



Euro-Med Human
Rights Monitor
الأورومتوسطي لحقوق الإنسان

Punishing Journalists

Israel's restrictions on freedom
of movement and travel against
Palestinian journalists

Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor

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Executive summary

Israel began tightening restrictions on the movement of Palestinians to and from the Palestinian territories since the first Palestinian uprising in 1987, when it abolished the so-called “general exit permit,” through which Palestinians used to travel between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Israel. During the Second Intifada in 2000, Palestinians needed an Israeli permit to travel outside of and within the Palestinian territories. However, during the past decade, Israel has tightened these procedures in an unprecedented manner. The process of obtaining a travel permit requires long, bureaucratic procedures that may extend to weeks or months and are often denied. Palestinian journalists, in particular, face more severe restrictions, as dozens of them are banned from travel and movement for their work. The restrictions and decisions issued against Palestinian journalists increased during and after

specific political or security events and in conjunction with their publishing reports, photos, or videos – through traditional or social media – documenting Israeli violations or criticizing Israeli policies.

In 2021 alone, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor documented 16 complaints by Palestinian journalists in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. All of them said that the Israeli authorities prevented them from traveling or restricted their right to freedom of movement. However, data collected by Euro-Med Monitor indicate that the number of Palestinian journalists who are banned from traveling as a punishment for their work is estimated at dozens.

The Israeli restrictions are not limited to denying Palestinian journalists to travel outside the Palestinian territories. After traveling abroad, journalists may face restrictions on their right to return or decisions preventing them from entering the Palestinian territories altogether.

Euro-Med Monitor documented cases in which the Israeli intelligence service and

the Israeli General Security Service (Shin Bet) extorted Palestinian journalists over their right to freedom of movement and travel. Some of the journalists that Euro-Med Monitor interviewed said that Israeli officers told them that the travel ban against them could only be removed if they work or cooperate with the Israeli intelligence in providing sensitive security information about Palestinians. In other cases, Israeli officers promised journalists to lift the ban if they gave up their journalistic work or stopped working for certain media outlets.

The Israeli authorities impose illegal and unjustified restrictions on the movement and travel of Palestinian journalists to punish them for their journalistic work in contravention of Israel's obligation as the occupying power.

The Israeli authorities should grant Palestinian journalists the right to freedom of movement to and from the Palestinian territories and within their cities without restrictions. If there were an exceptional case that calls for specific

security restrictions, the Israeli authorities must handle it separately in accordance with the provisions of international law.

Methodology

This report documents the Israeli restrictions on Palestinian journalists in terms of their right to freedom of movement and travel and their impact on journalists' social, cultural, and economic rights. It documents cases and testimonies of Palestinian journalists who are banned from traveling because of their work.

Euro-Med Monitor's team in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem interviewed Palestinian journalists whose right to freedom of movement and travel was violated. Some of them asked that their names, personal data, or some details related to their travel ban remain undisclosed, fearing Israeli persecution or more difficulties in their legal action aiming at revoking the travel ban.

In addition to personal interviews with journalists, Euro-Med Monitor conducted estimates based on the data provided by the journalists who are banned from traveling and their colleagues. The data indicate that the number of journalists

on whom Israel imposes restrictions on freedom of movement is estimated at dozens.

Legal background

Since the first human rights documents were drafted, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, freedom of movement has been a prerequisite for many civil, economic, social, cultural, and political rights. It is a right guaranteed under international human rights law and international humanitarian law in many instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and the ICRC commentary in Article 27 of the Geneva Convention on Freedom of Movement.

In Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the Oslo Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel in 1995 emphasized the need to respect and implement this right. Article IX (2) of which states: “a. Without derogating

from Israel’s security powers and responsibilities in accordance with this Agreement, movement of people, vehicles and goods in the West Bank, between cities, towns, villages and refugee camps, will be free and normal, and shall not need to be effected through checkpoints or roadblocks.”

In cases of extreme necessity, international law allows limited restrictions on freedom of movement, provided that these restrictions are proportionate and do not entail discriminatory measures or result in other violations that affect a wide range of civilians who do not pose a security threat to individuals or groups. However, most of the Israeli restrictions on Palestinians were disproportionate, discriminatory, and exercised as a punishment for exercising the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

As an occupying power, Israel bears responsibilities under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including Article 2 (2) of the International Covenant on

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which Israel ratified in 1991. It guarantees rights enshrined in the Covenant “without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” In addition, Article 26 of the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights prohibits the deprivation of rights for reasons related to the exercise of political or non-political opinion or others.

Restrictions on movement and travel

After Israel occupied the Palestinian territories in 1967, the movement of Palestinians was almost unrestricted, as they moved smoothly between Gaza, the Palestinian territories, and Israel. But this has gradually changed since the First Intifada, the events that followed it, and the Gulf War in 1991. Israel tightened these restrictions after the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada in 2000. Israel required individuals to apply for an entry and exit permit to move between cities. It imposed various restrictions on movement that tightened gradually, coinciding with the political situation. In recent years, Israel has tightened these restrictions significantly. The Palestinians' ability to travel has become subject to Israeli will. Palestinians consider themselves lucky if they are permitted to travel, since many other Palestinians are

arbitrarily denied permits and left without an explanation of the prohibition.

The Palestinian territories are completely under Israeli administration. Israel divides the territories into three main sections: The West Bank, which is under military rule and divided into small parts by hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints; the Gaza Strip, which is under an Israeli blockade imposed in 2006 and has been tightened since 2007; and East Jerusalem, which was annexed by Israel.

Israel completely separates the three areas. Palestinians from one section cannot move to the other without a prior Israeli permit, the procedures for obtaining which can extend for days or months.

Although freedom of movement is a guaranteed human right, Israel's policy of denying Palestinians the right to move between the cities of and outside the Palestinian territories, except with its permission, turns this right into a privilege granted individually to specific persons.

In the Gaza Strip, the Erez crossing, operated by Israel in the northern Gaza Strip, is one of two crossings – in addition to the Rafah crossing with Egypt – used to transport people to and from the Strip. But the vast majority of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are prevented from passing through it, as it is allowed for specific and limited cases. These cases include patients who need urgent medical treatment that is not available in Gaza, a limited number of traders who have permits, and students who manage to obtain travel permits to study abroad.

Permits are obtained in a bureaucratic process that lasts for weeks or months, often ending with an unjustified denial. The Israeli authorities justify their restrictive policy by saying that its responsibility towards the Gaza Strip is limited to humanitarian cases only since the movement of individuals between Gaza and other areas threatens its security. However, the Israeli authorities do not assess the requests of Palestinians who

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wish to enter or leave Gaza individually. In the West Bank, Israel controls all crossings and divides the area into small sections with a large number of checkpoints. According to Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, the number of military checkpoints until 2019 amounted to approximately 108⁽¹⁾, in addition to 705 ⁽²⁾ other permanent obstacles that include road gates, berms, and sand walls, among others. Additionally, Israel erects iron gates at the entrances of most villages so that individuals find themselves in constant need of Israeli's approval to cross from one city or region to another. These checkpoints not only divide the West Bank into small cantons, but also pose a real threat to the lives of Palestinians in many cases. Dozens of Palestinians were killed in the field in recent years just because Israeli soldiers suspected that they intended to commit a violation. Checkpoints are now known

as "death traps." ⁽³⁾

In Jerusalem, Israel controls the movement of people between different areas through military checkpoints and imposes restrictions on movement and travel.

In most cases, the severe Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement remain unjustified and go beyond the appropriate measures taken for security reasons.

1 https://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/checkpoints_and_forbidden_roads

2 According to the latest survey conducted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in July 2018. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/over-700-road-obstacles-control-palestinian-movement-within-west-bank>

3 <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/3631/Israeli-Checkpoints-Have-Become-Death-Traps-for-Occupied-Palestinians>

Restrictions on journalists

For decades, journalists working in the Palestinian territories have suffered various challenges and violations, including direct targeting, arrests, intimidation, damage to their equipment, and more. In recent years, another undisclosed form of abuse against them has escalated. An increasing number of journalists have begun to find themselves banned from traveling without justification or explanation, apparently to punish them for their work. In 2021 alone, Euro-Med Monitor documented 16 complaints from Palestinian journalists who said that the Israeli authorities denied them travel permits because they covered current events in the Palestinian territories or spoke up against Israeli violations. According to information collected by Euro-Med Monitor, the total number of journalists banned from traveling is estimated at dozens.

In the Gaza Strip, most journalists do not even try to get a travel permit through the Erez Crossing, knowing that the procedures are lengthy and complicated and usually end with rejection. In addition, journalists are not included in the categories that are allowed to enter the West Bank or East Jerusalem, as there is no mechanism dedicated for journalists to apply for permits.

Israeli restrictions on the right to movement and travel include decisions that ban journalists from entering certain areas and neighborhoods in the Palestinian territories to prevent them from covering events that are taking place there. For example, last May, the Israeli authorities arrested journalist Zina Al-Halawani and photojournalist Wahbi Makiya in Jerusalem during their coverage of events in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, where residents are being threatened with eviction. The two journalists were placed under house arrest, fined, and banned from entering

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the neighborhood for a month. On 5 June, the Israeli forces arrested journalist Guevara Al-Budairi, a correspondent for the Al-Jazeera TV channel, during her coverage of events in the neighborhood. Even when journalists are not banned from traveling, they are subjected to the same difficulties as other Palestinians, as they have to wait for days or weeks to obtain permits to pass through crossings. They also have to wait at checkpoints for varying periods, where they are searched, interrogated, and sometimes arrested. Israeli restrictions are not limited to preventing Palestinian journalists from leaving the Palestinian territories. In some cases, decisions are issued to prevent them from returning to their country after traveling abroad. In September 2017, the Israeli authorities arrested journalist Talal Abu Rahma, the photographer who filmed the Israeli soldiers' killing of Palestinian child Mohammed Al-Durra in Gaza in 2000. While crossing the Karama Bridge to go to Jordan for medical treatment, Abu Rahma was told that he

was placed under a security check and would not be allowed to return to the Palestinian territories.

Although Palestinian journalists face the highest percentage of violations related to the right to movement and travel, a number of foreign journalists have also been subjected to various punitive measures for their work in the Palestinian territories.

To enter and exit the Gaza Strip, journalists with foreign (non-Palestinian or Israeli) passports must follow a series of procedures and coordinate with Israeli authorities (including the Media Office of the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories and the Journalists Union of Israel) to request a permit to enter the strip and a Journalists Union card that will allow them to enter the Erez Crossing.

Israel often bans foreign journalists from entering the Gaza Strip during attacks and military operations. In other cases, some foreign journalists are banned from entering Gaza for up to 10 years due to their journalistic work.

How journalists are informed of travel ban

Journalists are usually not officially or legally informed of the travel ban. A journalist does not know that he/she is banned except when they reach the crossing or try to obtain an exit permit. Most Palestinian journalists banned from traveling learned of the ban in one of the five following ways:

1. When applying for a travel permit: In this case, journalists are not aware of the travel ban until they request a travel permit. The journalist waits for periods ranging from four weeks to several months, which usually end with a refusal or no response. Journalists from Gaza, in particular, suffer these procedures often, as they cannot go to the Erez Crossing (the only crossing between Gaza and the West Bank and Israel) without obtaining an exit permit. When they do not get a

clear response, journalists inquire about the reason for the delay. All that they eventually learn is that they are still “under security check,” which can go on for months without an answer.



Journalist “M.A.” (preferred to remain unnamed), whose travel requests from Gaza during the past years were either rejected or ignored, said: “I was surprised the first time my travel permit request was rejected when I tried to travel for a business trip. I thought at the time that this was due to the general political conditions and the [general] Israeli restrictions imposed on movement to and from Gaza. But after that, I submitted several other requests, all of which were met with no response, except for the last request I submitted to accompany a family member

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on a medical treatment trip in Jerusalem. I received a letter saying that the patient is allowed to cross, while I was still 'under check.'"

The journalist believes that the travel ban came as a punishment for her publishing reports and materials covering current events in the

Strip, including the Israeli military attacks and targeting civilians.

"Before starting my work as a journalist, I got a permit to enter the West Bank

once, but after a while of working in this field, I started receiving refusals," she said.

2. By the Civil Administration: hile most journalists do not learn that they cannot travel until they go to a crossing, the Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank enables Palestinians to check

whether or not they are allowed to travel before they go. However, most Palestinians are not aware of this possibility; therefore, few turn to the Civil Administration before preparing themselves for travel. In some cases, after submitting a request for examination, journalists are asked to go for an interview at the Civil Administration, where they are informed that they are

banned from traveling.

3. At the crossing: At

a time when Israel prevents Palestinians

from traveling through Ben

Gurion Airport or through its seaports, the Palestinians' only option to leave the Palestinian territories is to enter Jordan via the Allenby Bridge, east of Jericho. Israel controls the crossing and permits or denies Palestinians, including journalists, to pass. In some cases, journalists are not aware of

«Before starting my work as a journalist, I got a permit to enter the West Bank once, but after a while of working in this field, I started receiving refusals»

M.A, Journalist from Gaza

the ban until they arrive at the crossing. There, they are verbally notified that they are not allowed to pass. Sometimes they get additional details, such as travel bans that have been imposed against them. Journalist Radi Ahmed Karama, 32, from Hebron in the southern West Bank, told Euro-Med Monitor:



«In January 2020, my wife, my two-year-old daughter Wejdan, and I went to the bridge. We were accompanied by my sister-in-law and her husband and children. We intended to go to the Jordanian city of Aqaba for a leisure trip. When we reached the bridge, the Israeli employee asked me to sit and wait for a while. I waited more than two hours. After that, I was verbally informed of my travel ban, and I was handed a summoning paper from the [Israeli] intelligence.» Radi tried to travel twice, but he was denied both times.

4. When returning from abroad:

In this case, the journalist is allowed to leave the Palestinian territories normally, usually to participate in an activity or conference. Upon their return, they are often arrested, imprisoned, and/or interrogated for a long time about what they did outside the country, before being informed that the Israeli authorities have decided to ban them from traveling from that date onwards.

Journalist Laith Basem Jaarneh, 25, from Tulkarm, in the northwestern West Bank, told Euro-Med Monitor:



«During my return from Istanbul, after participating in a conference on the Palestinian issue in November 2018, I was arrested by the Israeli authorities and interrogated for 43 days at the Petah Tikva interrogation center. The interrogation focused on my participation in that conference. Then, I was notified of the official travel

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ban. They told me that I had been banned from traveling since my arrest in 2017, but they allowed me to leave to know what I would do abroad. The intelligence officer said to me: 'You have been banned from traveling since the arrest of 2017, but we allowed you to travel after security consultations, just to see what you want to do outside.' They told me verbally that I was banned from traveling immediately after the interrogation. I was also informed of the ban through my lawyer after I was sentenced to 10 months in prison. The district officer also said to me: 'do not bother going to the bridge; you will not pass.'"

«The intelligence officer said to me: 'You have been banned from traveling since the arrest of 2017, but we allowed you to travel after security consultations, just to see what you want to do outside.»

Laith Jaarneh, journalist from Tulkarm

5. In the Shin Bet interview:

Journalists are sometimes summoned for an interview at the Shin Bet. There, they are told that they are banned from traveling.



M.A., a journalist who lives in a village in Ramallah, told Euro-Med Monitor that the Israeli authorities

summoned him for an interview at the General Security Service. The agency interrogated him and informed him that he was banned from traveling.

In general, travel bans against Palestinian journalists in the Palestinian territories come in administrative decisions issued by the Israeli authorities, including the intelligence service, without following

legal or judicial procedures nor informing the journalists at the time of their issuance. Journalists are also not informed of the authority that issued the decision, the reasons behind it, or how to remove or object to the decision. Many of them resort to attorneys to act legally.

Israel's excuses for preventing journalists from travel

After journalists learn that they are banned from traveling, especially after arriving at the crossings to leave the country, they are often summoned by the Israeli intelligence for an interview, which turns out to be an interrogation lasting hours or days and ending with either imprisonment or release. The journalists are threatened to not think of traveling. In many cases, journalists hire lawyers to try to revoke the ban or find out why there was a ban in the first place. Attempts to overturn the decision are often unsuccessful. In some cases, journalists or their lawyers are not informed of the reasons for the ban. In other cases, they are told that there is a reason for the ban, but it is in a "secret file." In most of the cases Euro-Med Monitor documented, decisions banning movement and travel were issued without charges, judicial penalties, or previous trials.

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According to information collected by Euro-Med Monitor from dozens of journalists who have been banned from traveling, the reasons for the decisions include:

1. Threat to regional security:

Journalists or their lawyers are informed that they are banned from traveling because they pose a threat to regional security or a threat to the security of Israel. In this case, the journalists face these charges after taking legal action and submitting requests to the Israeli courts to remove the travel ban. In some cases, before the charges are brought against them, Israeli intelligence officers tell journalists verbally during interrogation sessions that they do not pose a threat to Israel's security, only for them to be shocked later that the charges are officially brought by Israeli courts.



Journalist Thaer Fakhoury from Hebron, in the south of the West Bank, told Euro-Med Monitor: «The Israeli intelligence

summoned me again in 2019. The commander of the Hebron area, named officer Adeeb, and the official in the area where I live, named officer Mufid, interrogated me. The session lasted for more than two hours. They assured me that I do not pose a threat to the security of Israel. I submitted several requests to Israeli courts to remove the travel ban, but all were rejected. The last refusal from Israeli court was when a court in Jerusalem refused to remove the travel ban, under the pretext that my travel poses a threat to regional security.»

2. Incitement through the

media: Many journalists working in the Palestinian territories face charges related to “incitement to violence.” These charges are related to journalists’ coverage of current events or documenting Israeli violations. The possibility of being accused of such charges increases if they publish a report, photo, or video that becomes

popular on media and social media sites. The consequences of that charge can exceed the ban on movement and travel to detention and imprisonment for up to five years. For example, journalist Laith Jaarneh, in addition to the travel ban, was sentenced to prison three times: for two months on 23 November 2017, ten months on 25 November 2018, and eight months on 13 December 2020. Among the charges brought against him was “incitement through the media.”

3. Communication/affiliation

with banned entities: Journalists face charges of communicating with, belonging to, or providing services to banned or hostile entities if they work with media outlets affiliated with political organizations or express political opinions supporting organizations that are classified as hostile to Israel. For example, in 2012, a travel ban was issued against journalist Musab Khamis Qafisha, 27, from Hebron in the southern West Bank, for working as a reporter for Watan TV,

which is close to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

4. Secret file: In this case, journalists are deprived of their right to know the reasons for the travel ban against them. The Israeli officers only tell them that the reason for their travel ban is in a “secret file” that they or their lawyers cannot view.



Journalist Majdoleen Reda Hassouna, 32, from Nablus in the northern West Bank, faced a travel ban in August 2019 for reasons she does not know. She told the Euro-Med Monitor: “I do not know the reason for the travel ban. I was interrogated by Israeli intelligence to inquire about the reason for the ban, but they did not disclose any information and only said that the reason was confidential. I submitted three requests to remove the travel ban, but they were all rejected. First, I presented a request to the

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Israeli Coordination [and Liaison Administration], and I received a response after eight weeks. Then I went to the court, where my lawyer presented the details that showed the illegality of the travel ban. The representatives of the Israeli Shin Bet attended the trial, where they presented a secret file that only the judge, who is naturally biased toward the Israeli side, can see. Based on this secret file, I am prevented from traveling."



Journalist Thaer Fakhoury told Euro-Med: «There was a delay in my file regarding the removal of the travel ban. I went to one of the institutions concerned with defending human rights and asked them to file a suit to remove the ban. This institution has an agreement with the Israeli authorities stipulating that the Israeli authorities shall respond to any file submitted by this institution within eight weeks. However, I did not get an answer until four months later, and the response was a rejection. The institution submitted a petition to the court, while the Israeli intelligence and the Public Prosecution submitted a file against me that they said was "secret." The lawyer repeatedly asked the Israeli intelligence to reveal it, but he refused saying that I am

The Israeli intelligence uses the "secret file" excuse when journalists, including those who were charged with posing a threat to regional security, go to court to revoke the ban. The Israeli intelligence submits these files to the court exclusively, and when journalists' lawyers ask to see the files, their requests are rejected.

an activist in the Palestinian territories, -and that it is against Israeli law. When the rejection decision was issued, the Israeli intelligence said that- my travel abroad would endanger regional security.

Euro-Med Monitor viewed the Jerusalem Central Court's decision to prevent Thaer from traveling. The judge stated: "After reviewing the secret files submitted by the Shin Bet, I decided to ban him from traveling for reasons related to his activity and his danger to regional security, as reported by the secret files that cannot be disclosed."

5. Unknown/unclear reason: In this case, journalists are not even informed that there is a "secret file" or of the charges against them that cause them to be prevented from traveling.

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For example, journalist Radi Ahmed Karama, 32, from Hebron in the southern West Bank, was subjected to an investigation during which no charges or explanations were brought against the travel ban issued in January 2020. To this day, Karama does not know the reason that prevents him from being able to travel outside the country.



Journalist Sujud Rebhi Asi, 28, from Ramallah in the central West Bank, said: «A month ago, I learned of the travel ban, and I have been unable to know any further details. There are no previous trials or judicial penalties. When I examined if I could travel for work, I was surprised by the ban decision. I had opportunities to work and

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study abroad, but I was unable to do so because of the travel ban."

In some cases, when journalists inquire about the reasons for their travel ban, they are directed to the Israeli General Security Service (Shin Bet) or to the Coordination and Liaison Administration to get answers.

In some cases, journalists face up to four charges, all relating to their journalistic work. In most cases, it is difficult for journalists to resort to the law to remove the ban, including the Israeli courts that uphold the bans.

Extorting journalists over their freedom to travel

In some cases, after Palestinian journalists are banned from travel, they face two other types of violations: the threat of permanent prosecution, arrest, targeting, and the continuation of the travel ban if they do not stop their journalistic activities; and extorting them over their right to freedom of movement and travel. In this case, journalists are informed that the Israeli authorities can reverse the ban if they cooperate with them or provide them with information related to Palestinian organizations, their members, or other information related to Palestinian groups and individuals.

Journalists are extorted by being told that the ban will only be removed if they cooperate and provide information to the Israeli officers and intelligence service. They may be also enticed by being offered attractive job offers in various professions.

According to information collected by Euro-Med Monitor from journalists who said that they were subjected to extortion over their right to travel, in most cases where journalists refuse to cooperate or work with Israeli intelligence in collecting

security

information, the Israeli authorities resort to using other methods against them. These methods include physical and psychological violence, such as arrests, beatings,

imprisonments, frequent house break-ins, and threats of continuous persecution.



Radi Ahmed Karama, 32, from Hebron in the southern West Bank, told Euro-Med Monitor

«Officer Mufid introduced himself as the one who issued the travel ban. We talked about the details of the ban. He presented me with several proposals, all centered on working with the Israeli security in exchange for removing the ban»

Radi Karama, journalist from Hebron

that after he was informed of the travel ban upon his arrival at the Allenby Bridge in January 2020, he was “handed a summons to appear at the intelligence office two days later. I went on time to the Etzion detention center.

There,

officer

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issued the

travel ban.

We talked

about the

details of

the ban. He

presented

me with

several proposals, all centered on working with the Israeli security in exchange for removing the ban. He offered me a monthly salary of \$3,000 in return for working with him, but I categorically refused that.

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A year later, the Israeli officer sent a copy of a work permit in my name and my picture to work in Israel. He asked me to receive the permit in Tel Aviv. I refused the idea and told him, 'if you want to help me, you should remove the security ban on me, and I will manage my affairs myself.'

He directed another person to chat with me via WhatsApp, and this person offered me work in different professions in exchange for providing the Shin Bet with some information, but I refused. In October 2021, officer Mufid texted me on WhatsApp and asked if I still wanted to travel abroad or obtain an entry permit to Israel in exchange for working with Israeli security. I refused again.

The day after the conversation, I was surprised that a large group of the Israeli army stormed my house. I was arrested and taken to the Kiryat Arba settlement

in Hebron. That night was the worst in my life. I suffered freezing cold and lack of sleep, as the waiting room had iron beds without mattresses. The next morning, I was taken to the Etzion interrogation [center], and there, officer Mufid talked to me on the phone at 3:00 p.m. He screamed a lot and told me that the removal of the travel ban is conditional on working with him. I was released without any food or drink of any kind during the 16 hours of detention."

Radi added that he asked the intelligence officer why he had been specifically chosen to work with Israel, and the officer replied: "You work in a vital area in Hebron, Working with us will reinforce Shin Bet's resources, since you have communications with many people. The information you will provide us will promote peace between the two sides and will

stop the bloodshed.”

Not only did the Israeli officers threaten Radi, but also his wife, who was with him at the time. The officer told him: “Tell your family that if they want to travel next time, you have to change your approach.”

In other cases, the Israeli officers pressured Palestinian journalists to quit their journalistic work entirely or to give up working with certain media and journalistic bodies in exchange for allowing them

to travel. Other journalists were not accused of specific charges during the investigation. The Israeli officers promised that they would work directly to remove the ban as soon as they pledged to stop their journalistic activity for a certain

media agency. The cases documented by the Euro-Med Monitor indicate that, in this case, after the journalists refused the Israeli officers' offer, various charges were brought against them, including posing a threat to the regional security and working with hostile parties, among

other charges.

«They told me: ‘If you want to travel, you must make compromises.’ When I refused, the officers said to me: ‘When you are ready to cooperate with us, you will be able to travel. Otherwise, do not even bother trying.»

Thaer Fakhoury, journalist from Hebron



*Journalist
Thaer Fakhoury,
from Hebron,
told Euro-
Med Monitor:
«The Israeli
intelligence
summoned me
again in 2019. I
had a session
with officers*

Adeeb and Mufid for more than two hours. They confirmed to me that I do not pose a threat to the security of Israel, but there are some things that I must give up, such as working

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in the Al-Quds satellite channel and other media outlets. They told me: 'If you want to travel, you must make compromises.' When I refused, the officers said to me: 'When you are ready to cooperate with us, you will be able to travel. Otherwise, do not even bother trying.'"

Journalists in Israel to allow them to move freely and work without restrictions in Jerusalem.

Journalist Mohammed Anwar Muna, 39, from Nablus in the West Bank, told Euro-Med Monitor that he was banned from traveling on 10 October 2009. He tried many times to remove the ban. During his attempts, the Shin Bet told him that the reason for his travel ban was "security." A month before this report was written, an intelligence officer told him that the Israeli authorities could revoke the travel ban "if he does not make any trouble." In Jerusalem, Palestinian journalists during the year 2021 faced another type of pressure. Israeli officers offered a number of journalists to replace their membership in the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate with a membership in the Union of

The impact of depriving journalists the right of movement on their other rights

Since freedom of movement is a basic right linked to the individual's ability to exercise a number of other rights, the Israeli authorities' decisions to deprive Palestinian journalists of their right to freedom of movement and travel entail many other violations that go beyond affecting their professional lives alone.

- **The right to work:**

In addition to obstructing their work inside and outside the Palestinian territories and preventing them from accessing different areas and cities to practice their work, travel bans limit Journalists options and means of expanding financial gains, undermine their right to earn a living, and deprive journalists of the right to work in certain cases, as some media and press organizations prefer to work with

individuals who enjoy complete freedom of movement to facilitate carrying out their work.

- **The right to health:** Journalists pay a heavy price in terms of their physical and psychological well-being, as they are denied adequate health care if they need it. In cases that require types of treatment that are not available in the Palestinian territories, journalists find themselves trapped and unable to obtain them, as they are prevented from traveling or moving to other cities and regions to receive the necessary health care.

- **The right to education:** Journalists are prohibited from traveling and moving to other countries or cities to complete their education, even if they obtain opportunities or scholarships abroad. Those who are prohibited from traveling are forced to forgo these opportunities due to the ban imposed on them.

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- **The right to express an opinion:**

When journalists are pressured to stop their journalistic activity or talk about certain issues in return for ending their prosecution and travel ban, the Israeli authorities force these individuals to give up their right to freedom of expression in exchange for allowing them to enjoy their other rights.

- **The right to make a family:**

Palestinian journalists who are banned from traveling are deprived of their right to make a family and family reunification. The most recent of these cases is journalist Majdoleen Hassouna from Nablus in the West Bank, who is prevented from entering Israel, where her Palestinian husband lives, or traveling outside the country to reunite with him there.



Majdouleen told Euro-Med Monitor: "My problem has special details; my life has been greatly complicated by the travel ban. I am married to a young Palestinian man from Israel. I cannot go reunite with him there, and he also cannot come to the West Bank because he would lose the rights granted to him by the Israeli document if he decided to live in the West Bank.»

Recommendations

Based on the data and cases Euro-Med Monitor documented, it appears that the Israeli authorities impose illegal and unjustified restrictions on Palestinian journalists, punishing them for their journalistic work in contravention of Israeli's obligations as an occupying power, which are:

- Granting Palestinian journalists the right to freedom of movement to and from the Palestinian territories and within cities without hindrance or restrictions. If there are exceptional cases that require specific security restrictions, they must be studied individually and dealt with in light of the provisions of international law.
- Investigating the cases mentioned in this report, in which Israeli officers threatened to deny Palestinian journalists their right to travel unless they work with the Israeli public security and intelligence services and

provide security information. Israel should ensure that such incidents are not repeated.

- Removing travel bans on Palestinian journalists for their work or exercising their right to freedom of expression, and stop prosecuting, arresting, threatening, and interrogating journalists at military crossings and checkpoints because of their journalistic activities.



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