

Situation Assessment

Who Paid the Price?

**A Preliminary Analysis of the Socio-
Economic Background of those
Indicted in the May Uprising of 2021**

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January 2026



Mada al-Carmel
Arab Center for
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Background of those Indicted in the May Uprising of 2021**

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Summary

This report, written as a "situation assessment/ monitoring" paper, examines the socio-economic background of the cohort of individuals who were criminally indicted in connection with the events of May 2021, known as Habbat al-Karamah "The Dignity Uprising", which started in Sheikh Jarrah and Jerusalem before spreading to Palestinian towns inside the Green Line. While the political and national aspects of the uprising have received extensive attention, its socio-economic dimensions have remained largely overlooked in research, media coverage, and political analysis. This report builds upon a study on the uprising published by Mada al-Carmel approximately a year and a half ago,¹ by conducting a socio-economic survey and analysis of this group, which was pushed to the forefront of the confrontations and judicial prosecution: i.e., those who were accused and received criminal indictments.

The report draws on both primary and secondary sources, as well as analysis of a database containing more than 200 indictment files, gathered from publicly available sources, in addition to interviews conducted with lawyers and human rights organizations. The findings reveal that the vast majority of those indicted are members of vulnerable socio-economic groups, and that a large proportion of them are youth, under the age of 30, and reside in the Naqab and the so-called "mixed cities", where the confrontations were concentrated. The findings also indicate that the state resorted to a repressive, retaliatory approach by inflating the charges against them, and framing them as "nationalist" and "terrorist" offenses. Furthermore, the state activated exceptional mechanisms such as the Counter-Terrorism Law and aggravated proceedings, with the aim of penalizing this segment of the population and undermining future political or social activism on its part.

This report seeks to develop an initial overview that will encourage fellow researchers to deepen our understanding of the Dignity Uprising, by shedding light on the social background of those who actively participated in it. It also calls for further quantitative and qualitative studies into the indicted, in order to help overcome the limitations of the methodology employed herein, and allow for deeper analysis of the dynamics of Palestinian popular mobilization inside the Green Line and how it relates to Israel's colonial and neoliberal policies.

1. Anabtawi, Khaled. (2024). **Uprising Amidst Liminality: The Karamah Uprising of May 2021 and Popular Insurrectionary Action Among Palestinians Within the 'Green Line'– A Sociological Perspective**. Haifa: [Mada al-Carmel](#). [In Arabic]

Part One

Introduction | The Course of the Uprising

The events of the May 2021 uprising, which erupted in Sheikh Jarrah and Jerusalem during the month of Ramadan, continue to prompt scholarly research due to their pivotal and formative significance, both at the national level and in terms of the relationship between Palestinians in Israel and the Zionist establishment. This served as the point of departure for Mada al-Carmel around two years in drafting a study on the uprising, titled *Uprising Amidst Liminality*.² It should be noted that many of the criminal trials are still ongoing today. The Dignity Uprising was marked by the preponderance of individuals from marginalized groups among the accused—i.e., individuals against whom indictments were filed. Mada al-Carmel's earlier study concluded that the uprising reflected several transformations, evident in its geography, discourse, organizational patterns, the presence and influence of new settler groups—especially the ultra-religious Zionist movement Torah nuclei "Garin Torani"—and in the characteristics of the population that participated and paid the price through harsh sentences or the nature of the charges brought against them. These transformations were not coincidental but reflected the convergence of processes and trends within Israeli politics, shaped by colonial-settler and neoliberal dynamics. Over the past two decades, the dialectic of political control and economic containment has created a new reality in the state's relationship with Palestinians inside the Green Line.³

The Initial Flashpoint and Escalation of the Uprising

Events in Sheikh Jarrah, incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and restrictions imposed on Palestinian Jerusalemites—in particular the suppression of gatherings at the Damascus Gate during the first days of Ramadan, 2021—provided the initial spark for the Dignity Uprising inside the Green Line.⁴ April and May 2021 witnessed an intense period of protests and clashes with the Israeli authorities and police. The protests began with demonstrations against a settler-led plan to evict and forcibly displace Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, and continued with near-daily clashes at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the vicinity of the Old City of Jerusalem during the month of Ramadan. In the first week of May, the events became consistently confrontational, before escalating further from May 10, 2021 after the disruption of the Flag March⁵ and the onset of the military assault on Gaza, which triggered a wave of demonstrations in

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. P. 97.

5. An annual march organized by fascist and right-wing groups to commemorate the occupation of Jerusalem. For more information, see: Al Jazeera (2025, May 5). The Flag March: A 'dance' launched by a rabbi in 1968 and fueled by the Israeli right. [Al Jazeera](#). [In Arabic]

Palestinian towns inside the Green Line. In the city of Lydda, the killing of a young man named Mousa Hassouna, shot by an Israeli settler, marked a turning point that sparked a major uprising that spread across Palestinian towns within the Green Line.

The uprising continued for just over a week (May 10-2021 ,18), with thousands protesting in the majority of Palestinian towns and cities inside the Green Line. The "mixed cities" and the Naqab saw the most intense clashes, including violent confrontations that followed attacks by settlers –both groups affiliated with the Garin Torani and others from outside these towns– who attempted to storm Arab neighborhoods.⁶ **On May 18, the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab citizens in Israel declared a general strike under the banner of the "Dignity Strike". The strike garnered broad national support and participation, the most extensive seen in the past two decades.** Israeli security agencies recognized the uprising as unprecedented in both scale and type, and comparable to the events of October 2000.⁷

The Israeli authorities resorted to suppressing and criminalizing the uprising through various means. The killers of Mousa Hassouna (from Lydda) were not brought to trial, and a young man from Umm al-Fahem, Muhammad Kiwan, was later shot dead by police, again without any prosecutions.⁸ The response to the uprising was a large-scale campaign of arrests and intimidation, codenamed "Operation Law and Order", which affected over 2,000 detainees inside the Green Line and in Jerusalem, of whom more than 540 were subsequently put on trial.⁹ It involved the extensive use of administrative and preventative detention against Palestinians inside the Green Line, a measure rarely employed in such circumstances.¹⁰ Unprecedented repressive measures were applied in certain cities, in particular Lydda, where a state of civil emergency was declared for 48 hours and a curfew enforced.¹¹ Palestinian reports documented practices amounting to

6. Ziv, Oren. (2021, May 13). Armed settlers roamed around Lod for hours and the police did not intervene. [Sicha Mekomit](#). [In Hebrew]; Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. P. 98.

7. Ibid.; Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel. (2022). Special Oversight Report on Mixed Cities 2022: The Police and Law Enforcement Apparatus in the Mixed Cities During the Events of "Operation Protective Edge– Battle of the Sword of Jerusalem". [Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel](#). P. 17. [In Hebrew]; Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. P. 59; 60; 89; 92; Adalah. (2023). Two Years After the Uprising of Dignity: Israel's use of excessive force and racial segregation against Palestinians continues. [Adalah](#). P. 10. [In Arabic]

8. Ministry of National Security. (2021, June 3). Summary of the Israel Police's Operation "Law and Order". [Ministry of National Security](#). [In Hebrew]

9. Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. Pp. 102- 103.

10. Ibid., P. 103; Zaher, Sawsan. (2022, May). Administrative Detention as a Form of Collective Punishment against Arab Citizens within the Green Line. [Mada al-Carmel](#). [In Arabic]

11. Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. P. 103; Senyor, Eli. (2021, May 21). Preparing for riots in Lod: Curfew declared from 8:00 PM, more than 20 arrested. [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

torture in interrogation centers.¹² In addition, dozens of Palestinian workers from inside the Green Line were subjected to harassment, threats of dismissal, or were actually dismissed from their workplaces for joining or attempting to join the Dignity Strike.¹³ The Adalah legal center documented dozens of statements made by extremist right-wing groups in the period between May 11 and 17, 2021 containing explicit calls to attack Arab citizens.¹⁴ The efforts to subdue the uprising were not limited to violence by the police and intelligence agencies, but extended to attacks by extremist settler groups, in particular those affiliated with the Garin Torani movement, active in mixed cities, especially Lydda, since the implementation of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan from Gaza in 2005.¹⁵ Clashes with Garin Torani groups and settlers were therefore a central feature of the uprising and constituted a significant shift, as confrontations were no longer limited to police and security forces, as had been the case in previous events.¹⁶

In short, the Dignity Uprising, in which thousands of young Palestinians inside the Green Line took part despite the police repression, was a turning point in the relationship between Palestinians in Israel and the Israeli establishment. It revived questions relating to the identity of Palestinians within the Green Line and their connection with the broader Palestinian national project. While it built upon previous national uprisings and movements –such as the protests against the Praver Plan in 2013 and the Al-Aqsa Intifada of 2000– thus reflecting continuity and accumulated experience, it also displayed striking new features in its organizational patterns and intensity.¹⁷ One such feature relates to the demographic profile of participants in the uprising, particularly during its more confrontational moments. On the one hand, there was clear social, geographical, and religious diversity, including the involvement of segments of the middle class, some of whom faced dismissal or threats of dismissal from their workplaces after joining the strike. On the other hand, a close examination of the indictment sheets reveals that most of those pushed to the forefront of the confrontation –and who have borne the heaviest personal costs, particularly in the mixed cities and the Naqab– belonged to socially and economically vulnerable groups.

12. Adalah. Reference No. 7. Pp. 11- 14. See, e.g., Asi Hourani, from Acre, in a special interview with Arab48, in: Murih, Inas. (2023, August 14). Detainees of the Dignity Uprising: Harsh Detention Conditions to Extract False Confessions. [Arab48](#). [In Arabic]; Testimony of the Family of Mohammad Abu Rumi: Murih, Inas. (2021, August 16). They detained him in a cell and told him that his mother had died; Abu Rumi: Our children are victims of security and neglect. [Arab48](#). [In Arabic]

13. Arab48. (2021, May 25). Against the backdrop of political events: Dismissals from work and Arab workers subjected to widespread persecution. [Arab48](#). [In Arabic]; Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. P. 133.

14. See, e.g.: Adalah. (2021, May 19). Urgent letter to the Attorney General and the State Prosecutor. [Adalah](#). [In Hebrew]

15. Amara, Ahmad. (2025). **The Expansion of "Settler Communities" from the West Bank Hills to the Coastal Cities: The Case of "Biblical Nuclei"**. Ramallah: The Palestinian Forum for Israeli Studies (MA-DAR); Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. P. 112; Ziv, Oren. Reference No. 6.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

This Report

In light of the above, there is a clear need for further research into the social and material aspects of the Dignity Uprising, given their analytical potential for deepening understanding of both the events themselves and collective political and protest activity within Palestinian society inside the Green Line. This report aims to complement the existing body of research on the uprising by shifting the focus to those who were indicted in connection with it, offering a socio-economic overview of their backgrounds. It does so in the hope that it will pave the way for further empirical research, since most studies to date have examined the political dimensions of the uprising, at the expense of other aspects, including its social and material features, and have given less attention to the indicted themselves. All these dimensions (political, social, and economic) are undeniably interconnected and interwoven; hence, shedding light on the socio-economic aspects of the uprising does not mean analyzing it exclusively from this perspective, nor does it imply that it stemmed solely from civil issues and demands. Accordingly, the report adopts an intersectional perspective that understands these dimensions as interlinked and inseparable. It therefore examines the material dimension within the framework of colonial control, and views all these dimensions as part of the wider colonial-settler question.

A note on methodology

The report, written in the form of a situation assessment report, explores the socio-economic background of those who were indicted in the Dignity Uprising. It does not seek to provide a theoretical framework or make a broader theoretical-academic contribution; rather, it aims to identify some preliminary characteristics of the indicted, in order to lay a foundation for further academic research. The analysis draws on both primary and secondary sources. For primary sources, it relies on an analysis of quantitative data obtained from a database of the defendants' indictment files, compiled especially for purposes of this report. The database was built via a review of publicly accessible court decisions, and through direct communication and meetings with lawyers, Adalah, and activists. This allowed for the compilation of socio-demographic data from each case file, including geographic area, age group, type of charges and sentencing decisions, family and social status, and economic background. The report also uses preliminary data collected by the researchers in the course of writing an earlier and broader study published by Mada al-Carmel, titled *Uprising Amidst Liminality*. Secondary sources include studies and reports published on the same subject, including *Uprising Amidst Liminality*, and reports by Adalah, the Israeli State Comptroller, and the Office of the State Prosecutor.

The authors of this report encountered several methodological obstacles and challenges, most significantly the difficulty in accessing accurate information about the socio-economic circumstances of the indicted and their families. This difficulty stemmed from the sensitive nature of such data and the need to safeguard their privacy, in addition to

the large number of indicted individuals and the limited possibility for cooperation with the families amid ongoing legal proceedings, surveillance, and the various pressures and restrictions imposed on their family members. This situation presented significant challenges to building trust. It was not possible to obtain complete, comprehensive information in all of the 424 cases (or even the names of defendants associated with the case files). As a result, the level of completeness of the data varied from case to case and from category to category. In total, we were able to collect demographic, age-related and geographic information in approximately 250 of the 424 case files, while the most sensitive data (e.g. about economic status) was limited to only around 100 cases.

Despite these challenges, the report, based on the sample available, provides a useful initial indicator of the socio-economic backgrounds of those who were indicted in connection with the uprising. There remains a need to build on its findings through more in-depth, comprehensive academic studies that use larger sample sizes and employ qualitative, phenomenological, and interpretive approaches that incorporate the voices of the indicted and their families, and analyze their experiences and perceptions within the wider socio-political context. In the following section, we present the most significant characteristics of the individuals who were put on trial on charges related to their participation in the uprising.

Part Two

A Survey-Based Analysis of the Indicted in the Dignity Uprising

The analysis in this part of the report is based on information compiled from several sources, most importantly the database constructed by Mada al-Carmel for purposes of this report, as well as data and reports published by official bodies: the Israeli State Prosecutor's Office, Adalah, and the State Comptroller, based on official data from the Israeli police. The majority of the information relates to individuals against whom criminal indictments have been filed, and not to all those who were arrested during the uprising. This data is further disaggregated into five main, overlapping categories: (1) the nature and gravity of the charges; (2) the geographic distribution of the indicted and locations of the clashes; (3) age bracket and the role played by youth; (4) socio-economic background and the position of marginalized groups in the confrontations; (5) the alleged criminal records of the indicted. This breakdown intends to highlight the socio-economic and material characteristics of the uprising, and clarify what the preliminary data reveals as indicators of shifts within popular mobilization among Palestinians inside the Green Line.

1. Judicial Review | Severity of Charges and Retaliatory Sentencing

Between 2,142 and 3,200 Palestinians were arrested during and in connection with the Dignity Uprising, including demonstrators from inside the Green Line and Jerusalem.¹⁸ According to the State Comptroller's Report of 2022, 3,200 demonstrators were arrested, of whom 92.5% were Arab, and indictments were filed against 574 defendants.¹⁹ According to data published by the State Prosecutor's Office, as of May 2023, 397 indictments had been filed against 616 defendants, of whom 545, or 88.4%, were Arabs.²⁰ According to our own data analysis and documentation, 424 Arab defendants from inside the Green Line are being tried in connection with their participation in the Dignity Uprising (this figure applies to the available data as of mid-2025), accounting for 68.8% of all those indicted (Arabs and Jews).²¹

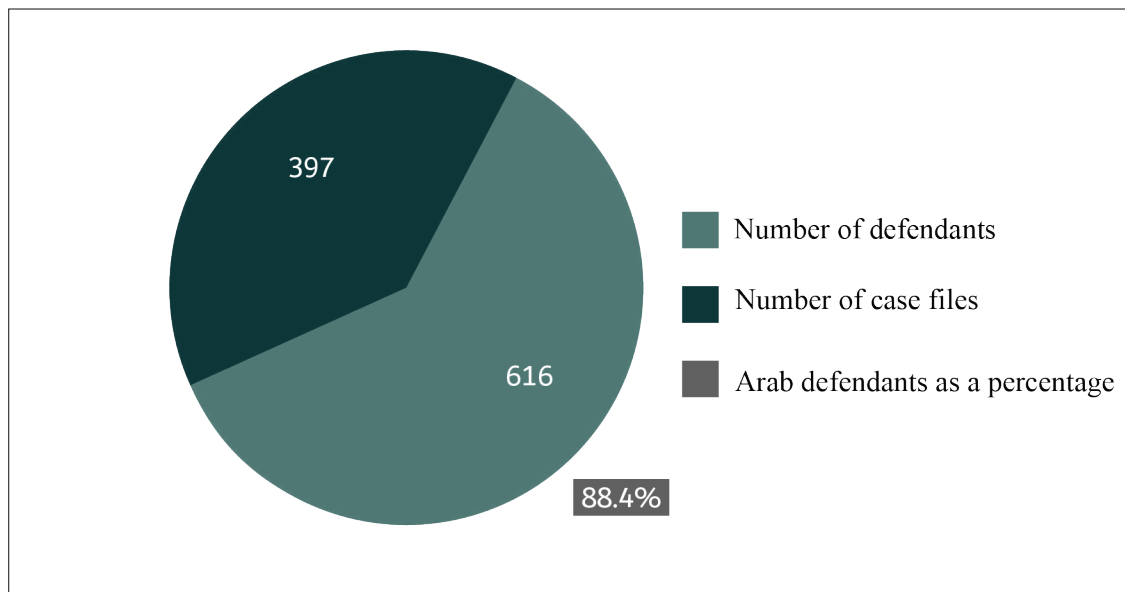
18. The discrepancy in the numbers comes from a discrepancy between two official sources: the State Comptroller's Report of July 2022, which refers to 3,200 detainees, and the official police report of June 2021, which cites a figure of 2,142 detainees.

19. Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel. Reference No. 7.

20. Ministry of National Security. Reference No. 8.

21. This figure was calculated after subtracting the number of files submitted against Arabs in the Jerusalem District, and using only the number of defendants tried in districts inside the 1948 territories (the Green Line). This assumes parity in the number of citizens from East Jerusalem being tried in district courts inside the Green Line, and the number of citizens from inside the Green Line being tried in the Jerusalem District.

Figure 1
Percentage of Arabs Among All Indicted individuals



During the criminal trials of the youth who took part in the uprising, the severity of the classification of the case files and the charges brought against the accused increased markedly. Most of the charges were categorized as having a "nationalist background" and/ or related to "terrorism", and/ or "racial" motives, which automatically allows for more severe penalties upon conviction. Moreover, most of the charge sheets begin with a standardized introduction that links the charges to the context of the 2021 war on Gaza. This introduction states, for instance, that:

The events associated with the following indictment took place on the night of May 12, 2021, during a military campaign between the State of Israel and the Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip, codenamed 'Operation Guardian of the Walls.' In the hours and days leading up to these events, civilians in the country came under fire from hundreds of rockets. At the same time, a wave of nationally and racially-motivated violence engulfed the entire country, including assaults on police officers and security personnel, as well as on Arab and Jewish citizens.²²

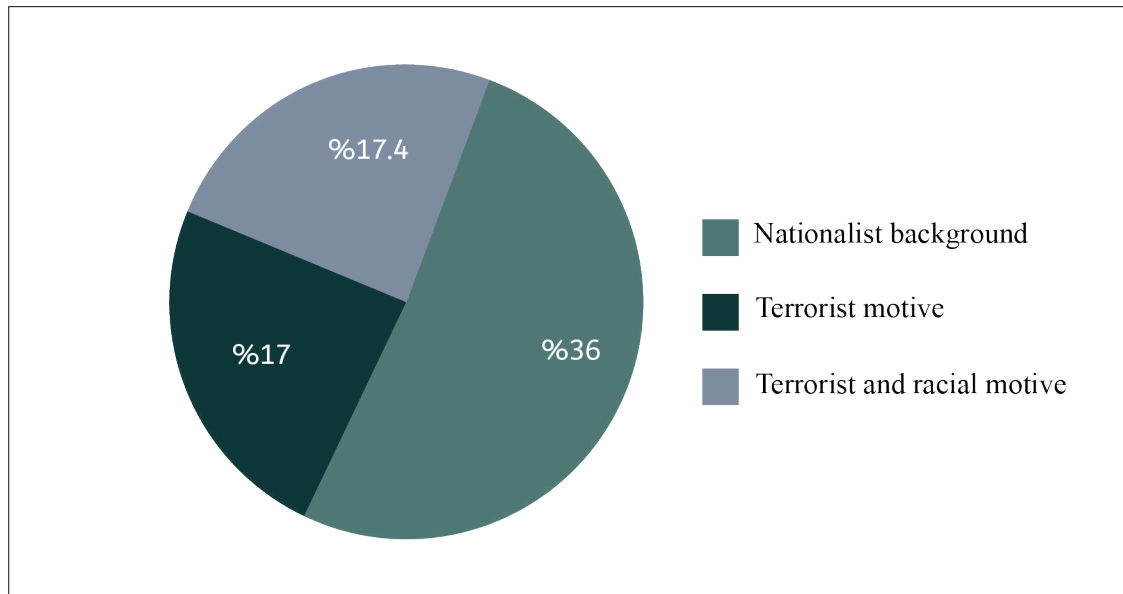
The purpose of this introduction was to categorize these cases as security-related rather than political in nature, thereby allowing them to be processed under Israel's Counter-Terrorism Law (2016).²³ This law was used in an extensive and unprecedented manner against Palestinians inside the Green Line, again allowing for enhanced penalties upon conviction. This policy was in line with an official campaign of incitement led by Israeli public officials who stressed the need to "deter" and "punish" those who took part in

22. C.C. (Criminal Case) 46690-05-21, cited in: Adalah. Reference No. 7. P. 25.

23. Nevo. (2025, November 27). The Counter Terrorism Law 2016. [Nevo](#). [In Hebrew]

the uprising.²⁴ The State Prosecutor's Office issued special procedural directives for the uprising cases that emphasized that the charges should be handled with severity.²⁵ According to the State Prosecutor's data, 36% of all the cases were classified as having a nationalist background, while a terrorist motive was ascribed to 17% of them, and a combined terrorist and racial motive to 17.4% (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Cases Categorized According to "Terrorist," "Racial," or "Nationalist" Motives



Our survey of the charges brought against arrested individuals (i.e., the case files of all the detainees, not only those against whom criminal indictments were actually filed) revealed a high level of severity: 47% were categorized as serious charges, and 16% as very serious charges (based on classifications in Israeli law and the length of potential prison sentences). The charges were distributed as follows: 32% for group assault (lynching); 26% for throwing incendiary devices; 11% for shootings; and 16% for throwing stones.²⁶

In developing this report, we were able to access detailed legal information about the charges listed in 106 indictments (those that were submitted to trial) of the 424 that we collected, including 68 from the Southern District (Naqab). The data (based on the 106 indictments) indicate that 83% of these cases contained charges of "participating in a riot", 50% included "stone-throwing", and 35% contained charges classified as "terrorism". 47.1% involved charges of "assault with a racial or nationalist background,"

24. Lis, Jonathan. (2021, May 12). Netanyahu: The riots in the mixed cities are reminiscent of scenes from our people's past. [Haaretz](#). [In Hebrew]

25. The State Prosecutor's Office (2022, May 19). Summary of the State Prosecutor's Office's work during the events of "Guardian of the Walls". [The State Prosecutor's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

26. The researchers' analysis is based on Adalah's report. Reference No. 7. P. 23.

25% charges of "obstructing the work of a police officer," 20% "arson", 19% "assaulting a police officer", 14.7% "weapons possession", and 14.7% "setting fire to tires".²⁷ This data clearly indicates an escalation in the severity of the charges brought, which were framed as exceptional punitive measures. In addition, roughly half of the cases included charges ascribed to a "racial background" and/ or "nationalist background", both of which indicate the gravity of the charges filed against the defendants in relation to the uprising.

2. Geographic Background | Mixed Cities as Key Arenas for the Events

Alongside the Naqab, the "mixed cities" –and in particular Lydda, Acre, and Haifa– were the sites of the most intense and widespread clashes. Our analysis here draws upon three indicators: the percentage of detainees; the percentage of persons indicted (according to the State Prosecutor's data); and the number of those indicted, sorted by priority, according to the findings of this report. Our analysis of the geographical distribution of the arrest campaign reveals the mixed cities as the site of approximately 44% of all individuals arrested in Arab towns that saw ten or more arrests (see Figure 3), even though the Palestinian residents of these cities account for no more than 12% of the total Palestinian population inside the Green Line.²⁸

Figure 3

Distribution of Arabs Detainees (in towns in which there were ten or more arrests) and their Percentage by District²⁹

District (based on the State Prosecutor's classification)	Percentage of Arab detainees in the district of all detainees (in towns in which there were ten or more arrests)
Upper Galilee and al-Shaghur (Beit HaKerem Valley)	8.9%
Lower Galilee	11.8%
Nazareth, Mount Sikh and Marj Ibn Amer	9.8%
The Triangle	10.7%
The "mixed cities" (including Haifa)	43.7%
The Naqab	14.7%
Total	100%

27. The total percentage is greater than 100% because a single criminal file may include more than one charge.

28. Khoury-Sabbagh, Areej. (2015). "Palestinians in Palestinian Cities in Israel: A Settler Colonial Reality." In: Rouhana, Nadim; and Khoury-Sabbagh, Areej (Eds.). **The Palestinians in Israel Readings in History, Politics and Society**. Haifa: [Mada al-Carmel](#). Pp. 247- 263. [in Arabic]

29. The researchers' analysis is based on Adalah's report. Reference No. 7. P. 23.

In a similar context, a survey analysis of data from the State Prosecutor's Office and charge sheets (involving 616 defendants) reveals that 51.5% of the indictments were filed in the Southern and Central Districts and in Tel Aviv, which include the Naqab, Lydda, Ramleh, and Yaffa. The State Prosecutor's data also indicates that 108 cases were investigated and subsequently categorized as "terrorist attacks" or "assaults with a racial-nationalist background" during the uprising, 35% of which took place in the "mixed cities".³⁰ This signifies that these cities were key arenas of the uprising not only in terms of the scale of the events, but also the intensity and nature of the clashes that took place within them.

Thus, the data confirms that the "mixed cities" –i.e., historical Palestinian cities– along with the Naqab, were at the forefront of the clashes during the uprising. The percentage of defendants from these areas far outstrips their proportion of the total Arab Palestinian population inside the Green Line. For example, according to data obtained while compiling this report, 90 defendants were brought to trial on charges related to the uprising in the cities of Lydda, Acre, and Yaffa alone (this number is based on the available data as of September 2021). These defendants account for between 22% and 25% of all Palestinian defendants, despite the fact that Palestinian citizens in these cities make up no more than 3.6% of the total Palestinian population within the Green Line.³¹ According to our survey of 424 defendants, 32% of the total were from the Naqab. Thus, the data reaffirms the prominent role of the Naqab and the mixed cities in the clashes (see Figure 4).

Figure 4
Arab Defendants by District of Trial

District	Number of Arab defendants	Percentage of all Arab defendants
Northern	68	16%
Haifa	122	28.7%
Tel Aviv	38	8.9%
Central	60	14%
Southern	136	32%
Total	424	100%

Source: The researchers, based on a survey of 424 case files and defendants.

30. The State Prosecutor's Office. Reference No. 25. Pp. 6- 10.

31. Data based on the researchers' analysis of the State Comptroller's report. Reference No. 7. The approximate figure of 22- 25% results from the difficulty in determining the percentage and number of Palestinian defendants who reside in East Jerusalem from among all defendants, since all the reports include them in their data and statistics. According to the data of the State Comptroller, 137 defendants were brought to court in Jerusalem (as of September 2021), but this number may include some Palestinians from the 1948 territories (inside the Green Line) who, according to the police, were arrested in the Jerusalem District.

3. Age Profile | Youth at the Center of the Uprising

The involvement of young people was among the distinctive features of the Dignity Uprising, as evidenced by the average age of indicted individuals. According to a survey of a sample of around 200 defendants (conducted for purposes of this report), the average age was found to be 22 years. An age-based geographic analysis shows that the average age in the Northern District was 24.5 years, in the Haifa District 21.5 years, in the Tel Aviv-Jaffa District 25.3 years, in the Central District 24.7 years, and in the Southern District 20.3 years (see Figure 5). The data further indicates that the overwhelming majority of defendants were under the age of 30: 98.5% in the Naqab; 90.9% in the Tel Aviv-Jaffa District; 81.8% in the Central District; 93.2% in the Haifa District; and 82.8% in the Northern District. Youth were particularly well represented in the Naqab: of all defendants, 41% were under the age of 20, 26.9% were between 21 and 24 years of age, and 8.9% were between 25 and 29, while just 2.5% were over 30; that is, 67.7% were under the age of 25. In the Tel Aviv-Jaffa District, 63.3% of defendants were under 25 years of age, in the Central District 40.9% were under 21 years of age; in the Haifa District this figure was 86%, and in the Northern District 55.1%.

Figure 5
Average Age of Defendants by District of Trial

District	Average age of defendants
Northern	24.5
Haifa	21.5
Tel Aviv-Jaffa	25.3
Central	24.7
Southern	20.3

Source: The researchers, based on a survey of 200 case files and defendants.

4. Socio-Economic Background | Socially and Economically Marginalized Groups at the Forefront of the Clashes

The participants in the Dignity Uprising of May 2021 were from diverse social backgrounds, whether they were active in the demonstrations that preceded the uprising, during its most intense days (May 11- 14), or in the events that followed, such as the "Dignity Strike" of May 18 and "National Economy Week" of June 6- 12. The detainees were similarly diverse. However, data obtained via a review of the defendants' case files (i.e. individuals who were formally indicted) indicate that those who paid the highest price—in terms of facing imprisonment and other criminal and security-related penalties—came from the poorest and most socio-economically marginalized segments of society,

and that the majority of them were not affiliated with any political party or organization.³²

In light of the difficulty in obtaining accurate information about the socio-economic status of the families –given privacy concerns and limited cooperation– this analysis relies on the data the researchers were able to compile (70 to 100 case files of a total of 424). This sample gives us a significant, albeit incomplete, indication of the socio-economic background of the defendants and their families. The analysis is based on the following three main criteria: size of household, receipt of social welfare services, and average monthly income. The survey of a sample of approximately 100 case files revealed that 69.5% of the defendants were unmarried and 30.5% married (see Figure 6). In addition, around 64% of the families of the defendants were recipients of one or more social welfare services. It was also observed that 31% of the defendants came from single-parent families (due to the death of a parent or parental separation).

The average household size was 5.3, according to a survey of 111 case files, larger than the average of 4.3 among the general Arab population inside the Green Line.³³ The indicators were more pronounced in the Naqab where, based on a survey of 25 case files from the district, the average household of the defendants was found to have approximately 7 members, reflecting more adverse socio-economic conditions (see Figure 6). With respect to income, the survey sample showed that the average net household income of defendants was roughly 5,800 NIS, which equates to around 50% of the average income of all Arab households inside the Green Line. It is especially noteworthy that in the Naqab, the defendants themselves were frequently found to be the primary earners for their families: a survey of 24 case files of defendants from the Naqab indicated that 62.5% were the primary earners in their households, compared with 33% of cases in which a parent was the primary earner, and 4% in which another family member was the primary earner.

Figure 6
Social/ Family Status of Defendants by District of Trial

District of trial	Married	Unmarried
Northern	2	11
Haifa	3	17
Central	9	7
Tel Aviv-Jaffa	4	7
Southern	10	22
Total	28	64

Source: The researchers, based on a survey sample of around 100 case files.

32. Anabtawi, Khaled. Reference No. 1. Pp. 126- 131.

33. Drukman, Yaron. (2024, February 7). Families with many children? This is the difference between the ultra-Orthodox and secular– and Arabs | CBS data. [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

5. Alleged Criminal Backgrounds of the Defendants

The Israeli establishment has attempted to turn public opinion against the defendants and socially delegitimize them, by publishing misleading statements and politically manipulated data about the alleged criminal backgrounds of the defendants. These included a claim that "approximately 73% of the detainees have a non-political criminal record" (i.e., 1,569 of 2,163 detainees),³⁴ without clarifying whether this percentage applies to all detainees or only Arab detainees. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that this figure conflates individuals who were detained in connection with their participation in the uprising with others who were detained as part of the arrests campaign but with no direct connection with the events of the uprising or the public protests. Our own survey of a sample of 133 out of 424 case files indicates that the percentage of defendants who had a previous criminal record³⁵ stood at just 24.8% (see Figure 7). While this sample is limited and therefore cannot fully represent all the defendants, the enormous gap between this figure and that cited by the Israeli authorities raises serious questions about the credibility of the state discourse, which one may conclude was used as part of a systematic campaign to socially and politically delegitimize the defendants and undermine their networks of solidarity.

Figure 7
Defendants' Case Files by Previous Criminal Record

District of trial	Yes	No	Percentage of defendants with a criminal record
Northern	1	14	6%
Haifa	12	37	24.4%
Central	7	7	50%
Tel Aviv-Jaffa	4	9	33%
Southern	9	34	20.9%
Total	33	101	24.8%

Source: The researchers, based on a detailed survey of a sample of 133 case files.

Thus, while those who took part in the uprising came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, the preliminary indicators show that the vast majority of the sampled individuals who were indicted in connection with direct clashes with police and security forces –particularly in the period between May 11 and 15, 2021 (the period covered by this report)– were from economically and socially deprived sections of society. This is not to say that only individuals from these groups joined the uprising: Israeli police arrested more than 2,000 activists from various social classes and backgrounds. Middle-class

34. Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel. Reference No. 7. P. 156.

35. According to the legal categorization, criminal records may include misdemeanors, not only felonies.

individuals and professionals also played a prominent role in major national events, such as the Dignity Strike of May 18, 2021, and National Economy Week in early June, albeit through less confrontational forms of engagement. Many of them –in particular those working in the culture, health and technology sectors and in Israel's major economic centers– faced threats and punitive action, including workplace dismissals in dozens of cases.

Conclusion

The Dignity Uprising of May 2021 was a pivotal moment that re-centered a fundamental political question: the relationship of Palestinians inside the Green Line both to the State of Israel and to the Palestinian national project. To revisit this moment, by examining it as a formative event, is essentially to inquire into the agency of Palestinian society within the Green Line, its limits and its potential. This report has approached the uprising from a perspective that has been largely relegated to the sidelines: the socio-economic backgrounds of those who were criminally indicted. The data we were able to obtain offers an important initial picture; the findings indicate that most of those indicted in connection with the Dignity Uprising are members of the most socially and economically marginalized groups, particularly in the Naqab and the "mixed cities" as the locations of the most intense confrontations. This, in our view, suggests the existence of a structural link between the escalation of colonial-settler policies in these areas – including the influx of Garin Torani-affiliated groups– and the intense nature of the clashes that peaked during the uprising.³⁶

The clashes with Garin Torani settler groups and others, together with the confrontational nature of the uprising, are without precedent in the history of collective mobilization and action among Palestinians inside the Green Line. 36% of the indictments were categorized as having an alleged "nationalist background", 17% as involving "terrorist motives", and a further 17.4% combined "terrorist and racial motives". These figures are indicative of the criminalization and politicization of the cases and an attempt to cast them in the framework of extraordinary punitive measures. In addition, data from the analyzed sample reveals that many of the indicted were very young –with an average age of just 22– with a high proportion under 30 years of age, especially in the Naqab. In relation to socio-economic background, while individuals from various social groups took part in the events of the uprising, this report found preliminary indications that the majority of the defendants (within the available sample) come from families in socially vulnerable circumstances. There was found to be a high incidence of single-parent households, a larger-than-average family size, and household incomes of no more than 50% of the average among Arab households inside the Green Line.

36. For more information, see: Amara, Ahmed. Reference No. 15.

All these indicators point to an urgent need for further research that can unpack the socio-economic aspects of collective action and protest activity among Palestinians inside the Green Line, and place them at the heart of the discussion on Palestinian popular movements. This report does not analyze the socio-economic dimension as a detached unit of analysis, or as separate from the political dimension; instead, it seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dialectical relationship between these dimensions as interwoven layers of analysis. This approach enables the observer, reader, and researcher of popular and collective action within the Green Line to grasp all of its far-reaching, interconnected political, social, and economic dimensions. Taken together, these dimensions provide us with a more expansive vantage point from which to view colonial-settler relations within the Green Line, including associated patterns of control, and the forms and modes of political action and engagement used to challenge them.

It appears that Israeli policy –both colonial and neoliberal– dialectically produces new forms of agency that arise at the margins and in the most deprived areas. This phenomenon was clearly evident in the Dignity Uprising, and further academic inquiry is needed to shed more light on it. In our view, this may be what drives the state and its authorities to continually modify and reassess certain techniques of control and enforcement. We think that this process began after the uprising, most notably with the targeting of grassroots organizations operating at the margins, and the expansion of persecution beyond the "political center" to what might be termed "political peripheries", whether in reference to movements that emerge at the margins or from the grassroots, including local youth movements, and community-based organizations. Based on these observations, and without aiming at theoretical generalizations, this report modestly concludes that there is a need to open a debate and encourage empirical research into the cohort of the indicted. Such research should incorporate quantitative and qualitative phenomenological methods and address the limitations of the present study, not least in terms of the limited access to information and data. It should also collect, frame, analyze, and follow the voices and perceptions of the indicted and their families.



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