



**Mada al-Carmel**  
Arab Center for  
Applied Social Research

# **Fragile Citizenship:** Racism and Oppression against Arab Citizens in Israel during the War on Gaza

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**Mtanes Shihadeh**

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Mtanes Shihadeh  
Director of Israel Studies Program

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Mada al-Carmel- Arab Center for Applied Social Research

90 Hamiginim st. Haifa

Tel: +972 4 8552035, Fax: +972 4 8525973

[www.mada-research.org](http://www.mada-research.org)

[mada@mada-research.org](mailto:mada@mada-research.org)

The security and political crisis that Israel has been living through since October 7, 2023, and its characterization of the war as an existential war, or a second war of independence, provide fertile ground for the growth of open racism towards Arab citizens in Israel, both on the part of the state and the general public. This racism has been articulated in statements from the Israeli media, in the words and conduct of political and religious leaders, in governmental policies, in the actions of the security establishment and academic institutions, and in the attitudes and actions of members of Israeli society.

The state of emergency created by the war has brought the boundaries that separate the Jewish and Arab communities inside Israel into sharp relief, and reconstituted tribalism within Israeli society. Any person who is outside the Jewish tribe or does not adopt its standpoints becomes a suspect and an enemy, and may be subjected to heightened racism and political oppression. The state of emergency also legitimates recourse to tools and practices such as silencing, muting criticism, mobilizing and recruiting society and the media in Israel to the war effort, and the use of all available means to repress freedom of expression and views that do not align with the Israeli consensus, particularly those that emanate from the Arab community inside Israel.

This report examines the primary manifestations of racism towards Arab citizens in Israel that have appeared since the outbreak of the war on Gaza, including racist statements and views voiced by leaders, decision-makers, politicians, and members of the Israeli general public, among them artists, intellectuals and journalists. It further analyzes racist practices by state authorities and security, judicial and academic institutions, including governmental policies and Knesset legislation.

## **Militarization and intimidation**

### **Racism within the security establishment**

After Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, the Israeli security establishment, police and the internal intelligence agency (the *Shabak* or *Shin Bet*) initiated changes to their rules of engagement with Arab citizens. They have stamped out any attempt on their part to demonstrate or speak out against the war, killing and destruction, and the police have dealt with Arab citizens as a party to the war, an 'internal front', and potential enemies.

On the day after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood (October 8), the Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, announced the launch of a campaign to accelerate the process of granting firearm licenses to Jewish citizens, granting preference to former members of the Israeli security forces.<sup>1</sup> With this campaign, Ben-Gvir seeks to put into practice his previously-declared policy of arming Israeli civilians on the pretext of confronting

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1. Arab48. (October 8, 2023). Ben-Gvir launches campaign to expedite procedures for arming Israeli citizens. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

Palestinian attacks and assisting the security forces. As a result, the conditions stipulated by his ministry for issuing licenses to possess and carry firearms apply almost exclusively to Jewish citizens of Israel.

Following this announcement, around 230,000 Israeli citizens submitted applications for a personal firearms license, and the Ministry of National Security issued close to 31,000 new firearms licenses from October 7-15, 2023 alone.<sup>2</sup>

The dangerous nature of Ben-Gvir's decision, and its implementation on the ground, stems from the fact that it creates a threat to the life of any Arab merely for arousing the suspicions of any Jewish citizen. Amid the mass distribution of weapons – especially in such a tense security environment – coupled with a growing desire for revenge within Israeli society, any Palestinian citizen can potentially become a legitimate target for killing. In the current climate, the killing of Arabs on any pretext will find justification and support within Israeli society, and the perpetrators are likely to go unpunished.<sup>3</sup>

### **Loosening the police's open-fire regulations**

In late October 2023, National Security Minister Ben-Gvir proposed a resolution to the government to alter a governmental decision that was taken following the recommendations of the Or Commission (the official commission of inquiry into the events of October 2000), which called for the police regulations governing the opening of fire on citizens during demonstrations to be tightened.<sup>4</sup>

According to Ben-Gvir's proposal, the Police District Commander may give permission to use live ammunition against demonstrators (or "rioters", as the proposal refers to them), "when operational necessity is the paramount value". With it, Ben-Gvir seeks to radically alter and relax the police's open-fire regulations to allow for field executions to be carried out.

Ben-Gvir's resolution states that, "The regulations for opening fire [the rules of engagement] will be turned into an emergency order [to remain in force throughout] the duration of the hostilities, in the event of a multi-front incident in which riots [could] take place on a main traffic route that is immediately essential for the movement of Israeli armed forces to combat operations or auxiliary operations, and interfere with the movement of Israeli armed forces along these routes."<sup>5</sup>

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2. Arab48. (October 15, 2023). Israel issues 31,000 firearms licenses following 236,000 applications since the war on Gaza. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

3. For more information on the dangers for Arab society of the plan to distribute firearms, see: Irshaid, Meisa. (April 2024). Position Paper – The 'Israel is Arming' Campaign: A recipe for rising crime and violence among Palestinians. Haifa, [Mada al-Carmel](#).

4. Arab48. (October 26, 2023). Following the approval of the Attorney General; voting on Sunday on change to open-fire regulations to allow for field executions. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

5. Ibid.

They would likewise apply in "case of riots that prevent access to [a town, village or city], which could put its residents in real danger, either due to the riots themselves, or to the state of emergency, including by preventing the delivery of essential emergency equipment to it, or preventing the evacuation of residents for medical treatment."

All of these scenarios target Arab citizens and seek to prevent them from demonstrating in solidarity with Gaza and its people, and show how the Israeli security establishment treats them as enemies.

In early February 2024, the hostile atmosphere and expedited distribution of firearms among Jewish Israeli citizens led to the killing of an Arab citizen of Israel in the town of Wadi al-Na'im in the Naqab (Negev) region, at the hands of a member of a "community security squad".<sup>6</sup> He was apprehended alive, along with two other Arab citizens, on suspicion of entering a Jewish town in the Naqab for the purpose of committing a robbery. According to police reports, a member of the squad opened fire on the youth while he was being held in hand restraints and did not pose any threat.<sup>7</sup>

## **Israel's Police Commissioner threatens to deport Arabs**

The police's hostile mentality towards Arab citizens and the intimidatory police policies pursued against them were laid bare in statements by made Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai. At the outset of the war, Shabtai issued an explicit threat to deport Arab citizens if they sympathized with Gaza, stating, "Anyone who wants to show solidarity and support for Gaza is welcome to get on buses that are now headed there." He added that the police would not allow demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza to be held and that such events would be dealt with severely.<sup>8</sup>

## **Activating emergency regulations to facilitate detentions**

In the aftermath of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, Israel's security and police authorities activated emergency regulations that allow them to take draconian measures against detainees. Experiences on the ground support claims that these regulations specifically

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6. Local "community security squads" are paramilitary units composed of citizens (a majority of Jewish citizens of Israel have some military background) that operate in Israeli towns and are headed by the town's security officer. They are small security forces whose main function is to provide frontline protection for Israeli towns in emergency situations until the security forces and army arrive. The squads are usually run by security officers in Israeli towns and have direct contacts with the army forces. After Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, new community security squads were set up in large numbers of Israeli towns, operating under the command of the Israel Police or local municipal councils.

7. Arab48. (February 3, 2024). The Naqab: Killing of Arab youth by the bullet of security officer in "alert squad" after being detained. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

8. The official X account of the Israel Police in Arabic [[@Israelpolice\\_Ar](#)]. Police Commissioner, Inspector Yaakov Shabtai: "Anyone who wants to show solidarity and support for Gaza is welcome to get on buses that are now headed there." [The X platform](#). (Arabic)

target Arab citizens who have been arrested during the war on Gaza, as part of a wider campaign of political persecution against them. They include regulations that allow for the amount of time for which detainees may be held to be extended, for lengthy periods, and to prevent them from meetings with lawyers for up to 90 days.<sup>9</sup> The new directives authorize the head of the *Shin Bet's* Investigations Department or an army officer with the rank of colonel or above to prevent a detainee from meeting a lawyer for a period of up to 30 days, without requiring approval from a judicial authority.

Since the start of the war on Gaza, the Israeli government has used the powers granted to it during a state of emergency to promulgate a number of emergency regulations, according to the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI). These regulations have the status of primary Knesset legislation, but are enacted without going through the legislative process or being ratified by the Knesset, due to the state of emergency.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, and notwithstanding the fact that needs justifying their use may sometimes arise, emergency regulations stand to undermine the rule of law and human rights protections. There are fears that the government may exploit the powers granted to it during the state of emergency – due to the gravity of the emergency situation or for other, unrelated, considerations – and cause excessive harm to human rights or minorities.

Since the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, the Israeli government has approved a number of emergency regulations, all of which are related in some manner to the war. On October 8, 2023, for example, the Emergency Regulations (Detention Hearings) were issued, authorizing the Minister of Justice to expand the scope for holding detention hearings in courts via video link (on the Zoom platform), without the physical presence of the detainee. These amendments expired on November 15, 2023. On October 14, the government approved emergency regulations allowing the Israeli army to hack computer equipment used to operate fixed cameras, by authorizing the head of the Cyber Defense Unit, or another officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel, to hack private computers should the security situation so require.

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9. Arab48. (October 30, 2023). "Adalah" demands cancellation of emergency regulations allowing for detainees to be prevented from meeting their lawyers. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

10. Lurie, Guy; Fuchs, Amir; Benvenisti, Dafna. (October 19, 2023). Emergency Regulations during the Swords of Iron War. [Israel Democracy Institute](#). (Hebrew)

## The legislative and executive authorities in the service of oppression

This section examines legislation, policies and governmental decisions that have been issued or amended since the start of the war on Gaza in order to facilitate the oppression of Arab citizens in Israel.

### Governmental bill expanding the powers of the police

In early January 2024, the Knesset's National Security Committee discussed a bill to amend the Criminal Procedures Law (Enforcement Powers – Arrests) (Amendment – Tightening Conditions for Release on Bail).<sup>11</sup> The bill was proposed by the Chairman of the Committee, Zvika Fogel, of the far-right *Otzma Yehudit* (Jewish Power) political party, and Member of Knesset Eliyahu Revivo of the Likud Party, and was endorsed by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. The bill seeks to expand the powers of police investigators to place restrictions on suspects without requiring the approval of a court.<sup>12</sup>

The explanatory notes attached to the bill state that the goal of the legislation is to expand the authorities of the police to deal with suspects from the Arab community in Israel, since "murders, assaults, shootings, confrontations, and breaches of the public order are taking place on a daily basis in the Negev, the mixed cities and within the Arab community. This bill aims to provide the Israel Police and law enforcement agencies with more powerful tools in the war against crime."<sup>13</sup>

The bill grants powers to a police investigator to banish a 'suspect' from their town or area of residence for a period of 90 days, up from the 15 days currently permitted by law. It also extends the period during which a 'suspect' can be prevented from contacting certain persons from 30 to 90 days, and doubles the number of days allowed for house arrest from 15 to 30 days. According to the text of the bill, the powers granted in the bill allow for restrictions to be imposed on persons suspected of an offense that carries a penalty of least three years' imprisonment, including the offense of blocking a street, i.e. demonstrators.

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11. The Knesset's National Security Committee. (January 8, 2024). The National Security Committee has rejected the government's request to wait for the conclusions of the Dotan Commission and to promote governmental legislation concerning the expansion of the powers of the police to tighten bail conditions. [Website of the Knesset's National Security Committee](#). (Hebrew)

12, Arab48. (January 17, 2024). Government bill expands police powers to repress Arab citizens. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

13. Breiner, Josh. (January 17, 2024). The ruling coalition is promoting a bill to increase police powers to restrict suspects' movement. [Haaretz](#). (Hebrew)

The bill seeks to exploit the significant proliferation of crime within Arab society in Israel, as well as the state of emergency resulting from the war on Gaza, to pass a law that expands the powers of the police to make arrests, with the aim of deterring Arabs from taking part in anti-war demonstrations and protests, as was hinted at by the legislation's sponsor.

## Laws and decisions to restrict the media and consumption of media

### New law criminalizing the viewing of “pro-terror content”

As part of its raft of policies to restrict freedom of expression and control the official narrative and public awareness about the war, the government also decided to restrict consumption of media and other sources of information by criminalizing the viewing of what it refers to as "pro-terror content". On November 8, the Knesset approved the Counter-Terrorism Law (Amendment No. 9 – Temporary Order), 2023, in a third and final reading.<sup>14</sup> The amendment was proposed by the Minister of Communications.<sup>15</sup>

Under the law, anyone found guilty of committing the crime of "consuming pro-terror content", by following websites known to be affiliated with terror organizations, may be sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Notably, the law does not apply to a person who views this type of content "randomly and in good faith, or for a legitimate reason".<sup>16</sup>

The Israeli authorities have not sufficed with restricting freedom of the media, the press and freedom of expression, however; the State Prosecutor has also initiated the criminalization and prosecution of the use of verses from the Quran in social media posts. In early April 2024, the State Prosecution drafted a document containing instructions for the opening of investigations and filing of indictments against Arab citizens of Israel who publish a social media post that includes the word "*shaheed*" (martyr), a verse from the Quran, a *da'wah* (invitation to Islam), or *munaja* (supplication) to God. According to the instructions in the Prosecution's document, the use of the word "martyr" to describe "a person who was killed during or after the commission of a terrorist act may be considered as support, praise and backing for the act of terrorism, by examining the circumstances in which the post was made".<sup>17</sup>

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14. Counter-Terrorism Law (Amendment No. 9 – Temporary Order), 2023. (October 25, 2023). [Knesset's National Legislation Database](#). (Hebrew)

15. Hilaie, Sivan. (November 8, 2023). Knesset approves law imposing a year's imprisonment for consistent consumption of terrorist content. [Ynet News](#). (Hebrew)

16. Ibid.

17. Arab48. (April 16, 2024). Israeli Prosecution puts in place rules for criminalizing posts that contain the word martyr and Quranic verses. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)



## Laws, decisions to close down media outlets

On October 20, 2023, the Israeli government approved emergency regulations allowing for the closure of media outlets and satellite channels on the ground that they "target state security". The government then ordered the closure of the offices of the Al Jazeera network in Israel and banned it from broadcasting in the country. However, the security cabinet delayed its ratification of the decision and did not close *Al Jazeera's* offices, reserving the move as leverage with which to pressure the channel.<sup>18</sup> In early May 2024, however, the government again decided to close *Al Jazeera's* offices, and this time they were, in fact, shuttered directly after the decision was made on May 5.<sup>19</sup> On November 13, 2023, the security cabinet also approved a decision to suspend the operations of the *Al-Mayadeen* media network in Israel. According to a joint press release issued by the Minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant, and the Minister of Communications, Shlomo Karhi, the decision was taken because *Al-Mayadeen* causes "harm to the security of the state".<sup>20</sup>

## Laws tightening control over the Arab education system

In early January 2024, the Knesset's Committee on Education approved a Legislative Bill Banning the Appointment of Teaching Staff and Denying Funding to Educational Institutions for Identifying with a Terrorist Act or a Terror Organization (Legislative Amendments).<sup>21</sup> The legislation aims to impose oversight over teachers on the pretext of combatting "terrorism" and tightening governmental control over the Arab education system in Israel. It provides for an employee of the education system to be removed via administrative expulsion or dismissal, rather than by a court decision, if it is proven that the employee identifies with "terrorism" or supports the armed struggle of an enemy state or an organization hostile to Israel.<sup>22</sup> It further allows for the withholding of budgetary transfers to any private educational institution, based on an opinion by the Minister of Education, if it is proven that the staff identifies with a "terrorist organization" or an "act of terror".

On January 29, the Knesset endorsed the bill at its first reading, and it was approved by the Knesset's Committee on Education on February 14, in preparation for its second and third readings in the Knesset plenum.<sup>23</sup>

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18. Arab48. (October 20, 2023). The occupation approves closing offices of the "Al Jazeera" network in Israel. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

19. The Arabic language website of Russia Today (RT). (May 5, 2024). Netanyahu's government decides to close the offices of "Al Jazeera" in Israel. [Russia Today](#). (Arabic)

20. Eichner, Itamar. (November 13, 2023). Cabinet approves closure of Al-Mayadeen channel in Israel: Mouthpiece for Hezbollah. [Ynet News](#). (Hebrew)

21. The Knesset: Knesset News. (January 23, 2024). Education Committee approves on first reading: Prohibition on appointment of teaching staff who support terrorism. [Website of the Knesset's Committee on Education](#). (Hebrew)

22. Arab48. (January 28, 2024). New law tightens control over Arab education system. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

23. The Knesset: Knesset News. (February 14, 2024). Committee on Education discusses bill prohibiting the employment of teachers who support terrorism. [Website of the Knesset's Committee on Education](#). (Hebrew)

The bill was tabled by Likud party member Amit Halevi, and was joined to a similar bill proposed in 2023 by *Otzma Yehudit* party member Zvika Fogel. A representative of the Ministry of Justice emphasized the need for the bill to be amended ahead of its second and third readings. A representative of the Ministry of Education had previously expressed his opposition to this legislation, referring to preexisting cooperation with the security services, and stating that, "Our relationship with the *Shin Bet* is solid, and we receive concrete information from it as necessary."<sup>24</sup>

In an interview that he gave to the *Arab48* news website, the Head of the Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education, Dr. Sharaf Hassan, stated that, "In this law, many matters are left unclear and vague, the interpretation of terrorism or support for an act of terror, for example. From the side of the judiciary, they want to interpret these points, while the initiators of the bill are trying to keep the interpretation broad so that they can include political opinions that contradict their own, or based on their own interpretations. Today, we see that the term terrorism is so expansive that a call for a ceasefire or for a peaceful resolution can become terrorism! Even humanitarian positions that reject the infliction of harm on civilians are interpreted as terrorism. The Justice Ministry wants a clear definition, while the right-wing wants it to be vague."<sup>25</sup>

## The clampdown on freedom of expression

From the first day of Hamas's attack on towns in the south, the Israeli security establishment began implementing repressive and intimidatory policies in order to silence voices of opposition to the war and the killing of innocent people and children, and to block any anti-war protests by Arabs in Israel. A mass campaign of persecution was launched against the Arab community, in which every comment, statement, or post on social media expressing a principled position against the war, opposing the killing of civilians, or sympathizing with the population of Gaza – children, women, and the elderly – is regarded as a position in support of Hamas, and thus grounds for investigation and arrest by the police and the *Shin Bet*.

Arrest campaigns have targeted large numbers of Arab citizens, on suspicion of supporting terrorism or Hamas. The police have arrested dozens of Arab citizens on the basis of social media posts that allegedly express support for Gaza or sympathy for its people. Among them are local political leaders such as Dr. Amer Al-Huzayel, a candidate for mayor in Rahat,<sup>26</sup> political activist Yoav Bar,<sup>27</sup> and artists such as singer

24. Ibid.

25. Arab48. *Supra* note 22.

26. Arab48. (October 14, 2023). Arrest of candidate for Rahat Municipality Amer Al-Huzayel extended until next Monday. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

27. Arab48. (October 30, 2023). Yoav Bar from Haifa is released. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

Dalal Abu Amneh<sup>28</sup> and actress Maisa Abd Elhadi,<sup>29</sup> as well as *imams* of mosques and medical professionals working in Israeli hospitals.

In most cases, those arrested were detained for a number of days before being released without charge. In only a few cases were indictments filed, including against actress Maisa Abd Elhadi,<sup>30</sup> which exposes that the fact that the majority of arrests were made for purposes of intimidation and silencing, and driven by racism within the security establishment. The true aim was to criminalize solidarity among Palestinians in Israel with fellow members of their people, along with humanitarian and ethical positions against the war.

On October 27, 2023, the Adalah legal center, in cooperation with the Emergency Committee of the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, published a report documenting 161 cases in which criminal legal proceedings were initiated against Arab citizens of Israel after October 7, 2023 "due to their expression of opinions concerning current events in the country".<sup>31</sup> The criminal procedures included summonses to interrogation, detentions, indictments and requests for detention until the conclusion of legal proceedings, as well as calls to 'warning talks' with police or *Shit Bet* officers. According to the report, there were 58 cases of arrest and investigation based on social media posts, in addition to 22 cases of arrest for participating in protests.<sup>32</sup> The report identified 82 cases in which Arab citizens were fired from their workplaces. Most of those subjected to interrogation or placed under arrest were released immediately after interrogation, under restrictive conditions such as house arrest, banishment, bail payments and financial guarantees. In addition, 11 indictments were filed against Palestinian citizens based on social media posts. All of the charges include offenses listed under the Counter-Terrorism Law, enacted in 2016, of "incitement to terrorism", and "identifying with a terrorist organization".

On November 14, 2023, Adalah published additional details about the campaign of arrests, investigations and warning talks that the police had waged against Arab citizens up until that date,<sup>33</sup> reporting that the total had increased to almost 250 cases. Further, 76 indictments had been filed on charges of supporting or identifying with an organization defined as a terrorist organization under Israeli law, or incitement to terrorism.

These figures reveal the ease with which Arab citizens can be arrested based on claims of incitement, supporting terrorism, or identifying with Hamas. However, it soon becomes

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28. Arab48. (October 17, 2023). Arrest of Dalal Abu Amneh extended until tomorrow. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

29. Arab48. (October 29, 2023). Indictment filed against actress Maisa Abd Elhadi. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

30. Ibid.

31. Adalah. (October 27, 2023). Adalah's survey of violations during the war: Hundreds of cases of persecution of various forms against Palestinian citizens. [Adalah](#). (Arabic)

32. Ibid.

33. Adalah. (November 14, 2023). On Investigations, Arrests and Indictments of Palestinians in Israel. [Adalah](#). (Arabic)

apparent that the majority of the allegations leveled against them are political in nature, and that the true objective of the arrests and detentions is to intimidate, deter and silence the Arab community in Israel, especially its leading figures.

## Repression of Knesset Members

In addition to enacting laws that suppress the freedom to express anti-war views, Israel's legislative and executive authorities also attempted to expel Member of Knesset (MK) Ofer Cassif (of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality party) from the Knesset, for signing a petition in support of Israel's referral to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on suspicion of committing war crimes. As soon as MK Cassif signed the document at the end of January 2024, MKs from all Jewish political parties launched a wave of incitement and attacks against him, demanding his expulsion from the Knesset. Over 90 MKs signed a bill to oust Cassif from the Knesset under the Expulsion of Members of Knesset Law, which allows the Knesset to expel one of its members with the approval of at least 90 MKs.<sup>34</sup> The Knesset House Committee approved the bill on January 30, 2024 by a majority of 14 MKs, with only two MKs opposing (from Arab parties).<sup>35</sup> However, the bill failed to pass its first reading as only 85 MKs voted in its favor on February 19,<sup>36</sup> just short of the 90-MK majority required.

Following the attempt to expel MK Cassif, his party, the Democratic Front, made the following statement: "The vote to remove MK Cassif is not only an unprecedented attack on Cassif himself, and a move that voids his parliamentary immunity of any real substance, but also a harsh assault on an entire segment of the citizenry, an oppressed political minority that chose MK Cassif to represent it in the parliament. The silencing of Cassif is tantamount to silencing them, and is an unlawful violation of their basic rights to vote and stand for election, to say nothing of the serious damage caused to such elementary freedoms as freedom of expression." The party also warned against "the implications of the decision for the already limited democratic space and for a political arena inflamed by the policies of the war."<sup>37</sup>

34. Arab48. (January 30, 2024). A majority of the Knesset House Committee approves dismissal of MK Cassif... "An illegal procedure". [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

35. Adamker, Yaki. (January 30, 2024). The decision goes to the plenum: Knesset House Committee votes in favor of removing MK Cassif. [Walla](#). (Hebrew)

36. The Knesset: Knesset News. (February 19, 2024). Proposal by Knesset Committee regarding the termination of Knesset Member Ofer Cassif's term of office was rejected. [Website of the Knesset: Knesset News](#). (Hebrew)

37. Arab48. *Supra* note 34.

## **Banning anti-war demonstrations and political activity**

In parallel with the repression of free expression and attempts to silence any stance in solidarity with the people in Gaza, the Israeli security services acted to block and suppress anti-war demonstrations, either by threatening to prevent the demonstrations from taking place in the first place, or by breaking them up if they did go ahead.

Three weeks after the start of the war on Gaza, an anti-war demonstration was organized in the Arab city of Umm al-Fahem, in which dozens of citizens took part. The police did not prevent the demonstration from taking place, as they had done in other towns – either by threatening the organizers or arresting them in advance of the demonstrations – but instead chose to disperse the demonstration shortly after it began. The police resorted to force to break up the demonstration and arrested 11 of the demonstrators.<sup>38</sup>

In an act that exposes the judiciary's complicity in practices of silencing and intimidation, the court extended the detention of the protestors for a day, without holding deliberations or allowing pleas during the hearings.<sup>39</sup> Two days after the arrests, the court ordered the release of nine of the detainees, while remanding the remaining two in custody: Attorney Ahmad Khalifa and political activist Mohammad Jabareen.<sup>40</sup> Charges were subsequently filed against them both for incitement, threatening state security, and identifying with a terrorist organization.<sup>41</sup> Days later, the State Prosecutor issued a statement in preparation for their indictment. The court subsequently extended their detention several times.

In mid-January, the Haifa Magistrate's Court delivered a decision to hold the two detainees in detention until the end of legal proceedings, accepting an appeal submitted by the Prosecution against an earlier court decision to release Attorney Khalifa under restrictive conditions. The court rejected the alternatives to detention put forward by the detainees' legal defense team.

The Adalah legal center, which represents the detainees, commented on the court's decision, which was issued three months after their arrest, as follows: "This is the first time that a detention has been extended for such a long period of time for detained demonstrators, and that the detainees have been left in detention until the conclusion of legal proceedings for chanting slogans, within a broader general context that is also unprecedented. We fear the ramifications of this decision, which directly targets the Palestinian public discourse, represents an escalation of political persecution against Palestinian activists and political actors in Israel, and paves the way for the police to

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38. Arab48. (October 20, 2023.) Arrest of 11 people who demonstrated in Umm al-Fahem extended without a hearing. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

39. Ibid.

40. Arab48. (October 22, 2023). Umm al-Fahem: Detainees released, detention of two others extended following suppression of a march against the aggression on Gaza. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

41. Arab48. (November 2, 2023). Statement of charges against Mohammad Taher Jabareen and another person, their detention is extended until Monday. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

tighten their grip on Palestinian society and continue their policy of silencing them."<sup>42</sup> In early February 2024, the Supreme Court of Israel accepted an appeal by Attorney Khalifa and ordered his release, four months after his initial detention, under restrictive conditions including an order banishing him from the city of Umm al-Fahem.<sup>43</sup>

The police rejected all requests made by the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab citizens of Israel for permission to hold demonstrations, and prevented protest vigils that fulfilled all relevant legal requirements and did not require an official permit from the police from being held, based on claims that they posed a threat to public order and safety, or that the police lacked sufficient manpower to escort the demonstrations. In order to prevent one such vigil from going ahead, the police arrested the Chairman of the High Follow-up Committee, Mohammad Barakeh, shortly before it was scheduled to begin, along with a number of other Arab political leaders, for several hours.<sup>44</sup> The Israel Police also prevented meetings of Arab and Jewish intellectuals and academics called for by the High Follow-Up Committee from taking place.<sup>45</sup>

## Growing racist rhetoric and incitement against Palestinians

### Incitement and racism on social media

The state of war and emergency has created an atmosphere that is conducive to growing incitement against Arab citizens, as social media platforms have become spaces free of oversight and accountability for expressions of incitement and racism against Arab citizens.

7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, which advocates for Palestinians' digital rights, has carried out monitoring of social media platforms using its 'Violence Indicator'. The center documented approximately 103,000 instances of hate speech and incitement against Palestinians on social media in the Hebrew language from the beginning of the war on Gaza until October 18, 2023, of a total of 120,000 pieces of content it monitored from October 7 to October 18. The majority of the posts were found on X (formerly Twitter), which still allows harmful content to proliferate without any effective oversight. The documented posts ranged from speech "based on political affiliations" (at 63%), and those "rooted in racial bias" (at 36%), to speech expressing

42. Adalah. (January 16, 2024). Decisions issued against detainees from the Umm al-Fahem demonstration: A legally unprecedented phenomenon. [Adalah](#). (Arabic)

43. Arabs 48. (February 9, 2024). After being detained for around 4 months: Attorney Ahmad Khalifa from Umm al-Fahem is released. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

44. Khoury, Jacky. (October 26, 2023). Venue owner canceled Jewish-Arab conference after the police said there would be "consequences". [Haaretz](#). (Hebrew)

45. Arab48. (November 9, 2023). Release of Chairman of High Follow-Up Committee Mohammad Barakeh and Arab leaders. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)



"gender-based or religious violence", among others.<sup>46</sup>

7amleh documented a total of 481,131 instances of violent or hate speech, classified using a linguistic model,<sup>47</sup> between October 6 and 26, 2023, using electronic monitoring software.<sup>48</sup> According to the Violence Indicator, by November 14, 2023, the number of instances of racist speech stood at nearly one million cases involving hate speech and incitement against Palestinians and supporters of Palestinian rights on social media platforms in the Hebrew language. Such speech continues to spread rapidly amid the escalating political events in the region that began on October 7, 2023. 68% of the documented speech was "based on political affiliations", while 29% were "rooted in racial bias", as well as speech expressing "gender-based or religious violence", among others.<sup>49</sup>

## Public incitement and racism

Hate speech and incitement against Arab citizens and society have also been directed at Arab figures and political parties in what are known as the 'mixed cities', in which Jewish and Arab residents live alongside one another. Arab citizens and political leaders in the mixed city of Nof HaGalil, situated close to the Arab city of Nazareth, for instance, were subjected to an incitement campaign led by politically extremist Jewish groups in the city. It included incitement against an Arab member of the municipality, Dr. Raed Ghattas, and the Arab Joint List party. Ghattas was labeled a "supporter of terrorism" based on old photos on his Facebook account in which the Palestinian flag appeared in the background. Extremist Jewish groups demanded that he be forced out of the city. In addition, they circulated a video glorifying and praising the racist figure Meir Kahane as he incited against Arabs, captioned with the slogan "Kahane was always right".<sup>50</sup>

## Incitement and racism in the workplace

As in previous security crises and periods of high political tension, incitement and racism against Arab citizens by members of Israeli society has also frequently surfaced in the workplace. A report published in business newspaper *The Marker* in late October 2023 discussed the increase in racism and attacks on Arab workers in the aftermath of the

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46. 7amleh. (October 19, 2023). 7amleh's "Violence Indicator" documents 103,000 instances of hate speech and incitement against Palestinians on social media. [7amleh](#).

47. The model uses artificial intelligence technology to monitor the spread of hate speech, incitement and violence on social media platforms in the Hebrew language.

48. Arab48. (October 26, 2023). Director of 7amleh: Unprecedented hate speech and incitement to kill Arabs in Israel. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

49. 7amleh. (November 14, 2023). 37 days since the start of the escalation, over 1 million instances of hate speech and incitement against Palestinians. [7amleh](#).

50. Arab48. (October 12, 2023). Incitement against Arabs in "Nof HaGalil". [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

events of October 7, including Arab bus drivers working in Israeli towns and Arab staff employed in Israeli retail stores. Bus drivers and retail workers found themselves at the forefront, confronting levels of racism in the workplace that have forced many of them to be absent from their workplaces, according to the report.<sup>51</sup> *The Marker* also reported that only about 60% of Arab bus drivers living in the Triangle and Galilee areas were continuing to go to work.

At the start of the war, the mayor of Rosh HaAyin, a town located in the center of the country, released a video in which he demanded that Arab workers (Palestinian citizens of Israel) should be removed from building and construction sites in central Israel. Following the release of this video, a security guard visited a building site in the city and demanded that the owners dismiss all the Arab laborers.<sup>52</sup>

This incident is neither unique nor exceptional. The Union of Arab Workers in Nazareth published data about the dismissal of Arab workers from their workplaces during the first two weeks of the war on Gaza. The Union reported that it had followed up on 37 cases in which workers had been permanently dismissed because of social media posts in which they expressed sympathy for the children and women lying under the rubble in Gaza. It additionally monitored many instances of Arab workers being called before disciplinary committees merely for writing very simple statements, illustrating how employers have come to see almost any expression by Arab employees as constituting 'identification' with a terrorist organization.<sup>53</sup>

The persecution has also reached the healthcare, education, sports, and high-tech sectors. For example, ten days after the start of the war, the Israeli Ministry of Health suspended an Arab nurse based on the claim that she had "posted content containing nationalist and racist sentiments that support the murderous acts of terrorism that took place on Saturday, October 7."<sup>54</sup>

In late October, a teacher from the town of Ar'ara in the Triangle area was subjected to an incitement campaign on social media that was led by Jewish extremists, who also organized a demonstration in front of the school where she taught in the Jewish city of Harish, which stands on the land of Wadi Ara. The school administration subsequently decided to suspend her from the school, where she had been working for several years.<sup>55</sup> The incitement campaign came in response to posts made by the teacher that featured photographs of child victims of the war on the Gaza Strip.

51. Shmil, Daniel; Spolter, Simi. (October 24, 2023). Curses, threats and throwing stones at drivers: Racism against Arab workers is at its peak. [The Marker](#). (Hebrew)

52. Arab48. (October 18, 2023). Arab workers... Victims of hatred and hostility amid the war on Gaza. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

53. Arab48. (October 12, 2023). "Al-Aqsa Flood": Dozens of orders dismissing Arab workers for their alleged "support for terrorism". [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

54. Arab48. (October 11, 2023). Nurse suspended from work for allegedly "posting nationalist and racist content". [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

55. Arab48 (October 30, 2023). Teacher from Ar'ara suspended from her work and investigated after being subjected to incitement. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)



## Incitement against Arab athletes

Arab footballers who play for Israel teams have also been persecuted for anti-war posts on social media. For example, the Maccabi Haifa football club summoned player Dia Saba to a hearing because of a post that his wife made on Instagram, in which she wrote that children should be removed from the warzone and that children in Gaza and in Israel were innocent.<sup>56</sup> The post angered fans of the team, who demanded that the management suspend Saba. They launched an incitement campaign attacking the player and his family, which involved death threats. Although his wife clarified that her position was sympathetic to all children and against killing, the club released him in early-November.<sup>57</sup>

In a separate incident involving another Arab football player, the Israeli Minister of Culture and Sports, Miki Zohar, called for the citizenship of Ataa Jaber, who plays for the Palestinian national football team, to be revoked. His demand came after Jaber, who is from the town of Majd al-Krum in the Galilee, took part in an international match between Palestine and Lebanon, as part of the Asian double qualifying rounds for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup.<sup>58</sup> In a letter addressed to Minister of the Interior Moshe Arbel, Zohar wrote that, "It is inconceivable that, at the height of the war in Gaza, an Israeli citizen would participate and sympathize with an enemy that killed over 1,300 Israelis on October 7."<sup>59</sup>

## Racism against healthcare sector personnel

In 2020, the percentage of Arab doctors in Israeli hospitals stood at approximately 20%, and Arab workers made up approximately 40% of all workers in the healthcare sector in Israel overall.<sup>60</sup> Despite these figures, the sector saw incidents of racism and harassment against Arabs healthcare professionals following October 7, which in some cases resulted in dismissals.

The Arab Emergency Committee and the Civil Society Coalition for Emergencies in the Arab Community, another body that operates under the auspices of the High Follow-up Committee and is comprised of its member organizations (Arab political parties and local authorities), in addition to civil society associations, documented 54 cases involving Arab citizens who had been fired from their jobs as a result of digging into their social media histories.<sup>61</sup> One such case involved the head of the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit

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56. Elbaz, Shimon. (October 18, 2023). Dia Saba will be called in for questioning following his wife's post – Will player be let go from Maccabi Haifa? [Ynet News](#). (Hebrew)

57. Ibid.

58. Arab 48. (November 21, 2023). Israeli Minister of Culture and Sports demands revocation of citizenship of footballer Ataa Jaber. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

59. Ibid.

60. Linder, Ronny. (October 29, 2023). Arabs are not "part" of the health system – they are the system. Damage to this fabric constitutes an existential danger. [The Marker](#). (Hebrew)

61. Arab 48. *Supra* note 53.

at the Hasharon Hospital, Dr. Abed Samara, who was suspended from his position after 18 years, without any questioning or investigation prior to the decision. The physician was accused of publishing posts on Facebook in which he allegedly expressed support for "terrorism", according to the hospital,<sup>62</sup> and of changing his personal profile picture on his Facebook account after the outbreak of the war on Gaza to an image featuring religious text and the Hamas flag. However, it transpired that the picture had been on his account since June 2022, and that it consisted of verses from the Quran placed above an image of a dove carrying an olive branch.<sup>63</sup> In another incident, the Israeli police arrested a nurse, Nour Oweidat, on suspicion of incitement to terrorism for posting a song by Lebanese singer Fairouz in 2021.<sup>64</sup>

In a further example, the Wolfson Medical Center summoned a nurse to a disciplinary hearing before suspending her for sharing a social media post in which children were pictured in Gaza alongside the words "Israel's bank of targets". The nurse also wrote under the photograph, "Nine children from the Abu Daqqa family were martyred in the bombing of their house in Khan Yunis". The hospital management claimed that the post exceeded the limits of legitimate free expression and rose to the level of incitement, and that it was therefore considering suspending the nurse. Indeed, two weeks after the hearing, she was fired from her position at the hospital.<sup>65</sup>

## Racism hits the high-tech sector

The Israeli high-tech sector, which is perceived as an advanced and liberal stronghold of coexistence between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, has also seen its share of racism, according to business newspaper *The Marker*.<sup>66</sup> A survey conducted by the Tsofen Association of Arab high-tech employees in late December 2023 revealed that 44% of Arab engineers working in the sector were afraid to go to their places of work, and that over 30% were scared to speak Arabic there.<sup>67</sup>

While 65% of those surveyed reported that the way they were treated by their Jewish colleagues remained unchanged, over a quarter responded that they were treated slightly or significantly worse after October 7. While 77% of respondents reported that their relations with their Jewish colleagues had been "good" prior to October 7, this percentage dropped to 48% after October 7. The percentage of respondents who described these

62. Efrati, Ido. (October 19, 2023). Without investigation: A Department Manager at Hasharon Hospital suspended for issuing a post supporting terrorism. [Haaretz](#). (Hebrew)

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Glazer, Hilo; Mashiach, Itay. (November 2, 2023). False arrests, dismissals on spurious grounds: This is what the persecution of Israeli Arabs looks like. [Haaretz](#). (Hebrew)

66. Gamss, Netanel. (January 22, 2024). "I couldn't believe they would treat me like that": What is happening to the Arabs in high-tech? [The Marker](#). (Hebrew)

67. Ibid.

relations as "strained" or "not good" rose from just 3% before the events of October 7, to 16% afterwards.

## **Academic institutions as instruments of repression and surveillance**

Israeli academic institutions have been drafted into the Israeli war effort and have played a central role in curtailing freedom of expression in general, and academic freedom in particular, by persecuting Arab lecturers and students who express their opposition to the genocidal war, killing and devastation of Gaza. Significantly, no Jewish lecturers or students have faced harassment or accountability, despite the large numbers of statements and articles they have published calling for killing, reprisals and destruction in Gaza, or inciting against the Palestinian people in general.

A high-profile example is the incitement campaign instigated by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem against Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. The university published a letter inviting Professor Shalhoub to resign from her position at the university after she signed a petition calling for an end to the war and for the rights of Palestinian and Israeli children to be protected. The petition was signed by over 2,000 academic specialists in children's rights from around the world. The petition did not differentiate between Palestinian and Israeli children, and appealed for their rights to be safeguarded equally and without discrimination.<sup>68</sup>

On October 29, 2023, Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian received the letter inviting her to submit her resignation through an email list that includes all lecturers working at the Hebrew University; the letter was not sent to her personally, in breach of the law. As a result, the letter was distributed rapidly and widely, triggering a largescale and aggressive campaign of incitement against her. In signing the petition, she thus did not enjoy the protection of the rights to academic freedom and freedom of expression, which are supposed to cover critical opinions that go against the establishment position, especially in universities.

The Hebrew University's administration was not satisfied, however, with sending the letter to Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian. In mid-March, it further decided to suspend her from her teaching position at the university, on the grounds that she had signed "a petition at the beginning of the war that described Israel's actions as genocidal practices and [Israel as] an occupying entity since 1948." As the university further stated in its decision, "At this stage, and in order to maintain an atmosphere of calm at the university for the benefit of our students, we have decided to suspend Professor Nadera Shalhoub-

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68. Arab48. (November 8, 2023). University lecturer Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian subjected to campaign of racial incitement. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

Kevorkian from her position."<sup>69</sup> However, the university retracted this decision less than two weeks later, as a result, among other things, of opposition from several lecturers at the Hebrew University itself, who claimed that the measures taken against her did not comply with the applicable administrative regulations. A further factor was the large number of academics from universities around the world who stood in solidarity with Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian.

The position taken by the Hebrew University and its persecution of Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian should not be seen in isolation from the broader role played by the Hebrew University – and by the Israeli academy in general – in supporting and providing justifications for the genocidal war on Gaza, and in suppressing opposition to the war by Arab students at the university.

In protest at the suspension of Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Mada Al-Carmel sent a letter to the Hebrew University in which it set out the wider role played by the Hebrew University in supporting the war and backing the government in its wider policies towards the Palestinian issue. The letter stated, "It is imperative to emphasize, moreover, that her suspension bears testament to the university's complicity in upholding and advancing the Zionist project, as manifested in the prolonged Israeli occupation and apartheid regime imposed on Palestinians... The university's decision was preceded by a harsh and widespread campaign of persecution initiated by all Israeli universities and institutions of higher education against the Palestinian academic community in Israel, teaching staff and students alike." The letter continued, "A reversal of the decision to suspend Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian in response to mounting international pressure would not erase or undo the harm caused by your actions. It remains clear that you see it as your mission to silence dissent and eliminate Palestinian and humanist narratives about the war."<sup>70</sup>

The persecution of Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian did not end with the decision to reverse her suspension, however, as the Israel Police opened an investigation against her, detained her for 24 hours in mid-April 2024, and interrogated her several times thereafter on suspicion of incitement.<sup>71</sup> The investigation focused on the content of her academic research, which has been published in leading international academic journals, in accordance with standards of academic publishing. As these developments illustrate, academic research that has been published in the most reputable academic journals may become a pretext for arrest and questioning by the police if it does not conform to the Israeli narrative and does not accept the justification of killing and war.

In a separate incident, Dr. Warda Sada, a lecturer at the Kaye College in Be'er Sheva,

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69. Arab48. (March 13, 2024). Hebrew University suspends Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian due to her criticism of the war. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

70. Mada al-Carmel (March 2024). Mada Al-Carmel's letter to the Hebrew University: We condemn your demand that we collude with Zionism. [Mada al-Carmel](#).

71. Arab48. (April 18, 2024). Lecturer Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian arrested for alleged "incitement". [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

was dismissed from her position after 28 years because of social media posts that the college claims constitute support for Hamas and endorse the use of violence.<sup>72</sup>

## **Persecution of Arab students at Israeli universities**

From the start of the war on October 7, Arab students at Israeli universities have been subjected to unprecedented levels of systematic persecution. Israeli academic institutions have issued warnings to a large number of Arab students and suspended or expelled some of them from their studies for expressing opposition to the war and sympathy with the children of Gaza.<sup>73</sup> Approximately 160 students received summonses from educational institutions in the country due to social media posts, in which most of them demanded an end to the war on Gaza.<sup>74</sup> Since the outbreak of the war, approximately ten Arab students from universities and colleges around the country have been arrested following complaints filed against them by their fellow students. A number of students have been suspended from their studies without a decision by a disciplinary committee, as required by the universities' own by-laws.

The Joint Body of Student Blocs (an umbrella group of 26 Arab student movements from various Israeli universities and colleges that operates under the Arab Emergency Committee) reported in mid-November 2023 that over 100 Arab students had been referred to disciplinary committees at various Israeli academic institutions. It further detailed that there had been hundreds of inflammatory posts made against hundreds of Arab students by their peers, with the complicity and assistance of the universities, colleges, and their student unions.<sup>75</sup>

The incitement culminated in assaults waged against Arab students in the student dormitories at the Netanya Academic College in late October 2023, events that put their lives in danger and resulted in their evacuation from their residences. A group of Jewish citizens surrounded the dormitories and threatened the Arab students, without anyone at the college taking responsibility for their safety or security.<sup>76</sup> The extremists attacked the students, blockading them in the student dormitories while chanting "Death to Arabs", along with other racist slogans, and calling for Palestinian students to be kicked out of the dormitories. Explicit death threats were even made to a number of the Arab students. The students were held inside the dormitory buildings following the raid, and were unable to leave until the police intervened, evacuated them, and sent them back to their hometowns and villages on buses.<sup>77</sup>

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72. Glazer; Mashiach. *Supra* note 65.

73. Arab48. (October 15, 2023). Joint student body to track cases of persecution of Arab students in universities and institutes of higher education. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

74. Arab48. (November 15, 2023). Israeli universities summon 160 Arab students during the war on Gaza: Students were arrested in the weeks after. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

75. *Ibid.*

76. Arab48. (October 29, 2023). The Joint Body of Student Blocs internationalizes the issue of the persecution of Arab students in colleges and universities. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

77. Arab48. (October 28, 2023). Arab students attacked by extremist group, chants of "Death to Arabs" in Netanya. [Arab48](#). (Arabic)

## Economic punishment

The war on Gaza is taking a heavy economic toll and has had a clear detrimental impact on the Israeli economy. According to Israeli estimates, the direct costs of the war (in terms of armaments, ammunition, and mobilizing reserve forces), and its indirect costs (the evacuation of residents, the rehabilitation of the western Negev, damage to GDP, falling consumption, etc.), will amount to a total of approximately NIS 200 billion.<sup>78</sup>

The economic situation that has prevailed since day one of the war on Gaza has had a particularly adverse effect on Arab citizens of Israel.<sup>79</sup> According to several reports published since the outbreak of the war, the economic damage incurred by Arab society in Israel has been acute and direct, and has principally been manifested in a decline in labor force participation, a spike in unemployment, and a drop in income levels. The Arab Economic Forum, for example, published an extensive report on the impact of the war on labor force participation among Arab citizens.<sup>80</sup> The report found that the war was having a serious impact on Arab employment levels: "The data indicated that the war had a particular impact on employment within Arab society, and especially on Arab men, on account of the sharp decline in activity in the construction and infrastructure sectors, and because of a shortage of foreign and Palestinian workers [from the OPT], as well as falling demand in the commerce, hospitality, food and entertainment sectors."<sup>81</sup> The figures reveal that the rate of absenteeism from work among Arab citizens during the first week after the war stood at approximately 30%, decreasing to around 20% after six weeks. A further relevant explanatory factor is growing tensions between Arabs and Jews, which have resulted in reduced economic relations between the two groups.<sup>82</sup> A report issued by the Bank of Israel cites an unemployment rate among the Arab population in Israel of 15.6% in October 2023, compared to the lower figure of 8.6% among the Jewish population.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, before the war, the Minister of Finance froze funding designated to Arab local authorities, thereby causing them considerable damage. The new state budget made matters worse still: in addition to proposing a 5% reduction in the budgets of all non-security ministries, the ministry also slashed the government's economic plan to bridge gaps in the Arab sector by 15%, which amounts to a budget cut of more than 5 billion NIS over three years.<sup>84</sup>

78. Sade, Yuval. (December 3, 2023). How do you deal with war costs of NIS 200 billion? [Calcalist](#). (Hebrew)

79. For more information about the economic impact of the war on Arab society in Israel, see: Mada al-Carmel. (January 2024). Position Paper: The Arab economy is paying a heavy economic price for the war on Gaza. [Mada al-Carmel](#). (Arabic)

80. Based on the results of a survey of workers from October 2023 that was published by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. See: Miaari, Sami; Barak, Arnon. (December 2023). Position Paper 4: The Impact of the War on Gaza on Patterns of Arab Labor Force Participation. [The Forum of Foundations in Israel](#). (Hebrew)

81. Ibid.

82. The Arab Economic Forum considers that the reduction in interaction between Arabs and Jews could have grave economic consequences in the long term.

83. Bank of Israel. (December 10, 2023). Report: A special analysis of the research division: the effect of the "Iron Swords" war on the attention to work in Arab society. [Bank of Israel](#). (Hebrew)

84. Arlosoroff, Meirav. (January 15, 2024). The five-year plan for Arab society is a success story. And it specifically is receiving the largest cut. [The Marker](#). (Hebrew)



The economic assault on Arab citizens of Israel did not begin on October 7, but it is becoming more severe, as the cuts hit Arab citizens twice: once by decreasing funding for general social services, and again by reducing funding specifically earmarked for the Arab community in Israel.

In sum, the economic damage that the Arab community in Israel stands to sustain is a result of a combination of the overall economic situation, the weak state of the local Arab economy and its dependence on the Israeli economy, racist policies and obstacles to the development of the local Arab economy, and the ease with which the government cuts funding budgeted for the Arab community.

## Conclusion

The chorus of incitement against the Arab community in Israel began from the first day of the genocidal war on Gaza. It includes a statement made by Netanyahu himself that Israel faces four fronts in the war: the south, the West Bank, the north, and the 'interior'. While he did not explicitly specify what the 'interior' front consists of, he made a clear allusion to Arabs in Israel. From day one of the war, then, the Israeli authorities have treated Arab citizens as a part of the 'enemy'. It therefore implemented policies of intimidation and silencing against the Palestinian community in Israel, in an attempt to stop them expressing any opposition to the war, the killing and destruction, or voicing support for civilians in Gaza.

In their treatment of Arab citizens during the war on Gaza, the security and political authorities and Israeli society in general have made more extensive use of tools that they employed during the May Uprising in 2021. The latter events marked a turning point in the way the security establishment deals with political protest by Arab citizens in Israel, which has come to involve severe police repression and brutality, and tactics such as mobilizing Jewish citizens and calling on groups of settlers to attack Arab citizens in the coastal (mixed cities). During the May Uprising, two Arab citizens were killed and dozens more injured. Police arrested dozens of Arab citizens and filed serious charges against them, and the Israeli courts delivered harsh sentences to many of the detainees. By contrast, only a very small number of Jewish citizens were prosecuted – for assaulting a taxi driver in the city of Bat Yam – and the sentences they received were lenient compared to those handed to Arab citizens.

This report has detailed the tools of racism and incitement used against Arab citizens during the war, and shown how the Israeli establishment deals with them during major security crises as enemies, or at least potential enemies. What is taking place can thus be described as an unofficial return to military rule. During the war, we have witnessed the near total suspension of the formal tools of democracy used in Israel, including freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate against the war. These developments

represent a dangerous escalation in the treatment of Palestinian citizens by the state, the security services, and Israeli society at large. The war on the Gaza Strip has exposed the fragile and empty nature of the citizenship granted to Palestinians in Israel, and its total subordination to security imperatives and the needs and terms of the Zionist consensus. It has further erased the political margin within which Palestinians in Israel used to exercise their most fundamental of rights, and seen an attempt to place new limits on their political expression and activity. Unless they are decisively challenged, and if those within the Zionist consensus are convinced that they are working to their advantage, the measures currently being employed by Israel against Palestinian citizens could become a permanent fixture of the post-war landscape.





**Mada al-Carmel**  
Arab Center for  
Applied Social Research