Incidents in Masafer Yatta (“Firing Zone 918”), June - September 2022

Below is a list of incidents that occurred in “Firing Zone 918” over the course of the last four months. This is not an exhaustive list, and it includes just a brief description of each incident. Nevertheless, this chronicle does illustrate how Israel’s policy makes the lives of the people who reside in “Firing Zone 918” a living hell and keep them in a state of complete uncertainty about what might come next.

The reports below were collected by B’Tselem’s field researchers, OCHA, and Israeli and Palestinian activists.

**June 2022**

1 June 2022 - Israel demolished the homes of four families numbering 21 members, including nine minors, as well as two agricultural structures in Kh. al-Fakhit and Kh. al-Markez. [Video footage](http://example.com), update on B’Tselem’s Facing Expulsion blog

2 June 2022 - A settler arriving from the direction of the Mitzpe Yair outpost grazed his flock on lands belonging to Kh. al-Markez. [footage](http://example.com)

7 June 2022 - Israeli forces delivered demolition orders for 20 structures in Kh. a-Taban, including a water cistern and the community’s central electrical system, both of which were built by COMET ME. The orders have not been executed yet.

10 June 2022 - From the evening hours until the next day, soldiers went through seven communities in Masafer Yatta - Kh. a-Taban, Kh. al-Fakhit, Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’, Kh. a-Safai a-Tahta, Kh. a-Safai al-Foqa, Kh. al-Majaz and Kh. Jenbah. The soldiers passed by residents’ homes, taking photos of their ID cards and asking who lived in each home. [footage](http://example.com)

11 June 2022 - A settler grazed his flock on Palestinian land in Wadi Humra.

13 June 2022 - the Civil Administration delivered stop work orders and demolition orders in a-Rakeez. [footage](http://example.com)

19 June 2022 - Soldiers stopped six Palestinians from Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ and Yatta at a checkpoint near Kh. al-Fakhit, taking them and the two cars they traveled in to a military base near Kh. Jenbah.

21 June 2022 - The military placed cardboard practice targets around the community of Kh. al-Majaz. Some of the targets were placed on Palestinian property, including a water tank, a cart and some bails of hay.
21 June 2022 - Two tanks drove on cultivated lands belonging to the community of Kh. al-Majaz. At the same time, a military jeep entered the community and drove in between the houses.

22 June 2022 - Heavy military vehicles drove around the area, firing shells on cultivated fields. The military tried to stop journalists from recording the incident and prevented shepherds from Kh. Jenbah and Kh. al-Markez from accessing their lands. [footage]

22 June 2022 - A settler arriving from the direction of Havat Ma’on grazed his flock on Palestinian land in Wadi Humra.

22 June 2022 – A military bulldozer drove on a field near Kh. al-Markez, trampling it.

22 June 2022 – A military patrol drove through Kh. al-Mufaqarah, as soldiers harassed locals.

22 June 2022 – Soldiers detained ten men traveling in two cars at a checkpoint near Kh. al-Majaz. The men were beaten, handcuffed and blindfolded, and taken in for questioning at a nearby military camp. One of the detained men required medical assistance and was examined by a military paramedic. Then, the men were released. One of the two cars was confiscated by the military.

23 June 2022 - Soldiers detained two Israeli journalists and a Palestinian activist near Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’. The soldiers took their phones and car keys and threatened to confiscate the car the next time they showed up. [tweet]

24 June 2022 - Israeli forces at a military checkpoint near Kh. al-Majaz stopped a group of lawyers from the Society of St. Yves from entering the area, detained one of them for four hours and confiscated his car.

25 June 2022 - Settlers grazed their flocks on cultivated Palestinian lands near the outpost of Issachar Mann. Police officers and soldiers removed Palestinians from the area, claiming it was a closed military zone. [footage]

26 June 2022 – Over the course of an hour, a military helicopter took off and landed multiple times inside the firing zone, on cultivated lands and grazing fields where flocks were grazing at the time.

26 June 2022 - The military set up a checkpoint between Kh. al-Fakhit and Kh. a-Taban. Three staff members from COMET ME were detained for about 90 minutes, with soldiers preventing them from reaching their destination and threatening to arrest them if they returned to the area.
27 June 2022 - The military conducted exercises inside the firing zone without giving residents advance notice. After the soldiers left the area, local residents recorded damage done to cultivated farmlands by heavy equipment and tanks.

28 June 2022 - The military said it was training in the area. The training included detonating explosives and creating a smoke screen. Heavy military vehicles drove on Palestinian farm fields near Kh. al-Markez and Kh. Jenbah, trampling them. The military blocked roads in the area and forbade residents to travel between the villages. In one case, soldiers detained ten activists, most of them Palestinian and American and one Israeli. The soldiers took their ID cards and told them the two Palestinian-owned vehicles they were in would be confiscated.

footage

July 2022

2 July 2022 - The military set up a checkpoint at the entrance to the village of a-Tuwani, blocking entry into the firing zone. Soldiers at this checkpoint detained a man and his elderly father, both from al-Mufaqarah, for more than two hours, ultimately confiscating their car and another vehicle that was passing through.

3 July 2022 - The military shot live fire near Kh. al-Majaz in the evening hours. Local residents were given same-day notice.

3 July 2022 - Soldiers detained a delegation of UN Human Rights Council staff members on their way to visit Kh. Jenbah for an hour, after which they told them to turn back, stating the military was training in the area.

4 July 2022 - As part of the military’s exercises in the area, a helicopter took off and landed near homes in Kh. al-Majaz.

4 July 2022 – The military exercised in the area, using live fire and heavy machine guns. The area was sealed off, and no movement was allowed inside it.

5 July 2022 – The military shot live fire and mortar shells near Kh. al-Markez. Farmers from al-Mufaqarah and a-Rakeez reported a burnt field and damage to olive trees and cactuses.

6 July 2022 - The military blocked roads and banned Palestinian travel in the area, claiming the soldiers were training in it. The soldiers used live fire. A bullet hit the insulation on the roof of a home in Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ and other bullets landed near community homes. Local residents fled to avoid getting hurt. footage

7 July 2022 - Soldiers confiscated a Palestinian vehicle near Kh. al-Majaz. The owners had to pay NIS 6,000 to have it released.
9 July 2022 - Soldiers stopped a car near Kh. a-Safai a-Tahta. The Palestinian family in the car was traveling from Kh. a-Tuba to visit their daughter in Kh. al-Halawah. After beating the owner of a car and unsuccessfully attempting to take his keys by force, the soldiers did not allow the family to go visit their daughter and told them to return home.

11 July 2022 – A day earlier, on 10 July 2022, the military informed local residents it would be training in the area over the coming three days. During those days, Israeli forces sealed off the area and forbade movement inside it. Loud explosions were heard in Jabal Dab and Kh. a-Tuba.

11 July 2022 - Soldiers detained a family from Kh. Jenbah in their car. After a long delay, the family left their car and walked home. The car was confiscated and towed away the next day.

12 July 2022 - Soldiers drove away a shepherd from al-Mufaqarah who planned to graze his flock in fields located near the road leading to the outpost of Avigayil. The soldiers then tried to drive away shepherds from fields closer to the community, while a settler was grazing his own flock on nearby Palestinian land. The soldiers ultimately declared the area a closed military zone. footage

14 July 2022 - Israel Nature and Parks Authority enforcement officers broke into a fenced compound belonging to a Palestinian and located between al-Mufaqarah and the outpost of Avigayil. They confiscated empty chicken coops.

16 July 2022 - Soldiers blocked the entrance to a-Tuwani, saying activists who “come to make trouble” in the area were in the village. The soldiers said the entrance would not be opened until the activists left. footage

18 July 2022 - The Civil Administration delivered demolition orders for structures in a farming project in Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’. The orders have not been executed yet. On 2 February 2022, Israel demolished four water cisterns in the project. footage

20 July 2022 - Soldiers confiscated a car in which activists were traveling on the road between al-Mufaqarah and Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’.

20 July 2022 - Settlers grazed flocks on Palestinian lands in Kh. Simri.

20 July 2022 - Palestinians were denied access to the road leading to the outpost of Avigayil and the communities of al-Mufaqarah and Kh. a-Rakeez due to a settler march to the ‘Ein al-Beida spring.

21 July 2022 - Soldiers detained members of a medical crew from Doctors without Borders and BBC journalists at a checkpoint near Kh. Jenbah. The crew was on its way to run a clinic in the community. The soldiers at the checkpoint demanded to see the crews’ ID cards and then took photos of them and the vehicles.
24 July 2022 - Soldiers detained a car in which a COMET ME team was traveling for about 90 minutes at a checkpoint near Kh. Jenbah.

25 July 2022 - Soldiers detained a shuttle driving several residents of Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ out of the firing zone. The soldiers held them up for about three hours, during which they checked their papers.

26 July 2022 - Soldiers entered the community of Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ during the night.

27 July 2022 - The military issued a seizure order for a small area at the entrance to the village of a-Tuwani, near the firing zone, to set up permanent guarding posts.

28 July 2022 - At around 12:30 P.M., soldiers set up a checkpoint between Kh. al-Markez and Kh. Jenbah and confiscated three cars. One of them had been used by members of COMET ME who were on their way to do maintenance work on some solar panels. The other car was used by a father who was driving his six-year-old son back from a YMCA program at the school in Kh. Jenbah. The third car was carrying equipment for the program. The drivers were ordered to drive the cars to a military base in the area. The soldiers did not let the residents go home until 4:00 P.M.

29 July 2022 - A military bulldozer blocked the road leading from She‘b al-Batem to other communities in Masafer Yatta and to the town of Yatta.

August 2022

1 August 2022 - Settlers punctured the tires of a car belonging to a Palestinian, which was parked in a forest near the outpost of Avigayil while the man was working on his land. Soldiers issued a closed military zone order and prevented people from approaching and taking photos of the car. footage

3 August 2022 - The Civil Administration came to a-Tuwani and delivered demolition and stop work orders for lines supplying electricity from a-Tuwani to Ma’in, the school in She‘b al-Batem and a-Rakeez. footage

4 August 2022 - Soldiers came to the home of the head of a-Tuwani village in the middle of the night, threatening “trouble” if he allowed activists who record what is going on in the “firing zone” to stay in the village. footage

4 August 2022 - The military set up a gate that blocks access from the north to Kh. Jenbah and Kh. al-Markez.

4 August 2022 - Settlers grazed their flocks in cultivated Palestinian plots belonging to Kh. Bir al-‘Eid.
5 August 2022 - Soldiers detained eight Palestinians making their way back from Kh. Bir al-‘Eid. They handcuffed them and took them to a military base near the checkpoint, where they blindfolded them. footage

6 August 2022 - Soldiers arrested B’Tselem field researcher in the South Hebron Hills, Naser Nawaj’ah, in his home in Susiya at night. After about 12 hours, he was taken to an Israel Security Agency facility in Gush Etzion, where he was interrogated by an officer who asked him about his work and accused him of being the person “who causes all the trouble in the area.” He demanded he stop “making trouble” and “seeking contact” with the military. Nawaj’ah was then sent home. The entire time he was detained, neither his family nor his lawyers, nor B’Tselem were informed of his whereabouts. footage

6 August 2022 - Israeli forces delivered demolition orders for a tent in Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ used by solidarity activists. The tent was set up by locals to host solidarity activities after the Supreme Court ruling stating there was no legal impediment to the residents’ expulsion.

11 August 2022 - Soldiers placed concrete slabs and firing positions in the entrance to a-Tuwani, near the access point to the firing zone two weeks after a seizure order was issued for an area in the entrance to the village. Another firing position overlooking the entrances to a-Tuwani and Yatta was set up nearby. footage

16 August 2022 - Soldiers standing in a new checkpoint set up near Kh. Jenbah denied access to a Doctors without Borders team for about 30 minutes. They took photos of their ID cards and vehicles. The team had come to the area to run the clinic in Kh. Jenbah.

19 August 2022 - Soldiers detained three relatives of a Kh. Bir al-‘Eid resident for about 30 minutes at a checkpoint. The three, who were on their way to Yatta, were released only after a soldier who had met them previously arrived and recognized them. footage

20 August 2022 - At around 5:00 P.M., settlers arriving from the direction of the Mitzpe Yair outpost came to Kh. Simri, which had been abandoned by its residents. In the morning hours, when local residents arrived at the site, they found smashed windows, water pipes that had been cut and lightbulbs and electrical panels that had been taken apart.

22 August 2022 - At around 1:00 A.M., three tanks came to the vicinity of Kh. al-Fakhit. The soldiers set up a roadblock and prevented travel by locals while a group of soldiers appeared to be doing an orienteering exercise in the valley west of Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’.

24 August 2022 - Settlers cut a fence surrounding a farm field in Kh. Simri overnight.

25 August 2022 - Soldiers stopped a minibus at the checkpoint near Kh. al-Fakhit at 1:30 A.M. The passengers were a group of young adults from Ramallah and Europe who were returning from a visit to Kh. al-Majaz. The soldiers confiscated the minibus, leaving the passengers with no means of transportation.
28 August 2022 - Soldiers detained nine teachers who work at the school in Kh. Jenbah and refused to let them through even after they presented their teacher cards. After about four hours, the soldiers confiscated the shuttle car and told the teachers to return home on foot in the desert heat.

29 August 2022 - Soldiers manning a checkpoint detained a delegation that came to the area for the start of the school year. The delegation included representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and local councils, journalists and staff from the community’s school. More than an hour passed before the soldiers allowed the delegation through.

30 August 2022 - Israeli forces set up a flying checkpoint near Kh. al-Fakhit. At 8:00 A.M., they stopped a Palestinian Ministry of Education shuttle carrying seven students to the school in Kh. al-Fakhit. They let the shuttle through after 45 minutes, but the students had already missed their first period. About 30 more students had to walk to school. video footage

31 August 2022 - Soldiers held up students and teachers on their way to school at Kh. al-Fakhit. The students were held up for about 30 minutes, and the teachers for about an hour. The teachers arrived on foot, fearing their car would be confiscated as it had been several days earlier. link to photo

31 August 2022 - Soldiers placed three concrete slabs in the entrances to the firing zone - one on the way to She’b al-Batem, one in al-Mufaqarah and one at the access point to the road leading to Um Tuba. On 11 September 2022, the military wrote entry into the firing zone was prohibited on the surface of the concrete slabs.

**September 2022**

1 September 2022 - Settlers tried to drive away Palestinian shepherds between the Kharuba valley and Kh. Sarurah. Soldiers who arrived in the area helped the settlers drive away the shepherds, shoving them while the shepherds were getting the flock out of the area. A Civil Administration official came by and told the soldiers Palestinians were permitted to graze their flocks there, and the settlers were not. Still, police officers who came to the area told both sides to file a police complaint. footage

1 September 2022 - Soldiers detained and beat a teacher from Kh. Jenbah, claiming he had filmed them.

4 September 2022 - Soldiers detained the head of the Masafer Yatta council at the checkpoint near Kh. Jenbah at around 6:00 P.M. They took him to the nearby military base and did not let him go for about eight hours.
5 September 2022 - Settlers threatened a Palestinian shepherd in the Kharubah valley in the morning and walked their flocks over farm fields. The Palestinians went along with Israeli activists to the police to file a complaint and found out the settlers had filed a complaint against them. footage

8 September 2022 - Soldiers in a jeep harassed Palestinian shepherds returning home from grazing in the Kharubah valley. The soldiers claimed the area had been put under a closed military zone order and demanded the shepherds advance towards al-Mufaqarah.

10 September 2022 - At around 3:30 P.M., the military used concertina wire to block the road from Haribat a-Nabi to Kh. Bir al-‘Eid and Masafer Yatta. The road was blocked in three different spots, blocking access to vast farmlands cultivated by local residents. footage

11 September 2022 - The military placed a checkpoint at the end of the road running from Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ to Kh. al-Fakhit. Soldiers detained tractors at the checkpoint for varying lengths of time. They also held up a school shuttle for about 30 minutes. Most of the teachers used detours to get to school or left their car in Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ and continued on foot. At the end of the school day, the students were forced to return home on foot too.

11 September 2022 - A settler took a herd through cultivated lands in the Kharubah valley. At the same time, soldiers who were observing Palestinian shepherds threatened them not to approach and not to go near the outpost of Havat Ma’on. footage

12 September 2022 - In the morning hours, six jeeps, four bulldozers and four tanks arrived in the area and apparently detonated an explosive device. In the afternoon, local residents were told the military would remain in the area at night. The sounds of gunfire and explosions were heard during the night. Still photos

12 September 2022 - Soldiers at the checkpoint near Kh. al-Fakhit stopped a school shuttle bringing students from Kh. al-Majaz and Kh. a-Safai and told the driver who was taking them to school in Kh. al-Fakhit to turn back. They also refused to let teachers arriving on foot from Kh. Khilet a-Dabe’ through the checkpoint. When the teachers tried to take a detour, a military jeep blocked their way and did not let them through.

12 September 2022 - Soldiers at the checkpoint near Kh. al-Fakhit detained a car with six people who live in the area declared a firing zone for about two and a half hours, saying their ID cards said they live in Yatta. The soldiers let only two of the passengers through and told the rest, all of whom live in Kh. al-Fakhit, to go back to Yatta. The soldiers threatened activists who came to the site, telling them they were not permitted to stay in the area but did let them reach Kh. al-Fakhit.

12 September 2022 - A settler took his flock through privately owned cultivated land in the Kharubah valley.
13 September 2022 - The military conducted tank maneuvers near Kh. al-Fakhit. The soldiers then left the area, leaving behind unexploded shells and bullet casings.

13 September 2022 - Two journalists and an activist were held up at a checkpoint near Kh. al-Markez for about 90 minutes. A military officer threatened to call the police if they did not turn around and go back.

14 September 2022 - Soldiers held military exercises on roads leading from Kh. Bir al-‘Eid to Kh. Jenbah from 10:00 P.M. to 3:00 A.M., including firing shells from tanks. Local residents heard at least four explosions and reported they felt their houses shaking. Additionally, soldiers walked around homes in Kh. Jenbah.

14 September 2022 - Settlers grazed flocks in an olive grove in Kh. Simri.

17 September 2022 - Settlers grazed flocks on lands belonging to Kh. Simri.

22 September 2022 - Israel demolished the home of a family of seven, including four minors, in Kh. a-Rakeez. The money to build the house had been donated by Action Against Hunger Link to update on Communities Facing Expulsion blog

24 September 2022 - At 10:30 A.M., a military jeep chased two Palestinian vehicles driving towards Kh. Simri in She‘b al-Batem. The soldiers lobbed stun grenades at the cars and then blocked their path, took their keys and left the area.

24 September 2022 - Settlers broke into vacant homes on a farm in Kh. Bir al-‘Eid, stole cables, destroyed a brick fence and threw stones into a water cistern. When the homeowners came with some activists, the settlers blocked their way as soldiers present at the scene looked on and did nothing. The activists called the police and waited for the officers, who did not show up, for four hours.