this right? How? Why?
	Right to Health and Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who denies you this right at home? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the community where you live? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the West Bank Level? • Does the PA deny you this right? How? Why? • Does the Israeli occupation deny you this right? How? Why?
	Right to Adequate Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who denies you this right at home? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the community where you live? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the West Bank Level? • Does the PA deny you this right? How? Why? • Does the Israeli occupation deny you this right? How? Why?
	Right to Adequate Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who denies you this right at home? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the community where you live? How? Why? • Who denies you this right at the West Bank Level? • Does the PA deny you this right? How? Why? • Does the Israeli occupation deny you this right? How? Why?
Closing Questions about Human Rights		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any rights (other than what we asked) that you think is essential? What are they? Who should give them to you? How? • From the rights you mentioned/ we discussed, which one hurts you the most to lose? • Do you think that the concept of human rights is compatible with our reality and needs here in Palestine? Why? How?

Appendix Two: Sample Characteristics

Table Two: Sample Characteristics

#	Sex	Age	Marital Status	# of Children	Education Level	Work	Locale	Residency	Refugee Status
1	Man	30	Single	N/A	Bachelor	Employee - Government	Hebron	Urban	Not Refugee
2	Woman	42	Married	2	Master Degree	Employee - Government	Ramallah	Urban	Not Refugee
3	Man	21	Single	N/A	High School	Student	Ramallah	Urban/Camp	Not Refugee
4	Woman	22	Single	N/A	Bachelor	Journalist	Hebron	Rural	Not Refugee
5	Man	28	Single	N/A	Bachelor	Unemployed	Bethlehem	Urban/ Camp	Refugee
6	Woman	33	Single	N/A	Graduate	UNRWA Employee	Hebron	Rural and Area C	Refugee
7	Woman	37	Separated	5	Primary	Unemployed	Nablus	Camp	Refugee
8	Man	37	Married	1	Master	Employee - NGO	Jenin and Ramallah	Rural and Urban	Not Refugee
9	Woman	29	Single	N/A	Graduate	Employee - Private	Hebron/ Ramallah	Rural/ Urban	Refugee
10	Woman	34	Divorced	6	Primary	Unemployed	Hebron	Area C	Not Refugee
11	Woman	34	Divorced	2	Bachelor	Unemployed	Ramallah	Urban	Not Refugee
12	Man	36	Married	2	Graduate	Employee - Private	East Jerusalem	Camp	Refugee
13	Man	32	Married	2	Bachelor	Employee - NGO	East Jerusalem	Urban	Not Refugee
14	Woman	18	Single	N/A	High School	Student	Hebron	Rural	Not Refugee
15	Man	46	Married	8	High School	Construction Laborer inside Green Line	Hebron	Rural	Not Refugee
16	Woman	29	Single	N/A	Bachelor	Unemployed - Student	Tulkarem	Rural	Not Refugee
17	Man	45	Divorced	5	Bachelor	Taxi Driver	Ramallah	Rural	Not Refugee
18	Woman	30	Married	2	Bachelor	Babysitter	Ramallah	Rural	Refugee
19	Woman	34	Married	0	Bachelor	Employee - Government	Nablus	Rural	Not Refugee
20	Woman	19	Married	1	Primary	Unemployed	Bethlehem	Camp	Refugee
21	Man	50	Married	4	Bachelor	Employee - Government	Hebron	Rural	Not Refugee
22	Man	36	Single	N/A	Bachelor	Employee-Private	Jenin	Camp	Refugee

23	Man	24	Single	N/A	High School	Student	Hebron/ Ramallah	Rural/Urban	Not Refugee
24	Man	59	Married	4	Bachelor	Employee - Government	Hebron/Ram allah	Rural/Urban	Not Refugee
25	Woman	24	Single	N/A	High School	Student	Ramallah	Camp	Refugee
26	Woman	33	Married	2	Master	Employee- NGO	Tulkarem	Urban	Not Refugee