



Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

Investigating or Stalling?

The Army Took **Two to Five Years** to Complete an Investigation Into **45%** of the Complaints Filed by Palestinians Who Were Harmed by Israeli Soldiers



In 2016, Israel established time limitations for processing complaints of suspected violation of the laws of armed conflict for the very first time. Two commissions that addressed this matter, the [Ciechanover](#)

[Commission](#) and the [Turkel Commission](#), determined that the Military Advocate General's Corps must decide whether or not to launch a criminal investigation within 14 weeks at most. In cases where a criminal investigation is launched, it must conclude within nine months, and in severe cases, within one year. The decision whether to file an indictment must not exceed 9 months in duration, and one year in exceptional cases.

A decade later, this new data sheet examines whether these timeframes are applied in practice by examining how long it takes the military law enforcement system to process complaints concerning offenses perpetrated by Israeli soldiers committed against Palestinians and their property in the West Bank in 2016-2025. The data presented here is based on legal representation provided by Yesh Din to Palestinian residents of the West Bank harmed by Israeli soldiers during this period.

Examining how long it takes to process complaints may seem trivial, and it certainly pales in comparison with the killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the results of rampant settler violence in the West Bank. Yet timeframes for handling complaints are crucial when considering how seriously and effectively allegations of harm to Palestinians are treated. **The prolonged processing of complaints is one of the central factors underlying the extremely low rate of indictments** in complaints submitted by Palestinians regarding harm caused by Israeli soldiers. Between 2016 and 2024, 2,427 complaints were brought to the attention of the military. From the 2,427 complaints, just 552 criminal investigations were opened (22.7% of the complaints), and 23 indictments were served (0.9% of the complaints).

Data collected over a decade of monitoring the army's processing of Palestinians' complaints reflects that **the army is unable to comply with the timeframes set according to its own recommendations**. On average, it took 213 days to decide whether or not to launch a criminal investigation, approximately 7 months, over twice the permitted time. In cases involving fatalities where investigations were not immediately launched, it took 304 days on average, approximately 10 months, to decide whether or not to launch an investigation. Processing of nearly half the complaints (approx. 45%) took 2-5 years.

The delay occurs mainly within the Military Advocate General's Corps, particularly before deciding whether or not to launch a criminal investigation, and to a lesser extent, once the MPCID investigation is concluded and the case is referred back to a MAG for a decision to be made whether to file an indictment or close the investigation file. The lengthy wait until a criminal investigation is launched, and another wait until a decision to submit an indictment is made based on the investigation's outcome, hinders investigations in practice, precluding the possibility that the military law enforcement system will penalize offenders and address violations of the laws of armed conflict.

By refraining from investigating complaints submitted to it promptly, effectively, and with due gravitas, the Military Advocate General's Corps sends a clear message to soldiers that the army and the state condone violence, looting property, beating, wounding, or even killing Palestinians in the West Bank. The continuous permission granted to soldiers to operate unconstrained vis-à-vis the Palestinian population in the West Bank has turned violence, cruelty, and degradation into

measures exercised by commanders in the field, enabling them to operate more easily.

The army's intentional delays in handling Palestinians' complaints serve two purposes: Domestically, it helps the State of Israel provide impunity to soldiers from prosecution and enables the army to carry out a policy of control over the Palestinians without the burdensome limitations of the rule of law. Internationally, it creates a facade of law enforcement and the appearance of a functioning mechanism, discouraging international intervention by evading its duty to treat cases that violate the laws of armed conflict with due gravitas. This data sheet reflects how Israel undermines this semblance of law enforcement and invites international involvement.

Key Data:

- According to data provided by the army to Yesh Din, between 2016 and 2024, only 22.7% of the complaints led to a criminal investigation, and in just 0.9% of the complaints, indictments were served.
- Processing of nearly half the complaints (approx. 45%) took 2-5 years.
- In 74% of complaints, the decision whether to launch an investigation or not exceeded the maximum 14 week-time limitation. The average duration of a decision to launch an investigation or not is approximately seven months.
- In fewer than half (46%) of the incidents involving fatalities, an investigation was opened immediately, as required by the army's own investigation policy. In cases when investigations were not launched immediately, the average duration for an investigation to be opened is ten months

- For over one-third of concluded investigation files transferred to the MAG Corps, it takes over one year to decide whether to take legal action against offenders.

TIMEFRAMES FOR PROCESSING COMPLAINTS CONCERNING VIOLATION OF THE LAWS OF ARMED CONFLICT			
	PARTY RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	IN PRACTICE
DECIDING WHETHER TO LAUNCH A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION	MAG Corps	Max. 14 weeks from receipt of the complaint	74% of complaints exceeded the timeframe Average: 213 days Approx. 7 months
THE DURATION OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION	MPCID	Max. 9 months One year in exceptional cases	22% of investigations exceeded the timeframe (47% exceeded the 9 month timeframe) Average: 298 days Approx. 10 months
DECIDING WHETHER TO SERVE INDICTMENTS	MAG Corps	Max. 9 months One year in exceptional cases	35% of cases exceeded the timeframe (50% exceeded the 9 month timeframe) Average: 306 days Approx. 10 months

[Read the full data sheet](#)

The HCJ Ruling Dismissed the Petition Against the Cabinet Decision to Resume Settlement of Land Title Procedures in the West Bank

On Tuesday, January 27, 2026, the High Court of Justice dismissed the petition filed by Yesh Din, together with ACRI, Bimkom, and HaMoked, against the decision of the Security Cabinet from May 2025 ordering the resumption of land registration (settlement of title) proceedings in the West Bank that were frozen when Israel conquered the West Bank in 1967, in accordance with the laws of occupation.

[Read further background on the Cabinet decision](#)

In recent years, settlers have attempted to promote the resumption of land registration proceedings for several reasons - the first being the very articulation of a policy of permanent sovereignty. The second is the desire to reshape the legal situation in light of changes on the ground over the past 50 years in a manner that benefits the state and settlers, following a long series of dispossession processes carried out by them. This effort partially succeeded in May 2025, when the Security Cabinet adopted a decision ordering the renewal of land registration proceedings. After several appeals Yesh Din had submitted that went unanswered, we filed a petition against the decision of the Ministerial Committee, along with a request for an interim injunction against the decision and its implementation.

[**Read about the petition**](#)

The state responded to the petition with a series of arguments, first and foremost, that the petition was premature since the military order had not yet been issued, thus the decision is not final; that the petitioners, as civil society organizations, lacked standing; and that the issue was a political matter in which the Court should not intervene.

In our response, we argued that the government had already begun implementing the decision by allocating budgets to staff numerous positions - meaning that the state withheld information from the Court; and how the state's remaining arguments were incorrect, including reliance on a fabricated case law that does not in fact exist as precedents supporting its position.

On Tuesday, January 27, 2026, the Court issued a brief ruling accepting the state's argument that the petition was premature, on the grounds that the Cabinet's decision is only one step among several required and therefore does not yet constitute a final decision. The

Court did not address the other arguments, including those concerning the illegality of the land registration process or the Cabinet's issuance of instructions to the military commander without the exercise of independent discretion.

In other words, instead of preventing the state in advance from carrying out a move whose clear result will be the mass dispossession of Palestinian residents of their land and the application of Israeli sovereignty in areas of the West Bank, the justices chose to postpone the decision and allow the harm to occur. In practical terms, this means that Smotrich and his associates are free to continue advancing a policy whose implementation will cause widespread harm to human rights and violate international law.

[Read the ruling](#)

[Join Our WhatsApp Group for Diplomatic Updates](#)

We invite you to join our WhatsApp group for diplomatic updates, in which we send periodic updates on important developments in the West Bank easily and conveniently. It is a 'silent' group, meaning only the administrators can post messages, and there are no conversations or debates. You are welcome to join and share the link with colleagues.

[Join Yesh Din's new WhatsApp group](#)

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