



Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

Unprecedented Pogrom in Southern Nablus Leaves Hundreds of Palestinians Injured and a Medic Killed

On Sunday night, February 26, approximately 400 settlers invaded the village of Huwwara following [the killing of two settlers](#) earlier that day. The attack had a severe effect on the entire southern Nablus region, with [hundreds of Palestinians injured](#) and one killed, [at least 100 vehicles incinerated](#), and [tens of houses vandalized and burned](#), according to media reports. Israeli security forces were present at the scene and did not act to prevent the violence, but rather provided backup to the settlers during the attacks. Speaking in a conference on Wednesday, Minister Smotrich openly proclaimed that in his view ["Huwwara needs to be wiped out"](#).

Settlers also seized upon the opportunity to [return to the evacuated outpost Evyatar](#), illegally built on Beita village lands.

Violent confrontation continued between the military and residents of Huwwara on February 27.



*Huwwara on fire. Photo: local photographer Hisham Abu Shaqra.
February 26, 2022.*

A failure by security forces to enforce the law on settler violence

In accordance with the system of laws originating in international law, military security legislation, rulings of the Supreme Court and legal and operational guidelines and procedures, the role and responsibility of Israeli military forces subject to the Laws of Occupation are to protect the safety and property of the protected local Palestinian residents. Soldiers and commanders who witness criminal offenses and do not act to prevent them are neglecting this duty and thereby committing disciplinary and criminal offenses.

The negligence of the military to protect the Palestinian population from the settler rampage in Huwwara was not the exception, but the rule. Increasingly in recent years, Yesh Din has documented soldiers

and commanders failing to act according to their duty when they are present at incidents of violence and property crimes. Instead, they frequently join in the attacks by shooting stun grenades and tear gas at Palestinians, as was the case in Huwwara.

No arrests were made during attacks. Today (March 1) [six suspects were detained](#), currently the only suspects detained out of the hundreds of perpetrators in the rampage.

[The lack of law enforcement in this incident should be viewed in the wider context of the decades-long systemic failure to enforce the law on Israelis who harm Palestinians. Between 2005 and 2022 93% of all police investigation files monitored by Yesh Din were closed without an indictment.](#)

The failings of Israel's law enforcement system can be observed in every aspect of its response to ideologically motivated crime by Israelis against Palestinians in the West Bank: ineffective prevention, failed police investigations, low indictment rate, and lenient sentences for convicted offenders. All of these result in a lack of deterrence for the criminals and leave Palestinians in the OPT defenseless in the face of attacks and harassment by Israelis.

The fact that this is a systemic failure that has continued for at least two decades proves the State of Israel normalizes and supports ideologically motivated violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank as a matter of policy and benefits from its effects.



In the video above, a resident of Huwwara describes the attack and the collusion between the military and settlers to a Yesh Din field researcher:

Return to Evyatar: Several dozen settlers seized upon the opportunity presented by the spirit of vengeance and lawlessness to [return to the evacuated outpost of Evyatar](#). Israel evacuated settlers from Evyatar in 2021, with promises to allow their return once the outpost was 'regularized'. The outpost sits near the village Beita, and consistent resistance from the Palestinian locals has resulted in approximately 10 people killed by the military and hundreds injured. Reportedly, border police officers responded to the scene to remove the invaders.

As of Monday morning, February 27th, military forces had closed the Za'tara checkpoint, effectively imposing collective punishment on the local population by preventing Palestinians from entering or leaving the area. Additionally, all entrances to the village of Tel were closed off. Israeli settlers continued to invade other villages in Nablus during the night of February 27th, vandalizing property and physically

assaulting residents.

As a result of the attacks, the Israeli military has forbidden business owners in Huwwara from opening their doors for at least three days. Today, Minister Smotrich called to forbid the re-opening of businesses for an entire month as a deterrence measure against stone throwing.

Yesh Din calls upon the international community to demand accountability for those who participated in this crime and to demand urgent protection for Palestinians of the West Bank.

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For more information contact:

Chanah Dulin; chanah@yesh-din.org; +972 (0)58.416.4797

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