

## B'Tselem's 2014 Annual Report

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## Summary and Impact

Jessica Montell handed over B'Tselem's leadership to Hagai El-Ad in May 2014 after 12 years of exemplary directorship (following five years in the International Relations Department). El-Ad took on the role of executive director just weeks before the abduction of the three yeshiva students that led to Operation Brother's Keeper and later, Operation Protective Edge. El-Ad initiated important organizational processes, reviewing our strategy through ongoing dialogue and monthly staff meetings with our Palestinian field researchers, with the participation of our three Gaza field researchers through Skype. The review process led to policy developments, including completion of the paradigm shift already begun from calling for an end to human rights abuses under occupation to calling for an end to the occupation, itself a human rights abuse, and in the nature of our engagement with the Israeli authorities in our search for accountability.

B'Tselem remained at the vanguard of the fight for human rights in 2014. B'Tselem's messages, particularly on Operations Brother's Keeper and Protective Edge, our messages were central to the international human rights discourse and B'Tselem was further positioned as a trusted global leader in human rights.

B'Tselem's Facebook posts on documented human rights violations reached unparalleled audiences in 2014. B'Tselem's information and analysis reached massive audiences within Israel and around the world. Two of our Hebrew posts on the hostilities in Gaza reached over 1,000,000, a staggering number in a country with a population of 8 million. Our English posts reached hundreds of thousands, with the top post reaching 650,000 people. B'Tselem's Facebook following quadrupled and the website views grew dramatically.

B'Tselem's outspoken critique of Israeli policy the Gaza Strip alienated many within Israeli society, which was nearly united in unwavering support for the military operation. Few dissenting voices were heard within the media nor the public sphere, and the failure to accept the disturbing events of Operation Protective Edge as an inevitable and unavoidable consequence of Hamas' tactics and urban warfare provoked cries of treason. B'Tselem's office and staff was viciously attacked by people who sought to silence us. These actions are a direct assault upon our freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Encouragingly, at the very height of attacks on B'Tselem, B'Tselem also received recognition as a global leader in human rights. In August 2014, B'Tselem was shortlisted for the [Václav Havel Human Rights Prize](#). The selection panel, chaired by Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, wrote: "B'Tselem has championed human rights in the Occupied Territories for 25 years, through public advocacy and the collection and publication of reliable information about human rights violations. During Israel's recent military operation in Gaza, B'Tselem provided ongoing information about harm caused to civilians by the Israeli military and Hamas. This exposed the organization and its staff, both in Gaza and in Israel, to scathing criticism that, at times, escalated into violence".

Just weeks later, The International Legal Assistance Consortium, the Swedish Bar Association and the International Bar Association announced that B'Tselem is the winner of the [2014 Stockholm Human Rights Award](#). The groups said: "The work of human rights defenders to uphold international human rights law across the world is essential and no more so than when working in an environment where the host government may be hostile to criticism. Promoting human rights standards from inside one's country requires an unwavering willingness to endure criticism from within, regardless of potential repercussions. Maintaining integrity and dignity is at the core of human rights defense. B'Tselem has shone international light on human rights violations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, providing a voice to victims and calling for accountability. It is commendable that B'Tselem has so tirelessly fought to uphold human rights in an environment where its criticism has not always been welcome. It is for this reason that B'Tselem has been awarded the 2014 Stockholm Human Rights Award. B'Tselem is one of those unique organizations that work tirelessly to promote human rights standards while fighting against a majority voice". Also in late 2014, Hagai El-Ad, B'Tselem Executive Director was [named](#) in Foreign Policy's sixth annual [100 Leading Global Thinkers](#) list".



Throughout this terrible year, B'Tselem maintained its integrity and remained steadfast in its commitment to human rights work in the face of extraordinary challenges, running the gamut from Bitunya to Gaza, from Hebron to Rafah. Despite the bleak situation, B'Tselem continues its persistent work to protect human rights and promote respect for IHL in the oPt. We have not and will not let such threats stand in the way of our work.

## Environment and Political Context

Since Operation Protective Edge was launched on July 8, 2014, B'Tselem diligently collected information on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) by Israeli security forces. During the fifty days of hostilities, B'Tselem's field researchers were forced to operate in extremely treacherous conditions. Operation Protective Edge was a human rights crisis, coupled with massive loss of life, destruction and humanitarian disaster. A third Gazan field researcher was hired, and emergency security measures were enacted to enable the Gazan field researchers to collect information under fire. After the cease-fire went into effect on August 26, they continued to collect evidence of the impact of the Israeli military operation, particularly the circumstances surrounding the deaths of so many uninvolved Palestinian civilians, including hundreds of children.



The Israeli government spared no effort in publicly justifying the military action. The IDF Spokesperson's office worked overtime to get the Israeli perspective into the international media and to deflect the mounting criticism of the devastation wrought on Palestinian civilians. The Israeli media almost exclusively covered the impact of the conflict on Israel, extensively covering the intense rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, its impact on Israeli families and communities, the soldiers' perspectives, and the Israeli fatalities. There was little coverage of the impact of the operation on Gazan civilians. The Israeli media primarily adopted the Israeli military and government lines, often embedding journalists with Israeli forces, and applying little critical thinking to official statements that the Israeli military invested supreme efforts to protect Gazan civilians from harm. The Israeli media questioned few claims, and was unapologetically supportive of the operation with little guise of impartiality.

Consequently, Israel was practically united in support of Operation Protective Edge, and little criticism was heard in the public sphere. Those that dared to express dissent on the unofficial national consensus on Protective Edge were publically vilified. On the very first day of the operation, as soon as information on Protective Edge from our Gaza field researchers was verified, B'Tselem began releasing information to the public. B'Tselem was outspoken in alerting the public to violations of human rights and international law during the operation and was quickly positioned as a leader of the human rights discourse. B'Tselem published over 60 updates on Protective Edge on our website.

Yet leadership comes with a price. B'Tselem's statements calling for respect of human rights and IHL attracted fire from opponents of human rights and IHL in conflict. B'Tselem bore the brunt of the backlash reserved for those who speak up for human rights in wartime. B'Tselem was viciously attacked with massive hate speech, threatening phone calls and emails, hostile visits to B'Tselem's offices, personal harassment of staff members, and incitement in articles and caricatures.

Both our staff in Jerusalem and our Gazan field researchers each faced their own perils. Our three Gazan field researchers endured not only dangers from airstrikes, missiles, explosions, the possibility of losing their families, their homes, or their own lives, but also the limitations on filming and collecting information under the Hamas rule, which is suspicious of research into their own actions. B'Tselem's Gazan field researchers faced tangible danger with every step they took, while their own homes and families were not safe. Our staff in Jerusalem faced the wrath of extremists within Israeli society, who sought to silence and intimidate us through violence and threats. In addition, hackers launched coordinated attacks, utilizing computers worldwide to try to debilitate B'Tselem's website and servers.



Playing an important role in the debate on competing narratives on Operation Protective Edge is the categorized list of fatalities that B'Tselem began during last summer's fighting and seeks to complete in 2015. Israel claimed that the Israeli military went to extraordinary lengths to avoid civilian casualties and that the high death toll resulted from Hamas' use of the Palestinian population as human shields by embedding itself into civilian areas. The Palestinians claimed that Israel's use of excessive and indiscriminate force in urban areas lead to so many deaths. A complete list of the 2,200 or so Palestinian fatalities classified by civilian, combatant, the subject of targeted killing, or unknown, will shed light on the Israeli military's conduct during Protective Edge and provide crucial missing data. A reliable list will contribute vital information to the debate on Israel's respect for human rights and IHL during the operation, help answer unresolved questions, and inform the international diplomatic communities' policy and advocacy.

 al-Mashal Family 16.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza City	 al-Sharif Family 16.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza City	 Zayyad Family 21.7.2014 in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip	 al-Masheh Family and Amna Family 26.7.2014 in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip
 Abu Jum'a Family 26.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza Strip	 al-Masri Family 26.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza Strip	 El-Haj Family 26.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza Strip	 Syyam Family 26.7.2014 in Rafah
 al-Yaqub Family 27.7.2014 in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip	 al-Ghanim Family 27.7.2014 in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip	 al-Khalili Family and Deebat Family 27.7.2014 in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip	 al-Barakat Family 27.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza Strip
 Abu Hashem Family 28.7.2014 in Rafah, Gaza Strip	 Abu Zarfat and Abu Ta Family 28.7.2014 in Rafah	 Abu Ayyash Family 28.7.2014 in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip	 al-Antar Family 28.7.2014 in Rafah

Though the attacks against B'Tselem have abated in recent months, we are still in a state of alert. B'Tselem continues to face on-going security threats and incessant sophisticated cyber-attacks against our website, servers, and electronic communications. Yet the attacks on B'Tselem also serve to demonstrate the power of B'Tselem's voice and the visibility and impact of B'Tselem's messages.

## Policy Changes

### Paradigm Shift - Opposing the Occupation Alongside Protesting HR Violations under Occupation

June 2014 marked 47 years since Israel began its occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For 25 of those years, B'Tselem has led the struggle to protect human rights in the Occupied Territories, defining how an entire generation of conscientious Israelis addressed that reality. June 2014, however, marked a milestone: B'Tselem decided to embark on a new strategy, after decades of experience and accumulated knowledge proved that human rights in these areas will never be fully protected under a system meticulously constructed to deny them. It is time for a paradigm shift and demand fulfillment of human rights through an end to the occupation.

B'Tselem published a paper on [47 Years of Temporary Occupation](#) in June 2014. The paper concludes that by taking advantage of a legal framework appropriate for short-term situations, Israel has produced a state of affairs that has not merely disinherited, stifled and trampled human rights for nearly half a century but also reveals Israel's sweeping, long-term objectives. This devastating reality cannot change unless the occupation is brought to an end.

The terrible events in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel both enabled and required B'Tselem to put this strategy into immediate action. A process that would otherwise have begun months later was put in motion with the abduction and murder of the three [Israeli teenagers](#), the retaliatory murder of Palestinian teen [Muhammad Abu Khdeir](#) and the Israeli military's [Operation Brother's Keeper](#). B'Tselem voiced public concerns that the military's actions, which resulted in multiple Palestinian fatalities and the administrative detention of 473 Palestinians, did not serve the aim of locating and returning the three abducted Israelis, constituted collective punishment and unnecessarily violated basic human rights.

### Strategic Change in Cooperation with Israeli authorities:

B'Tselem's work during Operation Protective Edge was also an unexpected testing ground for opting out of occupation mechanisms. It is clear that Israel violated international law in several instances during the operation, with other instances highly suspect. B'Tselem is determined to promote accountability for these violations. Therefore, unlike our practice in past operations, B'Tselem did not call for Israeli authorities to investigate allegations through existing mechanisms which merely facilitate the pretense that Israel fundamentally complies with international law. B'Tselem will no longer be part of this charade.

In September 2014, B'Tselem announced that it would not assist the Israeli military's investigation mechanism into Operation Protective Edge. B'Tselem decided to break with its previous practice concerning military operations in Gaza and reject a request made by the Military Advocate for Operational Matters Lt. Col. Ronen Hirsch to provide the military with information regarding "irregular" incidents that occurred during Operation Protective Edge. Instead, B'Tselem called for the establishment of an effective, transparent and impartial mechanism. B'Tselem Executive Director Hagai El-Ad explained the decision: "The announcement demonstrates one of the current system's main shortcomings: its adamant refusal to investigate senior officials and examine honestly wide ranging policy issues pertaining to Israel's use of military force".

We explained the background to this decision in a [position paper](#). B'Tselem determined that the existing apparatus is incapable of investigating policy issues or breaches of law by senior ranking military officials, and fails to promote accountability among those responsible. The figures show that the Israeli authorities are unwilling to investigate human rights violations committed by security forces against Palestinians. The failure of the Israeli government to implement the relevant Turkel Commission's recommendations, more than a year and a half after their publication, only reinforces this conclusion.

While the decision not to assist the Israeli military's investigation into Protective Edge does not necessarily affect demands for investigations into incidents in the West Bank, B'Tselem's experience shows that the situation in the West Bank and in Gaza outside the context of military operations is similar. Investigations conducted by Israeli authorities are poor, inadequate, limited in achieving accountability, and may actually promote an environment of impunity.

In light of the great resources required to demand and monitor investigations, and the authorities' poor track record of conducting credible investigations, B'Tselem is reconsidering its strategy of trying to change individual harmful policies to focusing on ending the occupation itself, due to the difficulty in inducing meaningful policy changes. B'Tselem has initiated a process of rethinking its strategy for seeking accountability and is examining ways to deal with the military's policy of impunity. This process of strategic development will continue through 2015.

## Research and Documentation

During 2014, B'Tselem continued its core task of monitoring and documenting IHL violations in the oPt. B'Tselem's primary source of information is first-person testimonies, taken by B'Tselem field researchers, from victims and eyewitnesses of human rights violations. Information about incidents of suspected human rights violations was collected by B'Tselem's 11 Palestinian field researchers: 8 based in the following areas of the West Bank – Ramallah, Hebron, the South Hebron Hills, Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem, Jerusalem; and 3 in the Gaza Strip. B'Tselem's field researchers also gathered documents from Palestinian officials, hospitals and other relevant institutions to substantiate first-person testimonies.

In 2014, B'Tselem's Palestinian field researchers collected **1482 testimonies** from victims and witnesses of suspected human rights violations. 649 testimonies were from Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. 343 of them concerned Operation Protective Edge. In addition, **328 field reports** were written about suspected human rights violations when no testimony is available. In 2014, B'Tselem's field researchers submitted a total of 1810 testimonies and incident reports about suspected human rights violations. This is a significant increase from 1532 testimonies and incident reports collected in 2013.

B'Tselem submitted **32 requests for information** under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 to Israeli authorities in 2014. B'Tselem made 12 monthly requests to the Israeli Prison Service for data on the number, age and gender of all Palestinian prisoners held in Israel. That information is tabled on B'Tselem's website for public use. B'Tselem also made inquiries to determine if IDF humanitarian officers were operating during Operation Protective Edge.



The information gathered directly from the oPt through B'Tselem's field researchers and verified by the data coordination team was then conveyed to B'Tselem's public outreach department and International Relations Department, who proceeded to bring the information to the attention of the public and decision-makers. The information informed the public discourse and debate on human rights in the oPt with current, factual and reliable data.

## Research Reports

B'Tselem produced three major research reports in 2014 on issues identified as subjects in need of investigation. These reports were widely distributed by digital newsletter to our mailing list of 22,400 Israeli, Palestinian and international decision-makers, policy shapers, government offices, academics, NGOs, religious leaders, and interested citizens. Hard copies were sent out to nearly 10,000 people (6312 copies in English and 3619 in Hebrew).



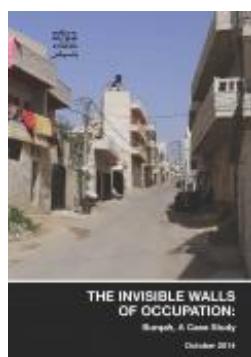
**So Near and Yet So Far: Implications of Israeli-Imposed Seclusion of Gaza Strip on Palestinians' Right to Family Life**, a joint report by Hamoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual and B'Tselem (January 2014). After the 1967 occupation, Israel enabled Palestinians to travel relatively freely between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel. Residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who married Israeli citizens or Israeli residents (i.e., East Jerusalem Palestinians with Israeli ID cards) could receive permanent residential status in Israel through the family unification process. This policy facilitated the renewal of family ties and the creation of new ties of marriage, work, etc.

Once the first intifada began in late 1987, Israel started imposing restrictions on the freedom of movement of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. At present, it is practically impossible for Palestinians to travel between the West Bank and Gaza. There is also absolutely no possibility for Gaza residents to receive official status in Israel or East Jerusalem and live there with a local spouse.

Israel's restrictions on entering and exiting Gaza sentence family members to separation, and force mixed Gaza-West Bank or Gaza-Israel couples to live without a normal routine, governed by a host of bureaucratic constraints. Tens of thousands of people must live with this impossible reality in which the state infringes on the most intimate aspects of their lives through many procedures with strict criteria that are virtually impossible to meet. The most fundamental and apparently simple matters such as raising a family, living together with one's spouse and children and regular contact with the relatives of both spouses, are rendered impossible and impracticable.



**47 Years of Temporary Occupation** (June 2014). At times, the occupation seems to be a thing of the past, but it is still going strong. A third, and even fourth, generation of Palestinians and Israelis has been born into this reality, and they know no other. Israel has created a reality in which the Palestinians live under a harsh military regime, which serves first and foremost Israeli and settler interests. This reality of dispossession, oppression and violation of human rights in the West Bank has lasted almost fifty years, and indicates far-reaching intentions for the future. While this state of affairs is progressively entrenched, the illusion that it can continue indefinitely grows stronger. The inevitable result is daily violation of the human rights of Palestinians living under occupation. Only ending the occupation will alter this reality.



**The Invisible Walls of Occupation: Burqah, Ramallah District, A Case Study** (October 2014) A rather unremarkable village, Burqah has never taken center stage in the fight against the occupation, and has not been subjected to extreme punitive measures. In fact, we chose to focus on Burqah precisely because it is unexceptional, as a case in point demonstrating what life under the occupation is like for residents of Palestinian villages. Burqah is a small, picturesque village, set amidst fields. Like many other villages, it endures severe travel restrictions which isolate it from its surroundings. It is also subject to massive land-grabs and stifled planning, all of which have turned it into a derelict, crowded and backward village with half its population living at or below the poverty line.

## Advocacy in Israel Promoting Human Rights in the oPt

B'Tselem's advocacy on human rights in the oPt with the Israeli public and its leaders continues to be directed at impacting policy and bringing about greater protection for the fundamental rights of the Palestinian population under occupation. B'Tselem's unique ability to engage with a wide variety of actors – ranging from military and police authorities, government offices and personnel, media, academia and other Israeli civil society organizations – enables it to direct efforts on a variety of levels and with many different systems and to engage directly with a broad scope of key Israeli target groups, thus enhancing its effectiveness and its ability to effect real change on the ground.



B'Tselem continued to engage with the Israeli military, initiating dialogue with key personnel, such as the IDF Spokesperson Unit, which sent a delegation to B'Tselem's office on April 6. B'Tselem's spokesperson, Sarit Michaeli, gave two lectures at the unit, on human rights violations and B'Tselem's work, during the reporting period. She also delivered a talk at a seminar of the Military Advocate General (MAG) Corps. B'Tselem's data coordinators are in continuous correspondence with the Israeli authorities, pushing for accountability on specific cases as well as issuing principled petitions on urgent issues. These authorities include the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division, the IDF Central Command, the IDF Judea and Samaria (West Bank) division, the IDF Legal Advisor in the West Bank, the MAG Corps, the Israel Police Department for the Investigation of Police (DIP), the Israel Prison Service, the Judea and Samaria police district, and the Hebron Brigade Commander.

B'Tselem's employed a lobbyist throughout much of 2014 to promote B'Tselem's human rights message in the Knesset (Israel's legislature) and Israeli ministries. He worked on a variety of issues by meeting the relevant personnel and MK's, writing letters, and participating in relevant committee discussions. These issues included: implementation of the Turkel Commission's recommendations, displacement of Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley, the water crisis in the West Bank, settler violence, and East Jerusalem checkpoints. Towards the end of 2014, it was decided to cease employing a dedicated lobbyist, since the potential for cooperation from Israel's current parliament and government did not justify a full-time position.

B'Tselem made **80 requests for investigation** from Israeli authorities in 2014. 20 requests were accompanied by video documentation that was shot by B'Tselem volunteers, collected by our field researchers, vetted and verified by B'Tselem field researchers and data coordination team. 37 investigations on events documented by B'Tselem were opened at B'Tselem's request in 2014. At the beginning of 2014, B'Tselem requested updates from the MAG Corps on 135 cases in varying stages of processing, including those in which a decision if an investigation will be opened has not yet been made, to cases in which investigations have been completed but the MAG has not decided if indictments will be filed.

B'Tselem made 5 requests for investigations to be opened on Gazan fatalities based on information we gathered. In three of the cases in which B'Tselem requested investigations, the Israeli military decided not to investigate. In one case, the Israeli military has not yet decided if an investigation will be opened. A limited investigation was opened in the third case. Please note that these cases are from incidents unrelated to Operation Protective Edge.

During 2014, B'Tselem filed three appeals to the MAG and the State Attorney's Appeals Department:

1. Appeal filed by Att. Gaby Lasky against the decision of the police and the DIP to close the case concerning the killing of the youth Milad 'Ayyash in East Jerusalem in 2012.
2. Appeal filed by Att. Michael Sfard, against the decision of the MAG Corps to close the case concerning the killing of Bassem Abu Rahmeh in 2009.
3. Appeal by B'Tselem in consultation with Att. Gaby Lasky against the decision by the DIP not to investigate the use of the child Muhammad Rabia as a human shield in 2013.

During 2014, B'Tselem submitted three petitions to the High Court of Justice (HCJ):

1. Petition filed by Att. Gaby Lasky to require the MAG Corps and the State Attorney's Office to make a decision regarding the investigation into the killing of 16-year-old Samir 'Awad in 2013.
2. Petition filed by Att. Gaby Lasky to require the MAG Corps and the State Attorney's Office to make a decision regarding the investigation into the killing of Lubna al-Hanash in 2013.
3. Petition filed by Atts. Hagai Kalai and Gilad Barnea against the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) decision not to allow the broadcasting of B'Tselem's paid radio spot which recited the names of Palestinian children killed in Operation Protective Edge.

B'Tselem also participated in a fourth HCJ petition against punitive home demolition policy:

On 27 November 2014, Att. Michael Sfard petitioned the HCJ on behalf of HaMoked and 7 other Israeli human rights organizations to rule the policy of punitive home demolition unlawful. The petition is backed by a legal expert opinion authored by some of Israel's top jurists, asserting that the policy severely contravenes international humanitarian and human rights law and the fundamental tenet of Israeli law whereby people cannot be punished for actions other than their own. The opinion stresses that this policy may be considered a war crime in certain circumstances, with the attendant risk for those involved in its implementation.

## International Advocacy

B'Tselem continued to maintain and cultivate relationships with diplomats stationed in Israel and the oPt, as well as with leading international agencies and NGOs, policymakers and opinion shapers. B'Tselem regularly responds to requests for information from ambassadors and embassy staff and is invited to meet visiting dignitaries—including government ministers. In 2014, B'Tselem's staff – including our executive director, research department, field researcher director, video department, international relations department, and data coordinators – met with key stakeholders to update them on the state of human rights in the oPt. At least 107 advocacy meetings took place in Israel, and 40 abroad, including by several delegations of B'Tselem's staff abroad. 1565 people took part in B'Tselem's advocacy meetings and group events.



B'Tselem conducted dozens of targeted briefings and field visits with a broad range of influential international officials and decision-makers, aimed to inform them and raise awareness to human rights and IHL violations in the oPt. These included, for instance, the French Consul General; the Egyptian Embassy; the French Ambassador for Human Rights; the Canadian Representative Office; the EU Delegation to the state of Israel; the Representative of Norway; the Belgian Representative Office; delegation from the French Parliament; delegation of 20 German diplomats (the Middle Eastern Desk Officers' Conference); and many more.

Information and analysis provided by B'Tselem was used in annual human rights reports written by major world governments, including reports written by The UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office report, the United States State Department and the Canadian government, used for internal policy decisions and was not published to the public). The Belgian government used information provided by B'Tselem about demolition of electricity poles funded by their government to hold the Israeli government responsible for destruction of property. In response to information provided by B'Tselem, the Belgian government issued a press release containing a condemnation by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders of the destruction of a Belgian cooperation project in the oPt on 29 September, when Israeli forces demolished part an electrical network financed by Belgium and implemented by the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), in the village of Khirbet a-Twayel, the West Bank

## Public Resource and Information Center

B'Tselem continued to integrate data from nearly 25 years of documentation into a single management information system (MIS) database, improving organizational efficiency and data dissemination. Combined with the capacities of B'Tselem's Salesforce-based customer relationship management (CRM) system, B'Tselem is now able to target its information and messaging to key stakeholders more effectively. These increased technological capacities represent significant force multipliers for B'Tselem's work.

B'Tselem's video department has now successfully archived thousands of hours of video footage in an accessible, searchable format, and this archive continues to prove a valuable resource for journalists, researchers and documentary filmmakers, in addition to its uses for investigations.

B'Tselem published comprehensive statistical reports and analysis on its website, providing detailed and reliable information to the public, policymakers and the media. The information includes data on fatalities, detainees and prisoners, administrative detention, rocket fire from Gaza, home demolitions, East Jerusalem land expropriation and use, the Separation Barrier, settlements, death penalty in the Palestinian Authority and under Hamas control, revocation of residency in East Jerusalem, restriction of movement, closure days, data on the water crisis.

B'Tselem's Prisoners Data Coordinator shared detailed statistics on Palestinian prisoners in Israel, obtained through monthly Freedom of Information requests to the Israeli Prison Service, via a monthly email to relevant human rights organizations, diplomats, attorneys and UN agencies.

The issue of administrative detention came to the forefront in April with a 63-day-long hunger strike of hundreds of Palestinian detainees, protesting the use of administrative detention by Israel. In June, a bill that would allow force-feeding prisoners passed its first reading in the Knesset, the Israeli legislature. B'Tselem published a paper stating the bill is unlawful and immoral, and clarifying that force-feeding prisoners on a hunger strike is prohibited by international law, as it is a violation of their dignity, their right to autonomy over their body and their right to express their protest by whatever means they choose.

B'Tselem also provided individual assistance to researchers, students, diplomats, and journalists addressing human rights issues in the oPt. B'Tselem responded to dozens of information requests each month.

In 2014, B'Tselem distributed 12 monthly newsletters in English and Hebrew by email to 22,400 individuals, including diplomats, domestic and international policymakers and journalists, providing them with current information on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.

## Visual Impact: Deterrence, Accountability and Public Awareness Video Project



Visual Impact: Deterrence, Accountability and Public Awareness continued to enhance protection for the fundamental rights of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. 'Visual Impact' trained Palestinian volunteers in volatile areas throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem to capture the experience of living under Occupation on film, to film human rights violations and confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis alongside the daily grind of Palestinian life – checkpoints, permits, arrests, and violence, and brought them to Israeli and global audiences. The video project captured and distributed images that concretize and humanize human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, in order to deter violence against Palestinians by soldiers and settlers, to promote accountability for human rights violations, and to advocate for policy changes in the oPt.

213 Palestinian video volunteers were actively trained in 2014. 13 training sessions took place in 2014, with 130 men, 77 women, and 6 children participating. B'Tselem published **30 new video items** with 5,269,328 views on its YouTube channel alone (cumulative total since September 2006). B'Tselem also issued 17 press releases that made use of video footage in both Hebrew and English to local and foreign journalists. Video footage was involved in 12 of the cases B'Tselem sought accountability on in 2014. Video footage featured prominently in monthly e-mail newsletters distributed to 22,400 people.

B'Tselem used video footage in 12 items on documented human rights violations published on our website. The items were also distributed in the newsletter, sent to 22,400 people, and the footage was also publicized widely through social media. 20 out of the made by B'Tselem to open investigations were accompanied by video documentation that was shot by B'Tselem volunteers, collected by our field researchers, vetted and verified by B'Tselem field researchers and data coordination team.

**B'Tselem's first film created through the project become internationally acclaimed in 2014.** B'Tselem's short film, "Smile and the World Will Smile Back" produced by B'Tselem staff from video captured by B'Tselem's video volunteers, of the search of their Hebron home by Israeli soldiers, has been screened at 18 film festivals and won several awards. It was screened in May 2014 in North America's largest documentary film festival, Toronto's Hot Docs festival, after a successful screening at the prestigious Berlinale Film Festival in February 2014 at the Jerusalem Film Festival July 2014, and the Milano Film Festival 2014, where it won awards for the Best Short Film and Special Mention.



## Public Outreach

In addition to providing information about human rights violations, B'Tselem uses a variety of strategies to influence public opinion. B'Tselem works hard to raise awareness of the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to generate commitment to the fundamental principles of human rights amongst Israelis. These efforts include close engagement with the Israeli and international press, a thriving new media department and B'Tselem's renowned video outreach to the wide public through shorts and documentaries.

B'Tselem's research and documentation are respected both domestically and internationally as a primary source of information for media correspondents. B'Tselem issued **66 press releases** (in Hebrew, English and Arabic) to over local and foreign journalists, including 17 that were accompanied by video documentation of the incident. Press releases were used to announce the new B'Tselem research reports, issue data summaries, highlight specific incidents of IHL and human rights violations, and provide a human rights perspective on current events.

B'Tselem also provided assistance to journalists preparing stories on human rights topics. B'Tselem's spokesperson responded to dozens of information requests each month via post, phone and electronic mail. B'Tselem's spokesperson also assisted journalists by providing information and analysis, giving interviews, proposing stories, identifying witnesses and materials, and escorting journalists into the field. B'Tselem also maintained a video archive, containing over 4,000 hours of footage from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem that provided footage to journalists. B'Tselem's Video Department served as a resource for productions, articles and reports about the Occupied Territories by identifying subjects and stories that are suited for production, providing data and statistics, artistic direction, and field escort and guidance.

## Public Campaigns

Eyes Wide Open Photo Blog: The blog brings to life B'Tselem's multifaceted work for Human Rights in the West Bank and Gaza through candid photos of impossible situations. It features select photos taken by B'Tselem's and volunteers during their work in the oPt. In 2014, B'Tselem published 17 new posts to the blog containing multiple images of events, documenting a range of issues, including the demolition of the homes of the community of Id'eis in the Jordan valley, Israeli military training in Khirbet Jenbah fields despite HCJ ruling forbidding it; the long lines of people waiting at Qalandiya Checkpoint to enter Israel, clashes between youths and soldiers in the area east of Jabalya Refugee Camp, severe problems with water supply in West Bank and Gaza, demolitions in East Jerusalem, and deserted docks in Gaza.

Facing Expulsion Live Blog: Thousands of people – residents of dozens of Palestinian communities located throughout Area C, the West Bank – face imminent expulsion by Israeli authorities on a variety of pretexts. The live blog pools the regular updates we get from B'Tselem field researchers regarding the communities and any attempts by authorities to expel them. The blog features an interactive map: you can click on the

number of a community cluster and then on the tent icon marked on the map for further information about communities facing the risk of expulsion. The information in the blog reflects the latest state affairs known to us and is updated as we receive new data from the field. Unfortunately, the Facing Expulsion

In 2014, B'Tselem launched four public campaigns. In tandem, B'Tselem released mini-campaigns with interactive materials. These included:



**So Near and Yet So far – illustrated accounts:** Five comic strips in the campaign depict the stories of women as told in [So Near and Yet So Far](#), the joint report by HaMoked and B'Tselem (January 2014). The report describes how – in cases when either a West Bank woman marries a Gaza resident or a woman from Gaza marries a West Bank man – the Israeli policy of isolation of the Gaza Strip results in a forced separation between families. Women end up feeling torn between their life with their husband and children and their longing to see the family into which they were born and whom they are rarely permitted to visit. We entrusted five women illustrators with the stories of five women who appear in the report.

**International Women's day, 2014:** In honor of this year's International Women's Day, we launched a special project to highlight women's perspective on the fight to counteract human right violations in the West Bank and Gaza.

The project is part of an endeavor to show the unique way in which Palestinian women experience violations of their rights. In this context, B'Tselem produced three short video interviews, "Women behind the Lens" where our camera volunteers relate their experiences. Manal Ja'bri, B'Tselem video volunteer, published an article on the project in an article in 972 Magazine: [Women behind the lens: Palestinians filming the occupation](#)

**"The Children in Gaza Have Names":** During Operation Protective Edge, B'Tselem recorded a radio spot that recited names of children killed in Gaza. The IBA wouldn't air it, on the grounds of being "controversial". B'Tselem appealed the decision to the HCJ but was denied. B'Tselem proceeded to post the spot on Facebook and it reached over a million people.



**National Parks in East Jerusalem:** Since East Jerusalem was annexed, several national parks have been declared in or adjacent to Palestinian neighborhoods, thereby restricting their development and promoting immaterial aims such as maintaining a Jewish majority in Jerusalem. This campaign included an interactive tour of the Old Bogus National Parks.

## B'Tselem Website

B'Tselem's website exposure expanded considerably in 2014, due primarily to the wealth of information B'Tselem published in Operation Protective Edge. Google Analytics figures show that in 2014 an astounding 1,485,246 pages were viewed from our website in 673,375 sessions by 484,891 unique users. This is an 81.87% increase of unique users compared to 2013. B'Tselem welcomes the increase in website exposure as a key step in providing the Israeli public and international community with accurate and impartial information about human rights in the oPt71% of B'Tselem's website users were new visitors, while 29 % were returning visitors. B'Tselem's website was viewed most from these 10 countries: Israel, the United States, Palestine, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France, Netherlands and Australia.

Comparison of 2014 and 2013 Website Exposure						
Year	Page views	Increase in Page Views	Sessions	Increase in Sessions	Users	Increase in Users
2014	1,485,246	<b>58.68%</b>	673,375	<b>72.51%</b>	484,891	<b>81.87%</b>
2013	935,978		390,336		266,617	

## **Website Items Published in 2014 Based on Documented HR/IHL Violations – By Category**

**7** Items on Communities in Danger of Expulsion

**2** Items on Home Demolitions

**4** Items about Israeli Security Forces Violence against Palestinians

**18** Items about Palestinian Fatalities Killed by Israeli Security Forces

**4** Items on Palestinian's Injured by Israeli Security Forces

**4** Items on Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees

**5** Items about Israeli Settler Violence against Palestinians:

**2** Items about Movement Restrictions

**65** Items about Operation Protective Edge, including figures and testimonies.

**8** Items about Other Human Rights Abuses

## **Social Media Outreach**

B'Tselem's Public Outreach Department continued to increase the reach and resonance of our human rights message using new media and related multimedia technologies. B'Tselem actively used interactive social networking and other web-based tools to target Israeli and international audiences and to create a hub of public debate and engagement. These new media tools have significantly expanded B'Tselem's outreach, with hundreds of thousands exposed to B'Tselem's messages weekly. B'Tselem's strong voice of in the new media is especially important in Israel, where information on the human rights situation in the oPt is strikingly absent from the mainstream press and the public agenda.

### **Facebook**

B'Tselem's Facebook exposure nearly quadrupled in 2014, driven by B'Tselem's outspoken criticism of human rights violations during Operation Protective Edge. On our English Facebook page, the "likes" rose from 18,572 on Jan 1 2014 to 53,291 "likes" on Dec 31, 2014. On our Hebrew Facebook page we grew from 17,20 to 51,424 "likes" in 2014. Just in the week of August 5, the page grew from by nearly 13,000 people from 37,901 to 50,677.

B'Tselem's Facebook posts on documented human rights violations reached unprecedented audiences in 2014. Two of our Hebrew posts on the war in Gaza reached well over 1,000,000 in 2014, which is astounding in a country with a population of 8 million. Our English posts reached hundreds of thousands, with the top post reaching over 650,000 people.

### **YouTube**

B'Tselem's YouTube channel featured 30 new videos in 2014. It is one of Israel's largest NGO channels, with 5,934 subscribers. At the end of 2014, the channel had 5,423,999 cumulative views since it was launched in 2006. 2014's Top three YouTube videos:

1. Settler attempts to take down Palestinian flag, released on Mar 12, 2014, with 314,942 views. B'Tselem camera volunteer Shadi Sidr filmed a settler trying to climb onto Shadi's own roof to take down a Palestinian flag flying there. The settler got caught in the barbed wire that encircles the roof. The two men go to speaking to one another, and the settler informed Shadi that Shadi's roof actually belongs to the settler, not Shadi, because the roof is part of Land of Israel. An Israeli soldier then came to the house. He too demanded that Shadi take down the flag, trying to justify his order by saying there are no other flags in the area. The footage belies this statement, showing many Israeli flags nearby. Shortly thereafter, five other soldiers arrived at the house. They ordered Shadi and his brothers 'Abed and Adham to take down the flag, threatening to arrest Shadi should he refuse. The incident was filmed by B'Tselem field researcher Manal al-Jaabari and B'Tselem camera volunteer Mahmoud Abu Hayah.
  
2. Israeli Soldiers detain developmentally-disabled Palestinian child in Hebron, which was published on October 19, 2014, and got 139,889 views. In the video footage, filmed by B'Tselem volunteer Samih Da'na

from his window, soldiers are seen holding the boy, handcuffing him, blindfolding him and closing him in the jeep, despite cries by Palestinian residents that the boy is mentally disabled. The footage also shows settlers from Kiryat Arba, watching the incident from behind the settlement's fence. Some are seen calling out encouragement to the soldiers, including several racist remarks.

3. Footage of the [killing of Nadim Nawarah in the Nakba Day incident at Bitunya](#), with 55,488 views. On 15 May 2014, four Palestinians were shot in their torsos in Bitunya. Two of them, both minors, died. B'Tselem's findings refute the military's claim that only crowd control measures were used and show that all four were shot with live ammunition, although they posed no danger to the forces. In November 2014, two Border Police officers were arrested for the killing of the two Palestinians. The official investigation's findings corroborated B'Tselem findings that Nadim Nawarah and Muhammad Salameh Abu Daher were killed, and two other Palestinians injured, by live ammunition and not rubber-coated metal bullets. B'Tselem believes that its analysis of the footage as well as the media attention it brought to the incident played a key role in impelling the Israeli military to complete its investigation and to make arrests in the case.

## B'Tselem in the Media

During 2014, B'Tselem continued to be cited on a daily basis in Israeli and foreign press, with over 1,000 citations in the Israeli Press and about 2,000 in the international press (not including new media). B'Tselem video footage also continued to be utilized regularly in the press, including prime time news editions in Israel. In addition, B'Tselem's staff was frequently interviewed in the press.

Google Scholar alone lists 227 citations of B'Tselem in academic articles just in 2014. These include articles on a variety of topics and publications, including *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*, *World Political Science Review*, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, and *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, among many others. Much of this information was gathered by academics through B'Tselem's publications on its website, social media, and through correspondence with our researchers.

Some of the media highlights during 2014 include:

- The NY Times Blog: [Israel's DM Calls Settlers' Attacks on Palestinians 'Outright Terror'](#) (January 8)
- France 24: [Video: Israeli soldiers accused of 'collusion' in settler violence](#) (January 14)
- NPR: [Palestinian Herders Pick Up The Pieces After Homes Destroyed](#) (January 21)
- NBC News: [Palestinians marry, but remain separated by Israeli borders](#) (February 4)
- AFP: [Israelis fume over EU parliament president 's water remark](#) (February 13)
- The Times of Israel: [Two decades after massacre, Hebron is still hurting](#) (February 25)
- The Washington Post: [Israel demolishes Palestinian houses in vital Jordan Valley](#) (March 8)
- The Guardian: [The battle to be Israel's conscience](#) (March 12)
- Al-Jazeera English: [Palestinians forced to demolish own homes](#) (March 23)
- BBC News: [Video 'shows shootings of Palestinian protesters'](#) (May 20)
- Channel 4 News: [Israel accused of unlawful killing as teenagers shot – video](#) (May 21)
- CNN: [Source: Israel suspends soldier after 2 Palestinians die in shooting](#) (May 29)
- Al Jazeera America: [Rights group: Israel's search for settlers led to collective punishment](#) (June 17)
- NPR: [Israel Says It Is Investigating Dozens Of Gaza Shootings](#) (September 12)
- Ha'aretz: [B'Tselem's quixotic fight against the 'temporary' occupation](#) (September 24)
- The Independent: [Israeli soldiers filmed 'blindfolding and detaining disabled 11-year-old Palestinian boy accused of throwing stones'](#) (October 23)
- CNN: [Israeli police officer arrested in Palestinian teen's death](#) (November 12)
- NY Times: [Israeli Forces Demolish Home of Palestinian Who Used a Car to Kill 2](#) (November 19)
- BBC: [Israel revokes residency of Jerusalem attacker's widow](#) (November 26)
- NY Times: [Facing Rights Accusations, Israel Opens Gaza Inquiries](#): December 6.

Some twenty articles and op-eds by B'Tselem staff, volunteers, board and public council were published in Israeli and international media. These included:

- Jessica Montell, [The Jerusalem Post Magazine: Our values, our homes](#) (March 3)
- Anat Saragusti, [The Hill Blog: Israel's indefensible settlements](#) (March 18)
- Anat Saragusti, [Haaretz English: AIPAC's Israel is not my Israel](#) (March 18)
- Sarit Michaeli, Haaretz Hebrew: [The moral abyss is to blame](#) (April 3)
- Jessica Montell, JTA: Op-Ed: [The West Bank is under military occupation, and that's a fact](#) (April 8)
- David Zunesheine, Haaretz Hebrew: With cameras you shall make a war (May 27)
- Alon Liel, 124News: [Proud to be a 'traitor'](#) (September 3)