



בצלם - מרכז המידע הישראלי לזכויות האדם בשטחים (ע.ר.)

بتسيلم - مركز المعلومات الإسرائيلي لحقوق الإنسان في الأراضي المحتلة

B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

2016 Annual Report

In June 2016, the occupation of the Palestinian territories (oPt) commenced its 50th year. Undeterred, B'Tselem continued its steadfast mission to unmask the occupation's guise of legality and temporariness, and to promote real accountability and respect for human rights in the oPt, advancing an end to the occupation and a future in which Israelis and Palestinians can fully realize their rights and live in freedom and dignity.

Table of Contents

Letter from Hagai El-Ad	3
2016 in Numbers	4
Context Analysis	6
Major Issues	7
<u>1.</u> B'Tselem at the United Nations Security Council	7
<u>2.</u> Exposing the Whitewash Mechanism	9
The Occupation's Fig Leaf	9
Whitewash Protocol	10
<u>3.</u> Israeli Security Force Violence	11
Extrajudicial Execution in Hebron	11
Fatality Watch	13
Violations Against Children	14
Harassment	16
<u>4.</u> Area C	17
Stop the Expulsion	17
Settlements	22
<u>5.</u> Gaza	23
Facts and Figures on Fatalities in Protective Edge	23
Life Under Israeli Blockade	24
<u>6.</u> East Jerusalem	26
<u>7.</u> Collective Punishment	28
Punitive Home Demolitions	28
Restrictions on Movement	29
<u>8.</u> Prisoners and Detainees	30
<u>9.</u> Attacks on Human Rights Organizations	31
Thank you	33

Letter from Hagai El-Ad

This time last year, we sent out a message to our supporters, saying B'Tselem won't stop. We did not know then what 2016 had in store: that only days later our Jerusalem office would [burn down](#) because of an electric fire, that by June the number of home demolitions in the West Bank would surpass the whole of 2015, and that in the United States, Donald Trump would win the Electoral College. Yet, and perhaps because of all that, it is clearer to me now more than ever that B'Tselem will not be stopped.

Late in December, the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 2334, reaffirming the strong international consensus against the occupation, the settlements, and their impact on the rights of Palestinians living under this reality for almost half a century. It was the first time in years that the Council addressed the issue.

Of course, no country in the world takes its cues from B'Tselem on such internationally volatile issues. But at the same time, as the leading ambassadors of straight-from-the-ground facts, all of us should be immensely proud of B'Tselem's role presenting the facts in front of global audiences, decision makers around the world, and every household in Israel.

This year alone, we have:

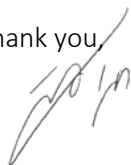
- Announced a principled decision to end our participation in the military law enforcement apparatus – as its real function is to cover-up unlawful acts;
- Stirred a heated national conversation about the emergence of a pseudo-normative shoot-to-kill policy within the Israeli security authorities through the release of a video that shows a Palestinian attacker lying injured on the road and then shot in the head;
- Ignited one of the most far-reaching discussions of the occupation and its repercussions in years, by presenting our work at a special session of the UN Security Council.

If we are to challenge injustice, we must face it without flinching. This has been at the very core of B'Tselem's work from day one. And throughout 2016 – building on this legacy, with your support – we have demonstrated that business cannot go on as usual. Indeed, this year we succeeded – again, and again, and yet again – in bringing the occupation to every major newspaper, news website and television network, in Israel as well as many key outlets around the world.

The times ahead are uncertain, and the challenges may very well be many. The future is, at best, deeply disconcerting. But B'Tselem will continue to act boldly to grow the vigorous debate generated by our work and to effectively challenge the occupation in its 50th year and beyond.

B'Tselem is the leading voice in Israel against the occupation. This year, we demonstrated the power of matching that voice with decisive action, no matter the backlash. But we cannot navigate the obstacles ahead without you. Please help make 2017 our strongest year yet by supporting B'Tselem. Together, we will ensure that B'Tselem will continue speaking truth to power – and to the public in Israel and around the world – until the occupation ends.

Thank you,



Hagai El-Ad,

Executive Director, B'Tselem

2016 in Numbers

B'Tselem collected and analyzed wide-ranging, **reliable and timely information** on human rights violations in the oPt, informing public and policy discourse.

- ✓ B'Tselem field researchers collected **177** field reports and **701** testimonies from victims and witnesses of human rights violations (182 from women), vetted and cataloged them in our digital, searchable database.
- ✓ B'Tselem data coordinators analyzed and cross checked information, publishing **85** short research updates on violations.
- ✓ B'Tselem data coordinators filed **14** Freedom of Information requests to the Israeli authorities (**10** responses of various kinds were received).
- ✓ B'Tselem data coordinators compiled **statistics** on [detainees and prisoners](#), [fatalities](#) and [house demolitions](#).
- ✓ B'Tselem researchers published **4** in-depth research reports: [The Occupation's Fig Leaf](#); [Reality check](#); [Whitewash Protocol](#); and [Expel and Exploit](#).

B'Tselem continued to harness **the power of video** for the struggle for human rights, with the support of nearly 200 Palestinian volunteers, documenting their daily lives under occupation.

- ✓ B'Tselem's video department conducted **11** group workshops and **37** one-on-one trainings for B'Tselem's video volunteers, with 63 women and 78 men participating.
- ✓ B'Tselem's video volunteers and field researchers sent in **180** camera memory cards from the West Bank, each containing documentation of 1-5 events.
- ✓ B'Tselem's video department published **41** videos of raw footage and short productions on B'Tselem's digital platforms.
- ✓ B'Tselem's videos were viewed nearly **3 million** times on Facebook in addition to over **1.8 million** views on B'Tselem's [YouTube channel](#), one of the most popular non-profit channels in Israel.

B'Tselem's materials garnered **massive media coverage**, as they continue to be respected both domestically and internationally as a primary source of information for media correspondents.

- ✓ B'Tselem's spokesperson issued **25** press releases in Hebrew, Arabic and English to over **2,000** journalists.
- ✓ B'Tselem's spokesperson provided ongoing assistance in preparing stories on human rights topics, including **more than 100** individual briefings and answers to queries from journalists.
- ✓ B'Tselem staff were interviewed on TV, radio and newspapers **dozens** of times.
- ✓ B'Tselem was referenced **thousands** of times in the Israeli, Palestinian and international media, including **hundreds** of references in mainstream publications such as *The New York Times*, the *Guardian*, the *BBC* and the *Washington Post*, all major Israeli and Palestinian news outlets, as well as agencies such as *Reuters*, the *Associated Press*, and other radio and TV stations.
- ✓ Over **20** op-eds by B'Tselem staff were published in local and foreign papers.

B'Tselem's **social media reach** is stronger than ever, reaching millions in Israel and internationally, initiating discourse on human rights issues, and serving as a highly effective form of grassroots outreach.

- ✓ Over **215,000** people are subscribed to B'Tselem's social media platforms, with 25K joining in 2016 (13% growth). This includes over 75K on the [Hebrew Facebook page](#), 98K on the [English Facebook page](#), 32K on [Twitter](#) and 8K on [YouTube](#).
- ✓ B'Tselem posted **143** updates on its Hebrew Facebook page and **208** updates on its English Facebook page, including videos, links and photos. On average, each post in B'Tselem's [Hebrew page](#) reached nearly **49K** people, and each post on the [English page](#) reached over **64K** people.
- ✓ The most widely-read post on the Hebrew Facebook page was on [the extrajudicial killing of A-Sharif in Hebron](#), which reached **620K** people in Israel. The most widely-read post on the English page was on [Settlers assaulting a Palestinian videographer in Hebron](#), reaching nearly **2.1 million** people.
- ✓ B'Tselem tweeted **848** times on its [Twitter page](#) gaining a cumulative **6.5 million** impressions. B'Tselem's Twitter grew by 30% when 7,657 people joined as followers in 2016, bringing the total over **32K**. The most popular tweet was on a [7-year-old Palestinian boy caught in Israeli army ambush](#), gaining **68K** impressions
- ✓ B'Tselem's website pages in Hebrew, Arabic and English, were viewed more than **1 million** times during **518K** sessions by **380K** visitors (**72%** of them new visitors). Some 42% of the visitors were from the Middle East (32% from Israel), 26% from Europe, and 20% from North America.
- ✓ B'Tselem's public outreach department issued digital newsletters (Hebrew and English) to a distribution list of over **25K** people, including decision makers, journalists, diplomats and international opinion shapers, with nearly **3K** new subscribers in 2016, and with the list's open rate averaging a steady **22.7%**.

B'Tselem leveraged its leading position to **advocate with a clear voice** with hundreds of influential internationals in Israel, the oPt and abroad for action against the occupation.

- ✓ B'Tselem staff advocated our position in over **250** meetings, briefings, roundtables, panels, receptions, presentations and events for the international community, counting diplomats, government officials, UN agencies, church groups and international organizations.
- ✓ B'Tselem held **2** large briefing events for the international community and journalists with 135 attendees.
- ✓ B'Tselem held **40** field visits to the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with diplomats, visiting government officials and international groups.
- ✓ B'Tselem staff went on **10** advocacy missions abroad targeting policymakers and holding dozens of meetings (**4** to Brussels, **4** to USA, **1** to Hague, **1** to Berlin), as well as speaking at conferences and public events (in Germany, France, South Africa and more).
- ✓ **B'Tselem conducted a survey** in January 2017 to evaluate the impact of B'Tselem's work with the diplomatic community. 52 diplomats responded, and rated the information that they receive from B'Tselem as high (average of **4.42 out of 5**) in regard to six criteria such as reliability, accuracy and ease of use.
- ✓ Over **61%** of respondents to the survey reported **high/very high usefulness of the information** for their work, and nearly **77%** reported high/very high usefulness of the information to decision makers in their country. **93%** rated B'Tselem's staff availability as high/very high.

Context Analysis



The occupation has been in place for 49 years. International law defines occupation as a temporary situation, but after nearly fifty years, the reality in the West Bank and Gaza can no longer be considered temporary. It is unreasonable to keep hoping that Israel will end this situation of its own volition. A third and even fourth generation of Palestinians and Israelis have known no other reality. In view of Israel's policies over the past half century, a change in policy is highly unlikely.

In the paper "[Reality check: Almost fifty years of occupation](#)", published on June 5th, B'Tselem presents a portrait of the current situation in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. In 1967, when the occupation first began, whoever lived on those lands shared the same status. Over the years, Israel has partitioned Palestinian land into separate areas, detached from one another: the Gaza Strip, which has been subject to the stranglehold of a nearly decade-long blockade is on the very cusp of a humanitarian disaster; the West Bank has been split up into dozens of segments, some of which have been transferred - in name only - to the Palestinian Authority; and thousands of hectares have been annexed to Israel and declared a part of Jerusalem. Yet, none of this can change the fact that Israel continues to control millions of Palestinians and dictate the course of their lives, while they have no real power to influence their fate.

The facts outlined in this paper are well-known, as is their significance. Equally well-known is the significance of standing idly by: a perpetuation of the current situation. As we near the 50-year mark of the occupation, determined action is needed to clearly demonstrate the termination of local and international cooperation with the occupation.

Major Issues

1. B'Tselem at the United Nations Security Council



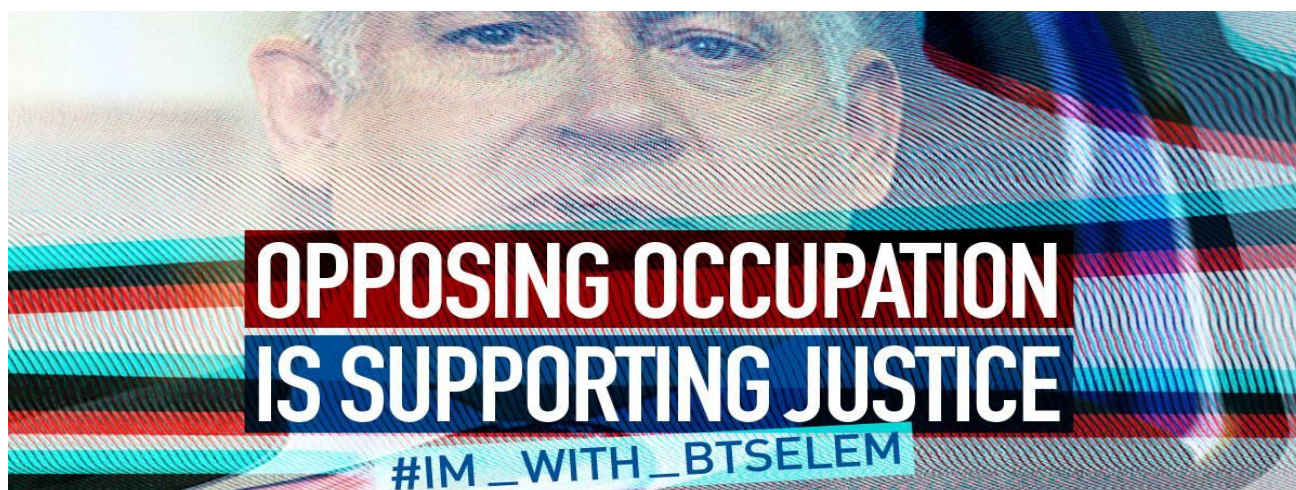
In October, [we brought our work to the United Nations Security Council](#) in a special discussion about settlements, where we articulated how all Israeli state agencies – the legal system (including the High Court of Justice), the planning authorities, the military and the government – are acting in concert to perpetuate control and advance Israeli interests at the expense of Palestinian rights, while minimizing international consequences. B'Tselem's message to the world was clear: without international action, the occupation will not come to an end. Two B'Tselem videos were screened during B'Tselem's presentation: [Razed to the Ground](#) (on demolitions in Area C and on the [military renewing the segregation on the main street in Hebron](#)).

To expose this reality is not easy – nor is it simple to weather the consequences of speaking out. From the Prime Minister on down, intimidating human rights advocates has become the new norm. B'Tselem is strong and resilient. Nonetheless, it is a difficult political environment to contend with. Prime Minister Netanyahu set the tone by [inciting against B'Tselem](#) on Facebook and [threatening legislation to deny us national service volunteers](#) – an act of political vengeance. A litany of Israeli politicians followed suit. Coalition Chair MK David Bitan said our director “[should find himself another citizenship](#).” These were not the only threats made against Hagai or B'Tselem. There were others and surely there are more to come. As Israeli politicians attack us, we continue reminding them and the world that the occupation – not B'Tselem – is the real problem.

The international community did not stay silent in response to these threats. There was [a direct statement by the US State Department](#) in support of B'Tselem, as well as [a response from the US representative to the UN](#) who said: “*We thank these NGOs – B'Tselem and Americans for Peace Now – for sharing their technical expertise ... as we recognize other NGOs around the world who shed light on difficult issues ... it is vital that all governments protect and create an atmosphere that all voices can be heard*”. There was also a show of [support from the EU](#) and from the [UN's special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories](#) who said he will examine the treatment of human rights defenders in the region in light of “the severe reaction by the Israeli government” to the appearance of B'Tselem before the UN Security Council.

B'Tselem sent out a [press release](#) on the address, which gained **massive media attention** in Palestinian, International and Israeli media. B'Tselem leveraged the Israeli media's attention to engage the Israeli public on the issue of the occupation. B'Tselem [translated the speech to Hebrew](#), published several op-eds and held **multiple media interviews** on Israeli mainstream news programs to explain the motivations behind the speech. Just within Israel: David Zonsheine (Chair of B'Tselem's board of directors) wrote [an op-ed in "Local Talk"](#) and also [interviewed](#) in the major radio show on "Reshet Bet" hosted by Razi Barkai, as well as Galatz radio; Orly Noy, member of B'Tselem's board, interviewed on TV in both New Evening (Israel Channel 1 major news show) as well as [Israel Channel 2's 6pm news show](#) with Oded Ben Ami; Amit Gilutz, B'Tselem Spokesperson, interviewed on TV for the holiday news programs of Israel Channel 1 and 10, [interviewed on 103 radio](#) and wrote an op-ed for the [JPOST](#); Hagai El-Ad, B'Tselem Executive Director, wrote [a widely circulated op-ed](#) in Haaretz, [and in Mako](#) and held multiple interviews on [TV Channel 2](#), [Galatz Radio](#) and [Reshet Bet](#). He also published the op-ed "[While Bibi was busy slamming me on Facebook](#)" on the Times of Israeli Blog.

The issue was covered by all the major news agencies in Israel, including [Ynet](#), [Nana10](#) and [NRG](#). There were also multiple articles published in support of B'Tselem in Haaretz, to name a few: Professor Ze'ev Shternhal, Haaretz: "[B'Tselem is the real patriot](#)"; Vered Li, Haaretz: "[Yes, outside pressure works](#)"; Haaretz editorial: "[We are all B'Tselem head Hagai El-Ad](#)"; Haaretz editorial: "[It was B'Tselem's duty to go to the UN](#)".



B'Tselem gained many **Israeli supporters following the speech**. [More than 3,700 people signed B'Tselem's petition](#) #Im_with_BTselem, and more than 80% of them were Israelis. The Hebrew Facebook page gained a further 1,500 followers and the English page gained more than 1,400. 541 additional people joined B'Tselem's Twitter. The Hebrew Facebook Hashtag [אני עם בצלם](#) was posted in 179 posts that were seen over 600K times. On Twitter the petition reached 65K views and 168 shares, and received support from important public figures, such as Barak Ravid. There was a huge surge in the number **of small donations to B'Tselem** from Israelis in October. The number of Israeli donors in October alone equaled more than the number in the whole period of January to September, and almost five times the amount in October 2015. The sums donated were small, but the support expressed by so many Israelis was particularly encouraging.

Following resolution 2334 condemning Israeli settlements adopted by the United Nations Security Council on December 24, B'Tselem sent out a clear message: [UNSC Vote: against the occupation, not Israel](#). B'Tselem director also published an [op-ed in New-Zealand's leading daily newspaper](#), thanking them for the role they took in pushing the resolution forward. He also published an op-ed in Haaretz titled [The UN Security Council Vote Is pro-Israel](#), in both English and Hebrew.

2. Exposing the Whitewash Mechanism

The Occupation's Fig Leaf



In May, B'Tselem announced a dramatic decision for the organization: we would no longer file complaints with Israel's military law enforcement system. **After a generation's work**, we concluded that a new strategy was needed to deal with the reality of systemic lack of accountability. By exposing Israel's law enforcement system as a whitewash mechanism, we are acting to challenge a system working to ensure impunity rather than accountability. B'Tselem will continue reporting violations, but will no longer help a system which serves as a whitewash mechanism and that also, in advance, absolves senior military and government officials of responsibility for the policy they set out.

B'Tselem's **detailed report**, [The Occupation's Fig Leaf: Israel's Military Law Enforcement System as a Whitewash Mechanism](#), explains the reasons behind B'Tselem's decision. It was based on information compiled from hundreds of cases where B'Tselem has filed demands for investigation with the military, dozens of military investigations and numerous meetings with officials.

B'Tselem produced **three short films**, on the [Beating of Sharif Abu Hayah](#), the [Killing of Lubna al-Hanash](#) and the [Killing of Mustafa Tamimi](#), to accompany and follow the publication of *Fig leaf*. The films were disseminated within Israel and the international community through B'Tselem's newsletter, website, YouTube channel and social media, and were viewed thousands of times.

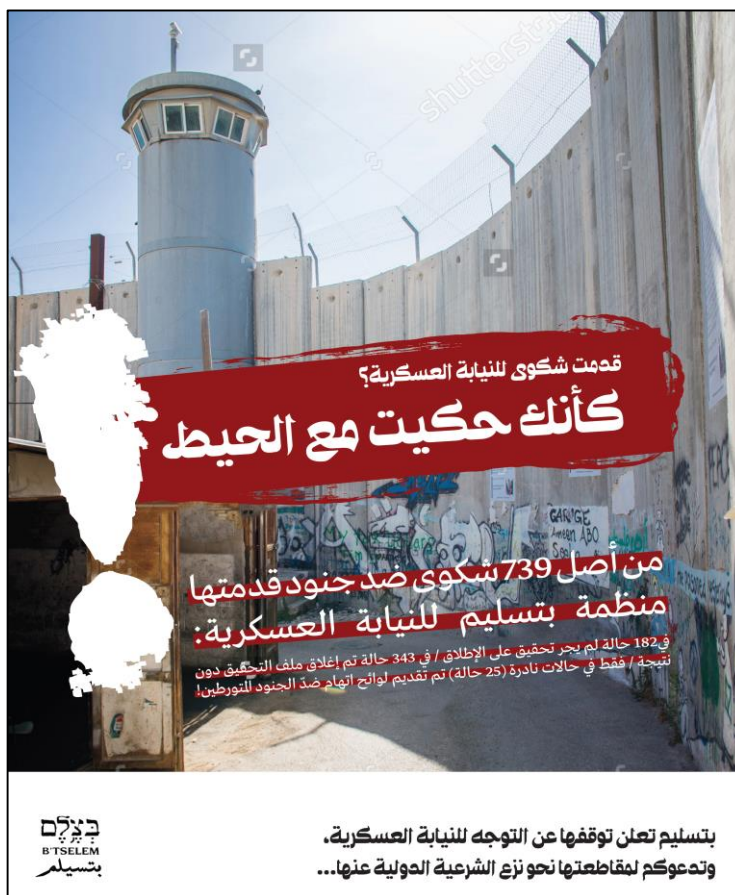
A **printed insert**, including an executive summary of the report and 4 case studies, was sent out with the weekend edition of Haaretz, reaching an estimated 300,000 Israelis directly.

The publication was accompanied by **a series of meetings and public events**, including: a briefing for diplomats stationed in Israel and the oPt, attended by dozens; a press conference; events for Israeli, Palestinian and international NGOs; and meetings with opinion shapers, political pundits, journalists and Israeli political parties.

B'Tselem's [press release](#) and **media work** on the report was immensely successful, receiving massive coverage and hundreds of references in print and online. B'Tselem's decision was discussed on multiple major TV and radio programs in Israel, the oPt and internationally, including many interviews with B'Tselem staff as well as an [op-ed by B'Tselem's chair David Zonsheine](#) and a paper published in [Open Society Foundations](#). In effect, the issue was covered by all the major Israeli and Palestinian newspapers, and dozens of international outlets, to name just a few: [Reuters](#); [The Forward](#); the [Telegraph](#); [Aljazeera](#); [NBC](#); the [New York Times](#); the [Washington Post](#); and [RT](#).

B'Tselem designed and published **media ads** in Palestinian newspapers (*al-Hayat al-Jadida* and *al-Quds*) - illustrating the reasons why B'Tselem decided to stop seeking accountability through the existing Israeli investigative mechanisms, and inviting Palestinian victims to join this move and stop filing complaints to the military system.

The report was also distributed through **social media** outreach to hundreds of thousands of people, and through a dedicated B'Tselem digital newsletter to over 22,400 Israeli, Palestinian and international duty-bearers, academics, UN agencies, NGO's, religious groups, thought-leaders and other interested citizens. The newsletter had an unusually high open rate of over 30% (1.5 times more than the average), and we received dozens of personal responses from recipients, many of which applauded this move and B'Tselem's courage.



Whitewash Protocol



As part of B'Tselem's strategic move to cease cooperation with the occupations' whitewash mechanism, B'Tselem published a report titled "[Whitewash Protocol: The So-Called Investigation of Operation Protective Edge](#)". Looking back over two years, the report describes Israel's charade of investigating alleged breaches of law during the fighting in Gaza in the summer of 2014. Official claims that these suspicions are being investigated, along with a MAG update on his work on the matter, constitute little more than a façade.

The decision makers who are responsible for the deadly consequences of the operation – government officials and senior military commanders, including the MAG, who devised the policy and gave the orders – were never investigated and made sure to absolve themselves of accountability from the outset. The only investigations that were opened focused on the responsibility of lower ranks for what the military considers isolated “exceptional cases”. At the time of publication, some of the investigations were still under way, dozens were closed, and only one indictment was filed – against three soldiers for stealing 2,420 shekels.

In his response to the [report](#), the IDF Spokesperson said that B’Tselem is waging a “de-legitimization campaign” against the military law enforcement system. Yet, this system cannot be considered legitimate until it ensures justice for victims and unless it seeks to uncover the truth and hold those responsible accountable.

B’Tselem sent out a press release announcing the publication: [Decision Makers Who Led to Unprecedented Killing in Gaza Were Not Even Questioned](#), and B’Tselem’s research director wrote and op-ed titled [How Israel Bombs Gaza with Impunity](#). MK Yair Lapid, the Chairman of the Yesh Atid Party, dedicated an op-ed in the Jerusalem Post in response to the publication, titled [B’Tselem Lies](#). In response to the misleading and inaccurate op-ed, Hagai El-Ad, replied in the Jerusalem Post with the facts as they are and the one question that remains: [How did this happen?](#) MK Lapid also dedicated [a Facebook post in Hebrew](#) to slandering B’Tselem’s report, to which we [replied](#) by saying that at least he got one thing right: B’Tselem argues that the responsibility for the Operation Edge lies with him and the rest of the members of government at the time. B’Tselem’s Facebook campaign on the report reached over **114K** people.

The report was cited by the media, notably by the **New York Times**: [Rights Groups Criticize Israeli Inquiry into 2014 Gaza War](#). B’Tselem’s analysis on Gaza were also cited in an earlier New York Times article that month: [Israel, Facing Criticism, to Investigate Possible Military Misconduct in Gaza](#).

B’Tselem held briefings on the report at the EU embassy in Tel Aviv (attended by Cyprus, Lithuania, Croatia, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Germany, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Belgium, Hungary, Spain, Netherlands and Ireland), and the US Embassy (7 staff members attended), as well as meetings in Washington DC and Brussels.

3. Israeli Security Force Violence

Extrajudicial Execution in Hebron

In March, the major incident where [a soldier executed a Palestinian lying injured on ground, ‘Abd al-Fatah a-Sharif, after the latter stabbed a soldier in Hebron](#), was documented by B’Tselem's video volunteer ‘Imad Abu Shamsiyeh. If it weren't for his professionalism, this case, like many others, would have gone unnoticed. Thanks to his documentation, B’Tselem was able to publicize the case widely and turn it into a one of the 2016’s biggest debates in Israel. It was covered extensively by the media both locally and internationally, and is still making waves in Israeli and international discourse on Israeli security force use of force. The footage received **over 1 million views** on B’Tselem’s YouTube alone.

Examples of **major international media coverage** of the shooting include: the [New York Times](#); [N-TV](#) and [ZDF](#) (Germany); [Al-Monitor](#) (“Why Israel needs B’Tselem”); [CNN](#); the [BBC](#) and [Radio 4](#) (including an interview with B’Tselem spokesperson); the [Independent](#) (interview with Abu Shamsiyeh); and the [Forward](#) (Meet the West Bank Cobbler Who Took Video of Israeli Soldier Shooting Palestinian in Head). The issue was also addressed by [UNOHCHR](#), including a [comment by their spokesperson](#) in Geneva.



Notably, there were multiple mainstream Israeli responses with surprisingly warm words for B'Tselem's important role in fostering public debate in Israeli society, on the occupation. For example:

- **Major General Ami Ayalon, Former ISA head**, in a radio interview: “These gatekeepers are the ones that still confront us with a kind of mirror of who we are – although we look very, very bad in the mirror. After all, B'Tselem or MachsomWatch or Breaking the Silence are the organizations that still enable us to maintain some kind of connection with reality (...) The only yardstick by which we can argue with them is if the information they give us is untrue. And I’m telling you that, to date, nothing that has been said by Breaking the Silence, or by the women of MachsomWatch, or by the photographers of B’Tselem has been proven to be untrue. So not only do I not have any argument with them, but I would say that if we lose them, then I’d say that we’d truly become like animals, or any other comparison or adjective that might suit us. At the moment that isn’t the situation – only because of them.”
- **Ronen Bergman, leading Israeli investigative journalist**, wrote in *Yedioth Ahronot* an article entitled "[Heroes – not enemies of the people](#)": “B’Tselem is waging a fight in an impossible reality to uncover the truth of what is happening in the [occupied] territories, against the majority of the public who considers it an organization that ought to be destroyed (Minister Yuval Steinitz said B’Tselem was “on the verge of treason” – a capital offense), and with right-wing extremists and their representatives in the government striving to harm the organization and its sources of funding. Whenever Israel did venture to open an investigation pursuant to [revelations uncovered by] B’Tselem’s inquiries, these repeatedly proved to be accurate and reliable. Undoubtedly, had B’Tselem not filmed the clip but merely documented the incident, a complaint by an eyewitness claiming that the terrorist had been executed after already being injured and captured would have ended in nothing. A laconic sentence would conclude the investigation, saying that no evidence had been found, or that the Arab witness was lying. Who knows how many complaints about other incidents would have ended differently had they also been captured on video.”

As the case developed, Hagai El-Ad published an op-ed titled "[A once-in-a-decade show trial](#)" arguing the military trial of Azaria is part of a ritual that takes place every 10 years, whose purpose is to create the illusion of a functioning military justice system in order to normalize routine violence inherent in the occupation.

Following the publication of the incident, **B'Tselem volunteer 'Imad Abu Shamsiyeh** received multiple death threats. Worried for his safety, [B'Tselem wrote the military and police commanders](#) asking them to fulfill their duty in protecting him (see article in [JPOST](#)). Later on, the [Hebron Police officers prevented him from lodging a complaint regarding death threats, themselves threatening him with arrest](#). In the same context, B'Tselem published strong video documentation of an incident where [settlers assaulted a Palestinian videographer in Hebron, wounding him in the head, while soldiers looked on](#). This was the most viewed video on our English Facebook page in 2016, reaching over 2 million people and viewed 404K times.

According to testimonies, prior to the execution of a-Sharif, [Ramzi al-Qasrawi was also shot dead after having been injured and not posing a danger](#). The two eyewitnesses, both B'Tselem volunteers, documented parts of the incident, but not the moment he was shot.

Extrajudicial street killings are the direct consequence of inflammatory remarks made by Israeli ministers and officials, augmented by the general public atmosphere of dehumanization. The law enforcement authorities are by and large turning a blind eye to repeated grave suspicions of extrajudicial killing by the security forces, and these are backed in the field by commanders. The message to the Israeli public is undeniable: attempting to injure a civilian or a soldier is a death sentence.

Fatality Watch

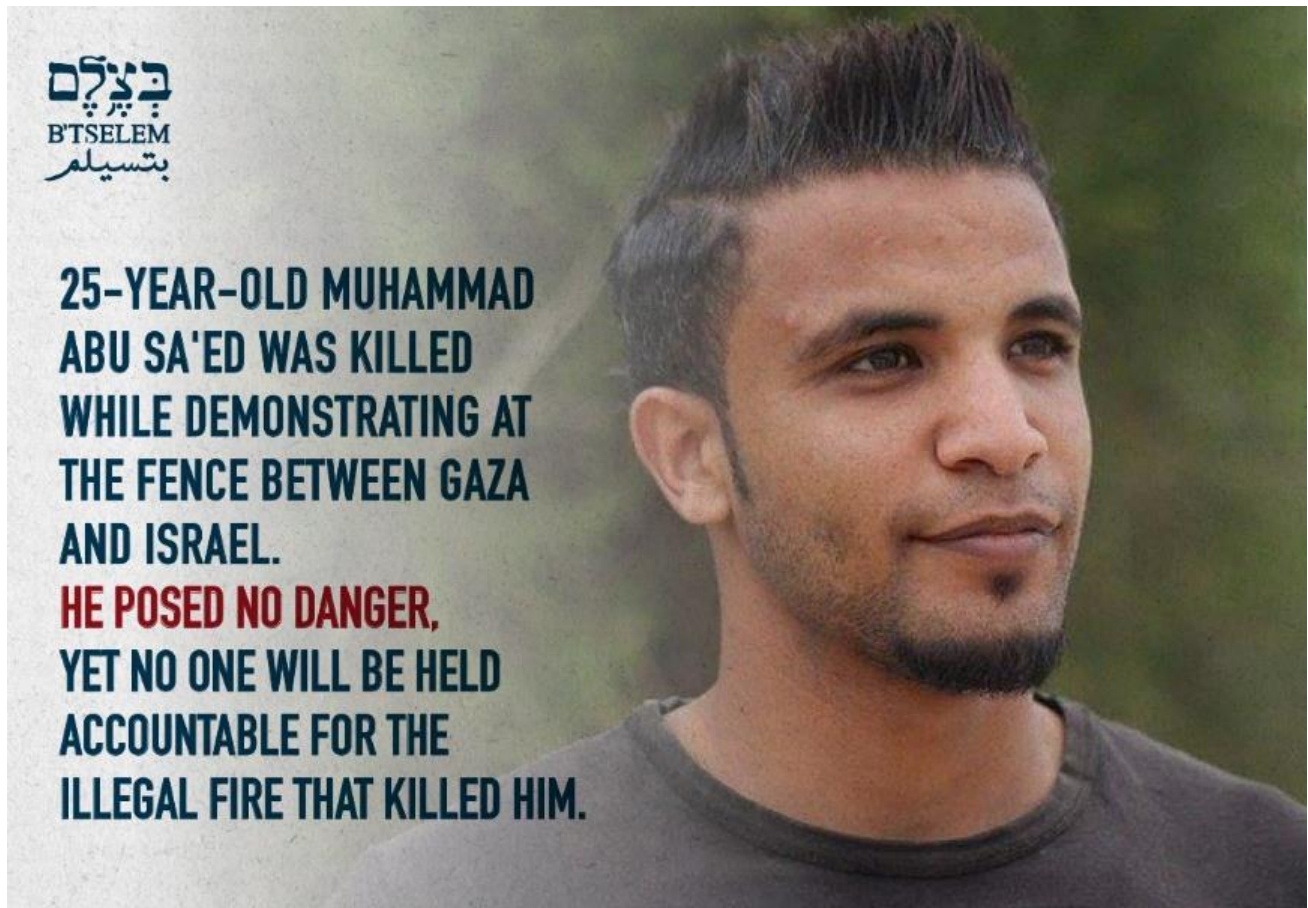
Since October 2015, Palestinians have perpetrated dozens of attacks on Israeli civilians and members of Israel's security forces. In 2016, B'Tselem published [seven updates on attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinians](#) which caused Israeli fatalities. Assaults have taken the form of stabbings, car-ramming and gunfire in which Palestinians killed 25 Israeli civilians, two foreign civilians and six members of Israel's security forces. Up to December 2016, **168 of the alleged assailants were shot dead by members of the security forces or civilians**, and a further four Palestinians were shot dead during these incidents, who were not involved in the hostilities. B'Tselem published and updated information on each and every case of [Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank](#), and the [overall statistics of fatalities](#) on its website.

In addition to the Hebron shooting, **Multiple additional fatality cases**, equally disturbing, were researched and published by B'Tselem during 2016, including use of press releases and a social media campaign, and therefore brought to the attention of the public.

B'Tselem published research on the [extrajudicial killing at Tomb of Patriarchs](#) (including video footage); a [suspicion that an Israeli Border Police fired without justification at car in a-Ram, killing the driver](#); a case where a [sniper killed a man in al-Fawwar RC](#); and another case where a [soldier killed a man in Silwad though he posed no danger to anyone](#). B'Tselem's documentation is vital for these cases and is used extensively by the media and for investigation that may be opened. For example, see Haaretz on [military investigations of fatalities](#), quoting B'Tselem's research.

B'Tselem also published an [analysis of the case of Mustafa Tamimi](#), who was killed in 2011. Contrary to facts and regulations, the MAG Corps found, in February 2016, that the soldier who killed Tamimi acted lawfully. This case, yet again, shows that attempting to attain justice through the military system is futile.

In Gaza, B'Tselem researched and published that [five Palestinians were killed when Israeli military fired at protesters near Gaza perimeter fence](#) (including footage of wounding and gunfire at paramedics and journalists); and that [once again: that Israeli military unlawfully shot and killed a Gazan protester, and no-one will be held to account](#). To this are added multiple cases of killing of minors, detailed below.



B'Tselem also published video documentation of the incident where a [military sniper shot a Palestinian man standing on his rooftop 4 times, injuring his hand and legs](#) - another case of illegal use of firearms, which luckily did not end in a fatality.

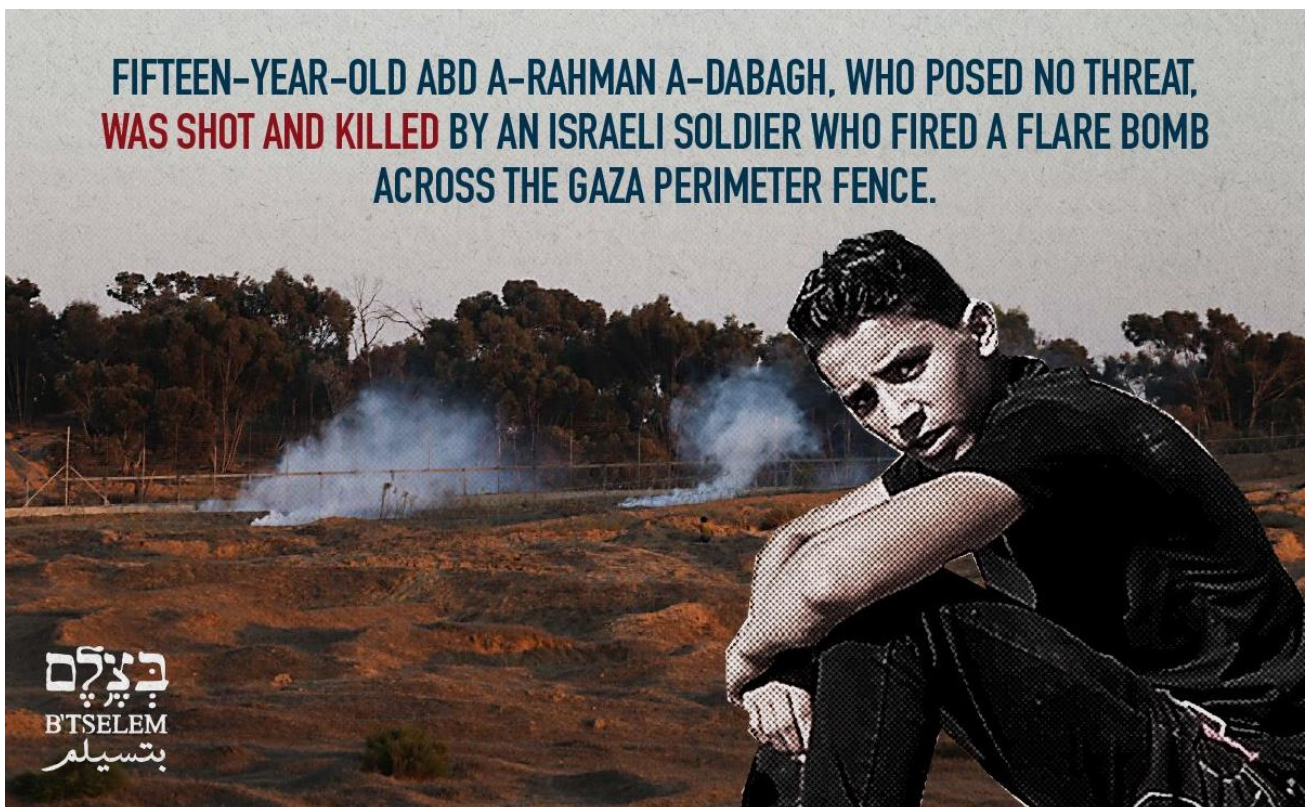
Violations Against Children

B'Tselem researched and documented multiple violations against children by Israeli security forces during 2016, including cases of killing, abuse and harassment.

[28 minors were killed](#) by Israeli security forces in the West Bank in 2016. In Addition to publication of all incident details, B'Tselem published detailed research into the [closing of the case against Col. Shomer](#) – who killed a Palestinian 17-year-old who threw a stone at his vehicle. He was shot in the back with no justification, while fleeing, and part of the incident was captured on a security camera (over 250K views on B'Tselem's YouTube and Facebook page). This research was well covered by the media, for example in the [Washington Post](#) and the Israeli TV show [Today's Talk](#) (interview with B'Tselem's spokesperson). [B'Tselem's English Facebook post on this case](#) reached 228K people (video viewed 47K times).

B'Tselem also researched the cases of the unwarranted killing of the [siblings at the Qalandiya checkpoint](#) (Ibrahim Taha, 16); the case of [Mahmoud Badran](#), 15, from Beit Ur a-Tahta - soldiers shot and killed him and wounded four of his friends (B'Tselem was cited in [The Israel Broadcasting Authority](#) and [Ha'aretz](#)). Hagai El-Ad wrote an op-ed on the case, titled [Under occupation, Palestinian teens are always killed by 'mistake'](#); and the case where [Israeli Border Police fire black sponge round at chest of 10-year-old boy in a-Ram, killing him](#). B'Tselem also published [the response of the security establishment to the killing of two Palestinians and the injuring of another in October 2016](#). The injured youth died of his wound (two of the victims were minors).

In Gaza, [three minors were killed](#) in 2016. B'Tselem published research into the two cases: [Israeli military bombs training camp; two children killed in their beds](#), and a [soldier killed a Palestinian teen who posed no threat by firing flare bomb at him across Israel-Gaza fence](#).



B'Tselem video volunteers documented multiple cases of **violations against children in Hebron**, in particular, in 2016. These cases garnered huge attention from the public and the media, especially the case where a [Border Police officer threw a child's bike into bushes for daring to play on street reserved for settlers](#). The film clip was screened at the *Other Israel Film Festival* in New York City. Chelsey Berlin, Director of B'Tselem USA, explained the context to the clip in a Panel Discussion on *The Power of Film*, together with Michael Moore, filmmaker & activist, and Israeli filmmakers. B'Tselem also sent out a press release on the case, which received huge coverage both locally and internationally, including in [The Times of Israel](#); [RT](#); [The Telegraph](#); [The Independent](#); [The Jerusalem Post](#); [NRG](#); [Israel Today](#); [Ynet](#); [Haaretz](#); [Nana](#); and more, leading to the suspension of the Israeli Border Police Officer. Notably, Israeli MK Ayman Odeh used the footage shot by B'Tselem in a speech and powerful video he shared on social networks: [One day children will play happily in streets of independent Palestine](#). On B'Tselem's YouTube, the footage got over **276K** views, in addition to **675K** people reached via Facebook and **60K** via Twitter.

B'Tselem volunteers also documented on video [soldiers gathering children, photographing them for future identification before releasing them](#). The FB reach of this case was huge, with over 410K people reached through

B'Tselem's Facebook pages, and some 67,000 video views. The case was also covered in [Haaretz](#). Later there was another case published where [Border police undertook a lineup of Palestinian children for benefit of settlers](#), which also received huge attention on social media.

Beating and abuse of children was also part of the 2016 routine. B'Tselem researched the case where [Israeli soldiers allegedly beat teenagers in al-Janiyah they suspected of throwing stones](#). The soldiers' alleged violence against the two teens is yet one more instance in a series of incidents documented by B'Tselem throughout the West Bank, in which Israeli security forces assaulted Palestinian youths, arguing that they had thrown stones or knew of others involved in such activity. B'Tselem also published footage of an [officer knocking 11-year-old to the ground in Zabubah](#) (59K people reached on Twitter and nearly 100K on Facebook), and of a [7-year-old caught in soldier stakeout at Kafr Qadum protest](#). B'Tselem sent out a [press release](#) on the latter incident, which [Al-Jazeera took up](#), reaching 1.5 million views and was also covered in [Middle East Monitor](#) and [Yahoo News](#) (and over 650K people reached on B'Tselem's Facebook). In Gaza, [Israeli soldiers severely abused six Gazan detainees, including three minors](#).

Harassment



Multiple cases of **security forces' harassment** were published by B'Tselem in 2016, many of them in Hebron, leading to attention in the press and social media. We reported on [stores in al-Birah, Area A, ruined after security forces cause fire and leave](#); on [Israeli military isolating Palestinian neighborhoods in downtown Hebron, making daily life an ordeal](#); on [Hebron settlers holding a mass Sabbath dinner while the Israeli military takes over nearby Palestinian homes to secure the celebration](#) (including video, covered in Ynet in both [Hebrew](#) and [English](#)); on [continued collective punishment in central Hebron: Closed neighborhoods and shops closed and repeated checkpoint inspections](#) (including three videos); on [violent nighttime search by Israeli military in the home of widow, raising suspicion of deliberate harassment](#); and on [life under occupation: 8 family members arrested in violent night raid of their home; 7 released, most of them after a week](#).

4. Area C

As before, Israel continued to treat Area C as though it were its own sovereign territory and meant to serve Israeli needs alone: expanding settlements; demolishing hundreds of homes and structures, restricting access to water and electricity, conducting military trainings, and aiming to expel the local Palestinian communities.

During 2016, B'Tselem researched and published [36 updates](#) on developments in Area C, which included 12 short videos from footage taken by our volunteers – including demolitions of donor funded structures. The updates focused on the wave of demolitions as well as issues such as closing down of [Palestinian quarries](#); [restrictions on access to water](#); [confiscations](#); and temporary displacements caused by [military training](#).

Stop the Expulsion



[In August 2015](#), the Israeli authorities launched an unprecedented demolition campaign in the West Bank, destroying around 100 structures, half of them residences, where more than 200 people lived, including roughly 100 minors. The wave of demolitions, seen at the time as exceptional in scope, was unofficially halted in late 2015 due to the Jewish and Muslim holidays. [It resumed in early 2016](#). As months went by, the seemingly exceptional scope of demolitions observed in 2015 took hold as the new norm and the new Israeli policy throughout Area C. In 2016, Israel demolished 274 homes in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), leaving 1,134 individuals, including 591 minors, homeless. **The destruction wreaked by Israel during this year surpasses the number of homes it demolished in the West Bank in 2014 and 2015 put together.**

This policy, upheld by all state authorities, severely violates the most fundamental human rights of Palestinians and offers decisive evidence as to Israel's long-term plans: continued control of the area, while oppressing and dispossessing its residents.

Thousands of people – residents of dozens of Palestinian communities located throughout Area C – are living in a coercive environment which is designed to push them out for good.

in 2016 and before, hundreds of Palestinians who live in the Jordan Valley have had to look on as the land on which they live and graze their flocks was used by Israeli troops for military training. [In June](#), B'Tselem published that 375 Palestinians, more than half of them minors, were temporarily **displaced due to military training** in the Jordan Valley. [Since the end of September 2016](#), the military conducted training throughout the Jordan Valley on 20 separate occasions, including 19 times that Palestinian residents were made to leave their homes, fields and livestock to make way for the training. In some cases, families with children have no proper place to go to and have no choice but to remain out in the open, exposed to the elements, where they must provide food, water and shelter for themselves. At times, when they return they find unexploded ammunition and damage to their farmlands and property.



B'Tselem collected up-to-date information, [data](#), [photos](#) and [videos](#) from the communities on the ground, empowering them to defend their own rights by contributing to the field-research, meeting with visiting groups and speaking in Israeli and international forums. The information from the ground was verified by B'Tselem's Area C expert data coordinator, and posted on B'Tselem's [Facing Expulsion Live Blog](#).

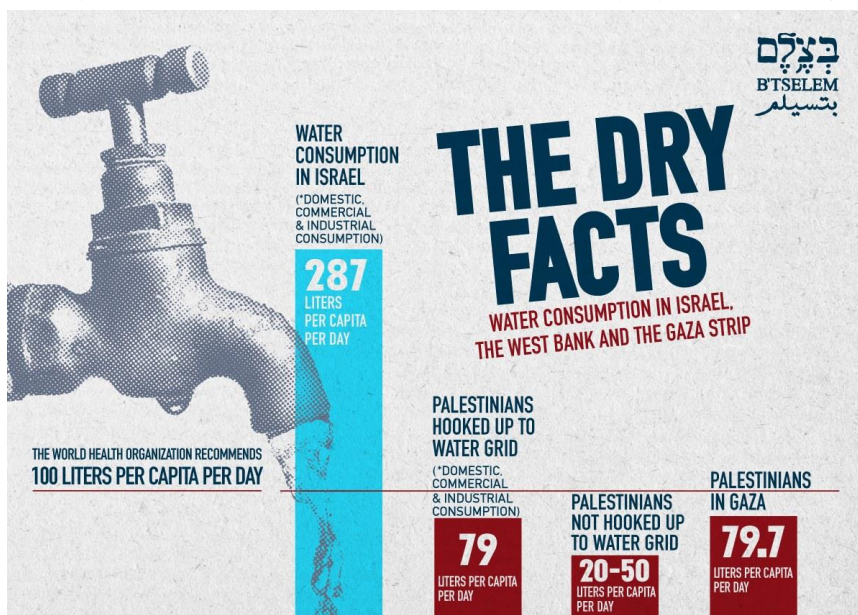
The live blog hosts an [interactive map](#) where you can click on a community cluster for further information. The map also shows the locations of land declared national parks and nature reserves or firing zones. The blog pages in Arabic, Hebrew and English were viewed **6,746** times in 2016.

B'Tselem maintained [a comprehensive demolition database](#) with information regarding every demolition in area C, and published the overall demolition data periodically. In Spring 2016, B'Tselem published a major consolidation of all the data we collected over several years, from 2006 onwards. This meticulous data informed B'Tselem's public outreach and advocacy efforts on the issue, which emphasized the scope of demolitions.

International Advocacy

As this man-made humanitarian crisis grows in scale, and is met with almost no international consequences, there is an urgent need for timely, strong calls for action. As one of the leading Israeli human rights organizations, with a clear voice criticizing Israeli policies, B'Tselem worked hard to bring the systematic violation of rights of vulnerable Palestinian communities to the attention of the international community.

In December, B'Tselem sent out a special diplomatic newsletter briefing to a list of hundreds of diplomats on the issue of military training as a tool for displacement in the Jordan Valley, stating that this repeated displacement of Palestinians causes intolerable disruption of their lives. [Official confirmation](#) that the removal of Palestinians from these areas is one of the main goals behind the military training in the area was provided in the hearing of the "Yogev" Knesset Subcommittee in 2014. As the occupying power in the West Bank, Israel is not permitted to use the area for routine military purposes such as general or combat training.



The **restrictions on access to water** were also of special concern during 2016. B'Tselem took multiple testimonies on the issue, and published a short [research update on access to water](#) accompanied by 3 short videos, and a social media campaign. B'Tselem held a special field visit for diplomats to the Jordan Valley in December, focusing on the issue of water, attended by 34 members of the diplomatic community travelling in a convoy of 13 jeeps.

In February, B'Tselem held a **large briefing event** in Jerusalem on the issue of Area C, attended by over 40 diplomats and UN staff, where we demonstrated the surge in recent demolitions, including of donor-funded humanitarian equipment, and the need for the international community to step up their actions.

B'Tselem's International Relations Team, Field Research Director, Research Director and Data Coordinators held dozens of meetings and conversations with diplomats and government officials from Europe, the US, and the global south, including several **targeted advocacy missions** in Brussels and European capitals, to share B'Tselem's concerns about Israeli policies of demolition and dispossession in Area C, in addition to participation in multiple roundtables, receptions and other events.

B'Tselem held **over 30 field visits for the international community** to Area C during 2016, including for diplomats stationed in Israel and the oPt, senior clergy, visiting government officials, rabbis, UN agencies and international advocacy organizations. These included three large field visits targeting diplomats, to the Jordan Valley and the "E1" area, the latter focusing on access to education. Dozens of diplomats from multiple embassies, consulates and representative offices attended these briefings, including many European governments, the EU states, the UK, the US, Japan and several governments from the global south. The diplomats were briefed by B'Tselem's staff on ground, and heard directly from members of the communities on their lives under threat of expulsion. They also received maps and a dedicated briefing sheet prepared for each one of the visits.



The Danish Representative Office [tweeted](#) after one of the visits: *We joined @btselem tour in area C yd. Focusing on settlements and beduins. As always factual and nuanced updates. Critical issue to follow.* B'Tselem also received many personal thank you notes from diplomats following the field visits, for example: *"I would like to thank you again for the most interesting visit yesterday. It was very well organized. It also presented a specific aspect of the situation in zone C which I believe add a great added-value for our group. Those visits are an excellent opportunity to get a more hands-on understanding of the situation on the ground. I am certainly interested to participate to future visits you may organize."*

Highlights

B'Tselem put a special focus during this period on recruiting **women in remote communities** in the Jordan Valley as B'Tselem video volunteers, where we formerly had only male volunteers. Six new women volunteers from the area joined the project. B'Tselem's video team visited the area frequently to work with the women on video diaries, filmed by the women, telling their stories. The publication of three diaries is planned for 2017.



B'Tselem worked with the media, publishing tri-lingual press releases, accompanying journalists to communities at risk of demolition, and connecting them with Palestinians impacted by the threats to their communities. This work resulted in **multiple articles quoting B'Tselem** or its data on Area C, as well as op-eds and interviews. A selection for example: [The Times of Israel](#); [972 Magazine](#); [Maan News Agency](#); [i24 News](#); [Al-Jazeera](#); [Al-Monitor](#); [The Jerusalem Post](#); [The Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#); [Haaretz](#); [The Guardian](#); [Ynet](#); [The Nation](#); [Sky News Australia](#); [World Post](#); and [Russia Today](#).

Hagai El-Ad, B'Tselem's executive director, wrote an outspoken op-ed '[Rubble and dust: How EU keeps failing Palestinians](#)', which was published in the EU observer in April. The article was also translated and published in the major Swedish paper [Aftonbladet](#) as well as the Belgian magazine [Knack](#). In the op-ed, El-Ad made an urgent plea to Europe to take action. He concluded that "The choice is clear: will Europe continue to provide Israel with the go-ahead for further violations of international humanitarian law and a policy of forced displacement? Too much rubble has already settled on the ground, too much dust already clouds the future. The time for words has long passed: it is time to, finally, take action."

B'Tselem published many dozens of posts on its **social networks**, sharing photos, videos and information on communities facing expulsion in Area C, reaching hundreds of thousands of people. B'Tselem also leveraged its online "Eyes Wide Open" [Photo blog](#) to share photos from a visit to Masafer Yatta, as the efforts to expel its residents escalated - one day before Israel's High Court of Justice held a hearing on a petition filed by the residents of [Masafer Yatta](#) against the Israeli Authorities' intention to expel them from their homes due to the establishment of "Firing Zone 918."

B'Tselem produced a short video titled [A few facts about the south Hebron Hills](#) – which was viewed over 68K times on B'Tselem's Facebook pages. It was published in reaction to an inflammatory TV report, which was based on materials supplied by a settler organization, as part of a smear campaign against Israeli human rights organizations, completely ignoring Israel's illegal policies in the area.



B'Tselem helped organized and guided a field visit for a famous **Danish pop star**, Shaka Loveless, to Badu al-Baba. [A video](#) produced on his visit stars a B'Tselem volunteer, incorporates footage shot by B'Tselem's volunteers, and features an interview with B'Tselem's spokesperson.

B'Tselem worked in cooperation with several members of the Israeli parliament to convene **a conference at the Israeli Knesset** on Area C in July. EU ambassador to Israel Lars Faaborg-Andersen opened the conference, followed by an UNOHCHR representative. B'Tselem Executive Director Hagai El-Ad delivered sharp remarks demanding action from Israel to address this untenable situation. Hagai's speech was [published in English](#). Several additional organizations working in Area C spoke, as well as representatives from Palestinian communities in Area C, on how Israeli policies affect their daily lives. The conference generated a strong headline in Haaretz: [EU Slams Israel's Destruction of Palestinian Homes in West Bank's Area C](#): "European Union ambassador to Israel Lars Faaborg-Andersen criticized Israel on Wednesday for destroying Palestinian homes in Area C of the West Bank. Faaborg-Andersen said at a conference at the Knesset that from 2009 to 2013 Israel had provided only 44 building permits to Palestinians in response to about 2,000 requests." As well as this headline in the JPost: [UN: Israel policies forcing Palestinians to leave Area C of the West Bank](#). The conference was an important opportunity for B'Tselem and colleagues to speak about these issues at the Knesset.

Settlements



B'Tselem issued a new report – [Expel and Exploit: The Israeli Practice of Taking over Rural Palestinian Land](#). The report surveys the fragmentation of Palestinian rural space in the West Bank through a case study of the process that three villages in the Nablus District – 'Azmut, Deir al-Hatab and Salem – have undergone since 1980, when Israel established the Elon Moreh settlement nearby.

Separating the residents of these Palestinian villages from their farmland, pastureland, and natural water resources – while the nearby settlements expand their built-up areas and the land they use for farming and pasture – has undermined the villagers' way of life. The collapse of their self-sustaining economy has reduced many villagers to a life of poverty, food insecurity and social instability. Denied access to the natural resources that used to be the mainstay of their livelihoods - and cut off from urban centers, roads, and communities that share their customs and social structure - a local way of life and unique cultural identity has been devastated.

B'Tselem dedicated a [photo blog](#) to the report, taken by Faiz Abu Rmeleh, from Activestills. The photos were also incorporated into our social media campaign on the report, which reached over **261K** people on Facebook

alone. B'Tselem also sent out a [press release](#) and disseminated the report through the digital newsletter. B'Tselem held a dedicated field visit to the areas covered by the report, for journalists. The report was covered in [the New York Review of Books](#); by David Shulman, in an article titled *Palestine: The End of the Bedouins?* It was also cited in [Lemonde](#); [Haaretz](#) – Gideon Levy; [Haaretz](#) – op-ed; and [the Washington Post](#); [The Social TV](#); [Maan News](#); [Middle East Monitor](#) (“B'Tselem: ‘Dispossession of Palestinians most consistent trend in Israeli policy’”); and [Asia News](#).

In addition, a small case of settler violence B'Tselem documented - photos of the word 'revenge' written in stones by settlers near Sussiya – was published in seven Israeli news sites, including [Haaretz Hebrew](#); [Haaretz English](#); [Mako](#); [Walla](#); [Nana10](#); [Megaphone](#); [Mekomit](#); and [Kol Hazman](#).

An important development regarding settlements during 2016, following the Amona case, was the approval by the Knesset’s Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of **the Regulation Law**. B'Tselem responded by publishing an op-ed by Hagai El-Ad in both [Hebrew](#) and [English](#), arguing it constitutes a fighting match between thieves: “The spirit of dispossession by the state has thrived and flourished for half a century ... Quibbling over the fine print with the settlers of Amona — and of other settlements — “just” because they did not distinguish public Arab land from private Arab land? Seriously: for as far as the state is concerned, they are one and the same: Arabs are Arabs and their land is ours to hold.”

5. [Gaza](#)

Facts and Figures on Fatalities in Protective Edge



After two years of intense research and documentation, B'Tselem published **comprehensive data on fatalities in Operation "Protective Edge"**, marking two years since the operation. 1391, or 63%, of the 2,202 Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces in the operation did not take part in the hostilities. Of these, 526 – a quarter of all Palestinians killed in the operation – were children under eighteen years of age. Additionally, 17 children were killed while participating in the hostilities, and for an additional 3, B'Tselem was unable to ascertain whether they had taken part in the hostilities. Of the 72 Israelis killed in the operation, six

were civilians (including one Thai national), including a four-year-old child, and 62 were soldiers killed by Palestinians. Three soldiers were killed by accident by other Israeli soldiers, and one in an operational accident. B'Tselem's data is based on a **meticulous, exhaustive investigation** carried out by the organization's field researchers in Gaza, then verified and analyzed by the data coordinators in Jerusalem. The information is available in an [interactive format](#) that enables searches by age, gender, location, and other criteria.



The high number of civilian fatalities – including women, children, and the elderly – casts doubt on Israel's claim that all the targets were legitimate and that the military adhered to the principle of proportionality during the attacks and took precautions to reduce harm to civilians. While the fighting was still in progress, B'Tselem already cautioned against the predictable lethal consequences of the military's open-fire policy, which included air strikes on homes that killed many civilians who were not taking part in the hostilities (see B'Tselem report [Black Flag](#)). Decision makers continued to apply this policy, in spite of these results.

B'Tselem's research was **covered in the media in Israel**, and internationally (such as this [Spanish newspaper](#)), and were [cited by "Every Casualty Worldwide"](#) (on the International Committee of the Red Cross website) as an example "of current casualty recording projects which publish casualty records in this detailed and disaggregated way include ... the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories ([B'Tselem](#)), which records, among other things, all individuals killed in the ongoing conflict in the [Occupied Territories](#). B'Tselem's Facebook posts on the figures reached over **208K** people.

Life Under Israeli Blockade

Beyond the destruction wrought by Protective Edge, Gazans continue to suffer from severe violations of human rights and IHL caused by the Israeli blockade, ongoing since shortly after Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, by Israel's control over extensive aspects of life in Gaza, and by continued fighting. During 2016, **B'Tselem published several research updates**, on issues such as [patients who cannot get proper treatment in Gaza or elsewhere](#); [Israel spraying Gazan farmland close to border fence, destroying crops and causing heavy losses](#); and on the fact [one quarter of Gazan requests for cancer treatment in Israel or the West Bank are denied or ignored](#) (cited in the [Middle East Monitor](#)).

B'Tselem produced and published **three video campaigns** during the report period, bringing the harsh daily reality in Gaza to the attention of Israeli and international publics, with a special focus on women. This strategy was chosen because of the invisibility of life in Gaza, which is seldom seen by outsiders:

[My Own Private Gaza - Reinventing Electricity](#): What do you do when there's no electricity or access to advanced technology? Enterprise, innovation and ingenuity try to fill the void. Khaled al-'Azayzeh, a B'Tselem field researcher in the Gaza Strip, brings us a portrait of Gaza as seen through his own eyes. A third installment in a series. (over 13K views on Hebrew and English FB).

[International Women's Day 2016](#): The demand for work in the Gaza Strip is enormous, with an unemployment rate of some 40%. The major reason is the siege Israel has imposed on Gaza. To mark International Women's Day, we spoke with three women – a carpenter, a blacksmith, and a vegetable market laborer – who are all trying to sustain families in this near-impossible economic reality. Gazan women face a particularly trying challenge, as they must deal not only with the dearth of work to match their skills, but also, like women around the world, with a society in which women are considered inferior and work harder for lower pay. (over 43K views on Hebrew and English FB).



[Int'l Workers' Day 2016: Desperate to make a living in Gaza](#): Nine years have passed since Israel began its blockade on Gaza, paralyzing the job market in an area inhabited by two million people. The right to work and make a decent living are both basic human rights. On 1 May 2016, we highlighted the stories of four professionals desperate for work in Gaza. (over 57K views on Hebrew and English FB).

In April, B'Tselem held **two public screening events** at the Solidarity Festival at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque, one of them on Gaza, with about 80% of the 300 seats in each theater taken. Connected (Disconnected) in Gaza told the story of humor and ingenuity filling the void and boredom: a direct view of life in Gaza through a collection of B'Tselem's footage, followed by a Skype conversation with Khaled al-'Azayzeh, B'Tselem field researcher and resident of Gaza, who answered questions from the audience with patience and sensitivity. The event allowed the Israeli audience to see Gazan reality, which is usually framed by the press, in a completely new way, conveying the simple fact that real people with real day-to-day problems are living in the strip.

B'Tselem's other event at the festival, Women Documenting the Occupation, began with the screening of the Women Next Door, a film by Michal Aviad (three filmmakers, two Israelis and one Palestinian, explore the role the occupation has created for women on both sides), followed by a screening of a selection of videos filmed by B'Tselem's women volunteer videographers in the West Bank from 2008 until recently, curated by Helen Yanovsky from B'Tselem's video team. The screening was followed by a lively panel with director Michal Aviad and volunteer videographers from the West Bank, hosted by B'Tselem spokesperson, Sarit Michaeli. Feedback from the audience indicated they were especially affected by the participation of the volunteers, a rare people-to-people encounter for Palestinians and Israelis. B'Tselem was able to attain permits to host 26 of the women video volunteers at the screening, and took the opportunity to let them enjoy a day in Tel Aviv. Three additional women volunteers were denied a permit by the Israeli authorities.

6. East Jerusalem

Since East Jerusalem was annexed in 1967, the government of Israel's primary goal in Jerusalem has been to create a demographic and geographic reality that will thwart any future attempt to challenge Israeli sovereignty over the city. To achieve this goal, the government has been taking actions to increase the number of Jews and reduce the number of Palestinians living in the city. During 2016, B'Tselem researched and published explicit examples of this policy, starting with [the planned expansion of Gilo](#) in January, which creates an annexable bloc that includes the Cremisan Valley and extends to Har Gilo. B'Tselem also updates comprehensive [statistics](#) on demolition of houses built without permits in East Jerusalem, on its website.

B'Tselem researched and published [the story of Bab al- Majles](#), a neighborhood in **the heart of the Old City** of Jerusalem. Once a rich cultural and social hub, a major route crossed by Muslim worshippers on their way to al-Aqsa Mosque, the neighborhood has choked under severe access restrictions, which severely harm residents' lives and livelihoods. B'Tselem accompanied the publication with a [Photo blog on the neighborhood](#).



Since 2010, Israel has severely [restricted access to the Palestinian village of Beit Iksa](#), which lies northwest of Jerusalem, in order to prevent Palestinians from entering Jerusalem. Instead of building the separation barrier along the Green Line in the area, Israel has chosen a restrictive route which results in severe effects on employment, education, basic services and communal ties. The choice to impose these draconian measures reflects absolute prioritization of Israeli interests over the protection of local residents' rights.

B'Tselem also published that [Israel demolished 13 homes in Qalandia al-Balad](#), close to the Separation Barrier. Since Qalandia and other neighborhoods were cut off by the Barrier, the Jerusalem Municipality has virtually halted the supply of municipal services and rarely enforces building laws. As a result, Palestinians from East Jerusalem have been attracted to the area. In a rare exception to its usual policy, the Jerusalem Municipality has decided to provide a service in the area: house demolitions.



Towards the end of 2016, [B'Tselem mapped](#) the expulsion processes underway in **Batan al-Hawa**, which is facing the most extensive dispossession in East Jerusalem in recent years. Israeli authorities have already transferred 9 of its roughly 50 parcels to the Ateret Cohanim association, and settlers have moved in to 5. Eviction claims are pending against 81 Palestinian families who have lived in the neighborhood for decades. Residents are also subjected to other types of pressure. Settler presence brings with it the police, the Border Police and private security guards; they regularly use violence against local residents, including live fire and crowd control measures, threats, and disrupting the fabric of life. [Settlers also block the road several times a day, with police backing, disrupting lives of local Palestinians](#). In addition, [Settlers' presence in Batan al-Hawa results in local minors being arrested and detained by security forces](#)

B'Tselem conducted five field visits to the neighborhood for diplomats, UN staffers and members of the international community, raising awareness and knowledge of the issue. B'Tselem also sent out a [press release](#) detailing the results of our mapping, and took an Israeli journalist on field visit, who then [published a TV news](#)



[item](#) about violence against minors in the neighborhood on Israel's Channel 10. B'Tselem's Jerusalem field researcher, Hussam Abed, [wrote an op-ed](#) which was published in Israeli news site Mako. Reliefweb also [reported](#) on B'Tselem's mapping on their website.

7. Collective Punishment

Punitive Home Demolitions

The extent of employing house demolition as a punitive action has [varied over the years](#). In February 2005 a military committee determined that the efficacy of the house demolition policy as a counter-terrorism tool was questionable, and that it “walked the line” of legality. The Minister of Defense adopted the committee’s recommendations, and the Israeli security establishment stopped using this measure, with few exceptions. In the summer of 2014, following the abduction of three yeshiva students at the Gush Etzion junction, and their subsequent killing, the security establishment [resumed punitive house demolitions](#). No explanation was given as to why the former recommendations were disregarded.

The people who bear the brunt of the demolitions are relatives – including women, the elderly, and children – whom Israel does not suspect of involvement in any offense. This Israeli government policy is consistently approved by the High Court of Justice.

Since the escalation of violence in October 2015, **Israel has intensified its use of house demolitions** as collective punishment for the families of Palestinians who perpetrated attacks against Israelis or are suspected of perpetrating or aiding such attacks. Since then, the authorities have demolished 23 apartments by official order, and rendered two nearby apartments uninhabitable, leaving at total of 118 people homeless, including 47 minors. In addition, the authorities fully or partially sealed five apartments, leaving 20 people homeless, including 7 minors.



B’Tselem published several updates on the issue during the year: [Israel demolished three homes in January in punitive actions, leaving 18 persons homeless; 29 demolitions carried out since Oct. 2015; Israel continues policy of collective punishment: Military punishes 15 people, incl. 9 minors, for their relatives’ actions, demolishing their homes; Israeli security forces demolish four families’ homes, punishing 28 people, including 6 minors, for actions of persons no longer alive; Massive collective punishment: homes of 149 Palestinians suspected of no wrongdoing demolished since Oct. 2015; hundreds more under threat.](#)

Restrictions on Movement

Israel's restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement in the West Bank are enforced by a system of fixed checkpoints, surprise flying checkpoints, hundreds of physical obstructions, roads on which Palestinians are forbidden to travel, and gates along the Separation Barrier. The restrictions enable Israel to control Palestinian movement throughout the West Bank as suits its interests, based on a racist argument that every Palestinian is a security threat, in a sweeping breach of Palestinians' rights, which makes it prohibited collective punishment.

[At the end of 2016](#), there were **98 fixed checkpoints in the West Bank**, including 59 internal checkpoints, located well within the West Bank. B'Tselem updated [the full list](#) of checkpoints and related data on its website.

In addition, temporary **travel restrictions imposed on entire areas** in 2016, following attacks perpetuated by Palestinians, constituted blatant collective punishment and belied Israel's claim that large parts of the West Bank have been transferred over to Palestinian control, and that it no longer administers them. Israel easily manages to disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, whether they live in Area A, B or C, while the Palestinian Authority has no power to intervene or influence these decisions and actions.

B'Tselem dedicated four in-depth updates to the issue in 2016, covering the following areas: **Dura:** [Entire town harassed for a month for being hometown of suspected assailant](#); **Al-Fawwar R.C.:** [Closure severely disrupted lives of its 10,000 residents, harmed livelihood and was particularly difficult for the elderly and patients](#) (including video); **Hebron District:** [Israel punishes hundreds of thousands of Palestinians for the actions of individuals](#); **Nablus Area:** [Israel imposes traffic restrictions, disrupting lives of over 54,000 Palestinians](#).

B'Tselem also assisted journalist Amira Haas in preparing [an article](#) on the blocking of the village of Dayr Nizam, which B'Tselem reported [on its Facebook page](#).



In July, B'Tselem documented the [inhuman conditions at checkpoint 300 and Qalandia checkpoint](#), publishing research and two short, shocking, videos.

Of some 100,000 Palestinians who work in Israel daily, 63,000 have permits and enter Israel via one of 11 checkpoints. Even in Ramadan, when workers fast all day, they are forced to leave for work in the dead of night, wait in long lines, and often sleep where they work and see their families only on weekends. This is not a necessary evil, but a deliberate choice by the Israeli authorities. Whatever the reasons, it is immoral and unacceptable.

8. Prisoners and Detainees

[At the end of August 2016](#), **5,988 Palestinian security detainees** and prisoners were held in Israeli prisons, 336 of them from the Gaza Strip. An additional 910 Palestinians were held in Israel Prison Service (IPS) facilities for being in Israel illegally, 10 of them from the Gaza Strip. A few dozen other Palestinians are held in IDF facilities for short periods of time. This data was provided by the military and by the IPS. Since May 2016, despite repeated requests, the IPS has not conveyed figures to B'Tselem on a regular basis.

The number of **administrative detainees** as well as the number of women and minors in custody are the highest they have been in years. In October 2015, [Israel resumed its use of administrative detention against Palestinian minors](#), for the first time since December 2011. [At the end of August 2016](#), **644 Palestinians** - including 1 woman and 10 minors - were held in administrative detention in IPS facilities.

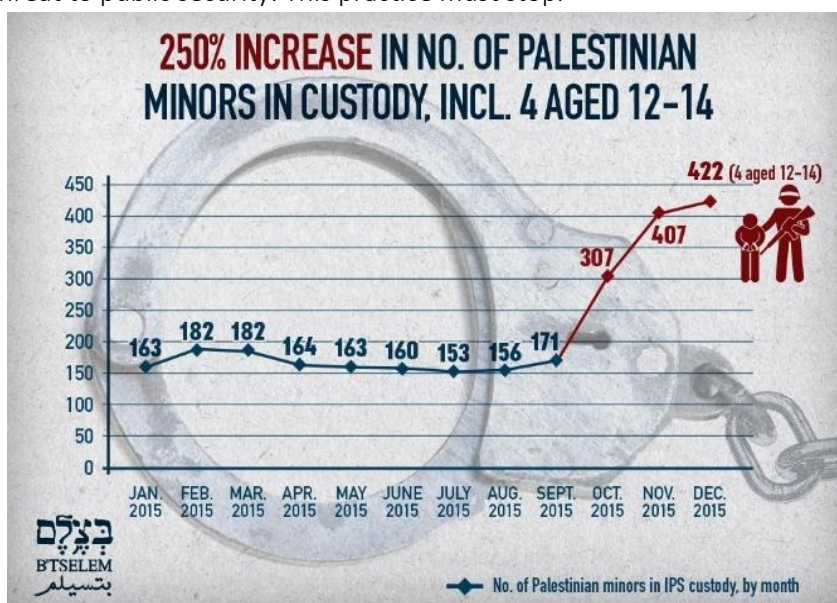
Administrative detention is based on classified “evidence” that is not revealed to the detainee nor their lawyer, so they cannot refute it in a fair legal process, and has no maximum time limit. By law, administrative detention is subject to judicial review. However, in the vast majority of cases, the judges approve the detention orders.

B'Tselem followed closely the case of hunger striker journalist **Muhammad Al-Qiq**, who launched a hunger strike to protest his administrative detention. In January, B'Tselem cautioned that the life of al-Qiq, on hunger strike for 65 days, [was in danger](#). In February, Israel’s HCJ [refused](#) to rescind the administrative detention of Al-Qiq. That month, B'Tselem’s Executive Director [wrote to the Prime Minister](#) demanding he order the immediate release of al-Qiq. According to [media reports](#), al-Qiq and the Israeli authorities reached an agreement whereby he would end his 93-day hunger strike, and then be released from administrative detention, in May.

B'Tselem also published the case of Bilal Kayed, who finished serving a 14½-year prison sentence. His family was then told that he was not being released, and was being [placed in administrative detention for a further six months](#). This case was covered by [El-Mundo](#) including an interview with Hagai El-Ad on administrative detention.

Israel recently agreed to stop renewing the administrative detention of three Palestinians who went on hunger strike to protest being held without trial or time limit. [Risking their lives is the only way for such detainees to go free](#), to challenge the injustice, and to prevent repeated renewal of their detention, given that judicial review is a mere formality. The fact that Israel insists in holding them even on the verge of death belies that argument that they are being held to prevent a threat to public security. This practice must stop.

In March, B'Tselem published an analysis of [trends in 2015 inmate figures, showing a record number of Palestinians held in Israel](#). The figures for 2015 showed **a 250% increase in the number of Palestinian minors in custody**. At the end of August 2016, 319 Palestinian minors were held in Israeli prisons as security detainees and prisoners. Another 10 Palestinian minors were held in Israel Prison Service facilities for being in Israel illegally.



An important case in 2016 was of a Palestinian [12-year-old sentenced to 4½ months in prison - probably the youngest girl imprisoned in history of the occupation](#), researched by B'Tselem's team. B'Tselem believes that our research in this case and publication of the incident, leading to pressure and campaigns by other organizations, led to her early release from prison. The case was widely covered in the media, especially upon her release. A sample of media coverage citing B'Tselem: [American Herald Tribune](#); [The Forward](#); [Haaretz](#); [The New York Times](#); and [Israel Channel 10](#).

9. Attacks on Human Rights Organizations

Along with the entire human rights community in Israel, B'Tselem endured multiple attacks during 2016, including numerous cyber-attacks on our website and servers, massive hate speech on social networks (thousands of violent innuendos and threats), direct threats on staff members, threatening phone calls, and more. These were accompanied by dedicated [smear campaigns against the organization](#), initiated by right wing groups such as *Im Tirzu and Ad Kan* (which led to the [false arrest](#) and release - [after six days](#) - of B'Tselem's field researcher, Nasser Nawaj'ah), as well as direct attacks on our funding sources.

The Israeli government led this incitement by denouncing B'Tselem and fellow organizations, such as Breaking the Silence, as enemies of the state, and directing attacks at us and other organizations via legislation and intimidation. In July 2016, **The NGO "Transparency" Bill**, which shames Israeli human rights organizations, like B'Tselem, as foreign agents, was passed by the Knesset. The law requires organizations to note foreign governmental funding on publications, communications with decision-makers, and in Knesset appearances. Notably, an article was published about [the impact of the NGO law on B'Tselem's Palestinian video volunteers](#).

The government's attempts to stigmatize and silence our work indicate B'Tselem's importance and impact,



along with its refusal to accept any criticism. The occupation is a glaring injustice that must end. The harder they try to deter us from exposing the facts, the more determined we will be to be heard.

Throughout the year, B'Tselem put an emphasis on **coordinated action** with the Israeli human rights community. We published a printed ad in January in Ha'aretz, along with another 14 Israeli human rights organizations, expressing opposition to the proposed laws that seek to silence opposition to government policy in the oPt. We later published another printed ad in Ha'aretz (left), after the bill was formalized in July, along with another 20 organizations, stating that “we may not have succeeded in stopping the NGO bill, but the NGO bill will not succeed in stopping us”. B'Tselem also sent two press releases together with additional organizations in solidarity with Palestinian and international organizations under attack: [Israeli Human Rights Organizations to the Israeli Government: Aid Organizations Perform Vital Work in the Gaza Strip](#) and [Statement of Solidarity: Israeli human rights and civil society organizations condemn attacks against Al-Haq](#).

~~RIVKA MICHAELI, SEGOL59, ENO@TIVE, ROY FREELICH, SARIT VINO EL AN, DROR FOYER, MIRA AWAD, OREN AMICHAI, YESHU DIN, B'TSELEM, BREAKING THE SILENCE, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, THE PUBLIC COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE, HAMOKED, CENTER FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL, THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FUND, THE COALITION OF WOMEN FOR PEACE, KAY LAQVED - WORKERS FIGHTING AS A, THE HOTLINE FOR REFUGEES AND OTHER VULNERABLE PERSONS, LAWYERS FOR PLANNING RIGHTS, MACHSOM WATCH, RABBI FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, THE PEACE AND SECURITY ASSOCIATION, MIZRAHI DEMOCRATIC RAINBOW - NEW DISCOURSE, SOTER, IR AMIN, THE NEW ISRAEL FUND, SHARON, PEACE NOW, THE ASSOCIATION FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN ISRAEL, GISHA, COMBATANTS FOR PEACE, SHARON, THE COALITION AGAINST RACISM, MASHPACH TIGHAR, THE MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, EMEK SHAVAN, ZAZIM, STANDING TOGETHER, THE ISRAELI NATIONAL LGBT TASK FORCE, LAORA RIVLIN, NERI LYNNEN, NIR BARAN, ROY CHICKY ARAD, ELIOT, DJ NARIUS TEPER, AND MORE...~~

BLACKLISTED
A SHOW WITH A GLIMMER OF HOPE

ARTISTS AND NGOs FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE
FRIDAY | 5.2 | 12:00 | HANGAR 11, TEL AVIV PORT | **FREE ADMISSION**

On February 5, B'Tselem jointly produced a large public event at the Tel Aviv Port - "Blacklisted". We enlisted support from a wide coalition of NGO's, including many that will not be affected by the NGO Law. 50 organizations participated in the Blacklist solidarity event from across Israeli society, including LGBT, environmental and community organizations. Leading Israeli artists, NGOs, and public figures, stood in solidarity for freedom of expression, creation, and thought. "Blacklisted: A Show with a Glimmer of Hope", featured performances and remarks by Israeli artists and leaders. It was attended by over 2,000 people.

In the international arena, B'Tselem brought the shrinking space for civil society and the increasing hostility and attacks against B'Tselem in Israel to the attention of key governments and international organizations. Our dialogue, in cooperation with other leading human rights organizations, with the international decision-makers and organizations contributed to the articulation of clear messages from the international community that legislative attempts to silence democratic opposition to

government policy are unacceptable and that Israel must allow its citizens to exercise their democratic rights to freedom of speech and association. These messages came from the EU, the US and France, to name a few. Grave concern for Israeli democracy was expressed by actors within the international community, and many expressed their hopes that Israeli civil society organizations continue to operate freely. In addition, B'Tselem addressed the NGO Law in the context of the global phenomenon of the shrinking space for civil society in several International forums, including a EuroMed Rights Seminar; an Oxfam advocacy seminar in the UK; a EuroMed Rights Working Group meeting; and a FIDH global conference in South Africa.

B'Tselem's executive director and spokeswoman appeared frequently in the Israeli and international media, including radio programs and prime time-news panels and interviews. B'Tselem countered the perception that the issue at stake is transparency. B'Tselem argued the real intent of the law is to silence opposition to the government policy of indefinite occupation. B'Tselem delivered clear and consistent arguments, that the longest ongoing occupation in modern history is not an internal matter but an international issue, that opposition to the occupation is a legitimate Israeli agenda that Israelis have every right to advance, and that we will continue to fight until the occupation ends.

In addition to the major media work in Israel and internationally, B'Tselem put a special emphasis in 2016 on **strategic work with the Israeli public**. B'Tselem conducted a public opinion survey with 700 adult Israelis (500 Jews/interviews in Hebrew; 200 Arabs/interviews in Arabic) assessing the Israeli public's attitude towards the occupation and human rights. The strategic analysis of the quantitative research was done by expert researcher Dr. Dahlia Scheindlin. It was leveraged by B'Tselem for focused outreach and the formulation of B'Tselem's campaign on 50 years of occupation, to be held in 2017.

During 2016, B'Tselem piloted a series of over a dozen lectures for Israeli high school and university students and for students in pre-army academies. Young people in Israel gain little to no knowledge about the occupation from the formal education system, because it is labelled as a "political issue". Therefore, these activities targeted audiences who may disagree with B'Tselem's messages, but are potentially open to looking deeper into their political ideas and their behavior as soldiers could be influenced.

Paradoxically, while hostility from the mainstream grew, it emboldened B'Tselem's target audiences: the number of small donations to B'Tselem from individuals, in Israel and abroad, grew dramatically over the last year in comparison with the previous years. For B'Tselem, this encouragement and show of support is vital.

Thank you

This was a challenging year for B'Tselem. On January 10 2016, B'Tselem's office completely burned down. Great resources and will power were invested in continuing our effective work in the aftermath. Thanks to B'Tselem's amazingly resilient and dedicated staff, working away from a burnt office, documents and equipment, and thanks to the generous support of our colleagues and donors, we were able to succeed. We are therefore especially proud to conclude this report which shows 2016 to be an exceptionally industrious year.

B'Tselem extends its gratitude to the tens of thousands of individuals, foundations, NGOs, CSOs, UN agencies, journalists, artists, students, activists, ministers, rabbis, and European governments who support our work, both in spirit and in funding, whether small or large. Thank you for supporting us. Your backing gives us pride in our work, confidence in our shared values and strength in our efforts to challenge the occupation until it ends. Together, determined, we will bring forth a better future.

"Our lives begin to end
the day we become
silent about things that
matter"

Martin Luther King Jr.