



Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

What Did 2023 Look Like?

2023 has been devastating for Palestinians in the West Bank, with [the most extreme-right government](#) in Israel's history ushering in the entrenchment of annexation and apartheid at a dizzying speed. With the [mass 'regularization'](#) of Israeli outposts well underway, unprecedented settler pogroms wreaking havoc in Palestinian villages, and the balance of powers governing the West Bank shifting dramatically from military rule to Israeli civilian rule, Israeli authorities have no desire to respect the human rights of Palestinians or put an end to the 56-year occupation of Palestinian territory.

[2023 set a record for the number of settler violence incidents](#) in the West Bank since 2006 when Yesh Din began systematically monitoring incidents. The severity was reflected both in the number and gravity of violent events, the number of Israeli civilians involved, and their outcomes. Dozens of homes and vehicles were set on fire, and 10 Palestinians were killed by settlers, in addition to others who were killed by soldiers as a result of settler violence incidents. Earlier this year, together with several Israeli CSOs, we launched a [campaign](#)

aimed at raising awareness to the issue of settler violence on over 70 bus stops across Tel Aviv.

2023 opened with concrete attempts to silence Israeli civil society's criticism of the 56-year occupation when a commitment to pass [a bill that would impose a 65% tax on civil society organizations funded by "foreign governmental entities"](#) was written into Israel's 37th government coalition agreement. In May, the Ministerial Committee for Legislation was scheduled to vote on such a bill, which, if passed, would have likely forced Yesh Din to shut down. Thankfully, due to intensive advocacy efforts made by Israeli civil society, including Yesh Din, and [international pressure](#) to allow Israeli civil society to continue to play its vital role, the vote was postponed indefinitely, and this threat appears to be neutralized for the immediate future. The year ended with an ongoing war that has shaken the lives of all Palestinians and Israelis on this land and is still threatening the present and future of human rights.



פוגרום המתנחלים בגיבוי הממשלה

הצטרפו לקבוצת עדכונים על
אירועים מהשטח ופעולות נגד



חוזרים

זאב



נשק מלא
שומרים ביתר



שלום
עכשיו



[שופרים
שהיקה]

מעל 50% מהתקציב של חלק מהארגונים החתומים על מודעה זו הגיע מ"שויות מדיניות זרות"

One of 70 signs on bus stops across Tel Aviv as part of a campaign we launched in July, aimed at raising awareness to the issue of settler violence.

Highlighted Activity During 2023

New Project Analyses the Impact of Israeli Shepherding Outposts on Palestinian Shepherding Communities

In January, we launched a new project with Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), investigating how [Israeli shepherding outposts](#) impact Palestinian shepherding communities east of Ramallah.

Unfortunately intensifying settler violence and resource deprivation impacting their subsistence have forced the entire communities of Ras a Tin and Ein Samiya to leave their lands, as have entire families from al Muarajat, Wadi a Siq, and Ein a Rashash. At least [15 shepherding communities from across the West Bank have been forcibly transferred](#) since October 7.

The Legal Struggle Against Homesh

Yesh Din devoted significant efforts to our legal struggle against the Homesh outpost, on behalf of the rightful landowners from Burqa in 2023 as in the past decade. While the year began on a positive note, with an [order nisi issued](#) by the High Court in January, it quickly deteriorated with the state announcing its intention to establish a new settlement in Homesh, subsequently [canceling the Disengagement Law](#) to advance this plan. Yesh Din pursued every avenue to oppose this blatant land dispossession, including briefings and updates to journalists and international stakeholders, participating in Knesset

committee hearings, legal correspondence, complaints filed, litigation, and a [public campaign](#) warning against the precedent this case could set as the first settlement evacuated in the 2005 disengagement poised to be re-established. In August, the Israeli High Court Justices [issued a ruling deleting Yesh Din's petition](#) to evacuate Homesh and restore access of rightful landowners to their lands. However, [the legal struggle with the residents of Burqa against the Homesh outpost continued](#), and Yesh Din [filed another High Court petition](#) on behalf of the Head of the Burqa Village Council [demanding that the newly defined jurisdiction of the Samaria Regional Council](#), intended for the re-establishment of the Homesh settlement, be canceled. The petition further calls for the public ('state') lands in the area to be allocated for the benefit of Burqa residents, rather than to the new settlement.

New Reports Published

Yesh Din then led the creation of a first-of-its-kind joint situation report in cooperation with 17 Israeli human rights organizations on [the state of the occupation in its 56th year](#), published in June. Later in June, Yesh Din published a [legal opinion on the legal status of the Israeli occupation](#), in advance of state submissions to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its forthcoming advisory opinion on the legal status of the Israeli occupation. Ahead of publication, we conducted a series of briefings with EU states to inform their submissions to the ICJ.

The Current War

Yesh Din was, and is, horrified by the cruel assault carried out by Hamas on Israel on October 7. We have [unequivocally condemned the massacre](#), while also expressing concern for the lives of civilians

in Gaza vulnerable to Israeli fire in the ensuing war, and in the West Bank facing a surge of violence.

During Hamas's massacre on October 7, Yesh Din's Executive Director, Ziv Stahl, was trapped inside a safe room with her family in Kibbutz Kfar Azza, fearing for her life, while Hamas kidnapped and killed civilians outside the door. Read Ziv's [op-ed in Haaretz](#) newspaper urging the Government of Israel not to take the path of revenge, but rather to work towards a political solution, which, in her words, "we are obligated to try, and we must begin this work today."

In the wake of October 7 and the ensuing war in Gaza, Yesh Din identified an escalation of settler and security forces violence in the West Bank under cover of war. Israeli movement restrictions all but imposed a total closure on the West Bank, with entrances and exits of many villages and towns blocked. The traditional olive harvest was almost completely obstructed, causing massive financial damage to thousands of Palestinian families. In the three months since October 7, Yesh Din documented [240+](#) incidents of settler violence in 93 West Bank towns and villages, yet to our knowledge, Israeli law enforcement authorities have not filed a single indictment. We fear the West Bank will deteriorate further into lawlessness with no accountability.

Yesh Din signed several public statements with the Israeli human rights community opposing Israeli actions in the wake of October 7, calling on the international community to take action. Among these was a [joint appeal together with 15 Israeli SCOs to President Joe Biden](#), urging him to work for the release of all hostages and an end to the bombardment of civilians, both in Israel and in Gaza.

Media Outreach

Yesh Din responded to the escalation in violence by documenting it, distributing its information and analysis to the Israeli, Palestinian, and international media and diplomatic community, and calling on the international community to hold Israel accountable for violence against Palestinians. Yesh Din has taken a leading role in documenting the situation on the ground and providing the Israeli and international media, Israeli duty-bearers, and the diplomatic and international community with accurate and updated information.

Yesh Din made a strategic decision to enhance its media visibility and expand its audiences in Israel and around the world to raise awareness of the absence of accountability for Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and contribute its documentation and commentary to the public debate. Yesh Din's expertise was sought by the media, and Yesh Din was cited in major news outlets including [The Washington Post](#), [The New York Times](#), [The Financial Times](#), [The Guardian](#), [BBC](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Haaretz](#), [Dawn](#), and the [International Crisis Group](#).

Yesh Din shared its expertise in at least 10 TV and radio interviews in 2023, including on the two prominent Arabic radio channels in Israel, radio A-Shams and radio Nas - In February, Executive Director Ziv Stahl was interviewed on the [Occupied Thoughts podcast](#) by the Foundation for Middle East Peace about settler violence, and on [Democrat TV](#) on proposed legislation allowing Palestinian homes within Israel to be invaded without search warrants. In June, Yesh Din attorney Shlomy Zachary was interviewed on the [One a Day](#) podcast of Israeli news Channel 12 and spoke about our High Court of Justice

petition to evacuate Homesh. In July, Yesh Din's Legal Advisor, Michael Sfard, was interviewed on Israeli News [Channel 12](#) to present Yesh Din's legal opinion that was submitted to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and on the letter we sent to the Attorney General alerting her to the fact that the Knesset's decision to cancel the Disengagement Clause does not apply to Palestinians living under military rule in the oPt.

Social Media

Yesh Din significantly grew our social media presence in 2023 via our [Hebrew-language Facebook account](#), new Telegram channel, and [English Twitter account](#). Yesh Din's social media presence on Facebook reached a total of 378K users, publishing over 120 posts (such as [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#)) resulting in our following increasing by around 29%. Our Twitter following has multiplied by five, with several [videos](#) reaching [millions of views](#) within days.

What's Next?

Ahead of the New Year, Yesh Din will continue to provide legal aid to Palestinian victims of ideologically motivated crime in the West Bank, facilitate workshops for residents of Palestinian towns and villages who are vulnerable to settler violence on how to exhaust legal rights, and we will continue to urge the international community to demand accountability from the Government of Israel for its systemic violation of the rights of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

We wish you, our community of partners and supporters, a happy new year, and send our wishes for justice, peace, and liberty to all.



Yesh Din lawyers and field researchers on a visit to the plot of a Palestinian land owner who is being denied access to his land - October 4, 2023.

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For more information contact:

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Yesh Din is required by law to make the following statement:

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Yesh Din is proud to be funded by States that are committed to the rule of law, that believe the occupation is not an internal Israeli matter, and that support the defense of international humanitarian law and human rights.



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