

נשים נגד הכיבוש ולמען זכויות אדם  
نساء ضد الاحتلال ومن اجل حقوق الانسان  
Women against the Occupation and for Human Rights



## Annual Report 2022



Crowding at Barta'a Checkpoint, as seen on the morning of November 2, 2022. Photo by Shuli Bar

# About MachsomWatch

Since 2001, MachsomWatch has observed, monitored, documented, and raised awareness about conditions faced by Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) under Israeli military rule. In 2004, MachsomWatch became an independent legal entity, registering as the not-for-profit company called the *Women's Fund for Human Rights, Ltd.*

MachsomWatch is composed of around 200 Israeli women volunteers. As an all-women grassroots organization, we reject hierarchy and work only through cooperative teamwork. The organization does not have an office, as we work from our homes and in the field. Expenses are kept to a minimum and are only used for material needs.

MachsomWatch activists dedicate extraordinary time, energy, and commitment to protesting the Occupation. We embody a democratic feminine civilian presence in military spaces. Our daily presence in front of soldiers and Palestinian civilians demonstrates that there are Israelis who oppose the Occupation. Playing the dissident role in Israeli society subjects us to challenges to our own free speech and the right to protest, even within a society that sees itself as democratic.

## Contact information

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Meeting of MachsomWatch members, March 2022:

# Challenges in 2022

2022 marked the 55th year of Israel's Occupation of the West Bank. Several generations of both Palestinians and Israelis have been born into this reality of occupied and occupier. Israel sees the Occupied Territories, and particularly Area C, where Israel controls both security and civilian aspects, as its own, where it can take over territory, exploit natural resources for its own needs, and build settlements for Israelis only. The Palestinians living under occupation, especially those in Area C, face human rights violations on a regular basis by both the army and the Israeli settlers who work together to deter the Palestinians from remaining on their land.

Members of MachsomWatch continued to witness various violations, the differential treatment given to Palestinians and to Israelis, and the pervasive ignorance among Israelis about the situation, as well as the refusal of many Israelis to treat the Palestinians as fellow humans and not as terrorists.

## Our Focus

### Monitoring Checkpoints

During 2022, we held 490 shifts to the checkpoints. We reported on many changes at the checkpoints, including the closure of breaches in the Separation Wall, overcrowding at checkpoints, new checkpoints that were suddenly manned, the closure of villages as collective punishment, particularly in the South Hebron Hills and Azzun; without our presence, it is doubtful this information would be made public. And despite Israeli attempts to make the large checkpoints more like border crossings, the checkpoints and the restrictions imposed are still very much a point of contention. Our monitoring and reporting on the checkpoints have helped to maintain interest in the subject, as evident from news articles and reports by other organizations about the checkpoints and permit regime.



Qalandiya Checkpoint on June 21, 2022. Photo by Ronit Dahan-Ramati



MachsomWatch members talk with Palestinians in Zanuta, near Hebron, February 7, 2022. Photo by Leah Shakdiel

#### Highlights of our checkpoint monitoring included:

- Unmanned checkpoints. We observed checkpoints inside the West Bank that were previously open and unmanned and where cars could pass freely had become suddenly manned by soldiers, such as Hermesh Checkpoint in the Northern West Bank.
- We reported on the closure or the closing of the main to entries to villages as a collective punishment. The town of Azzun, which we visit frequently, was cut off most of October.
- In the second half of 2022, we significantly increased our presence at checkpoints in Hebron and the South Hebron Hills, where vulnerable Palestinian communities are under constant threat of attacks by settlers and demolition by the Israeli authorities.
- In August, the army started closing the breaches in the Separation Barrier that we had observed since the beginning of the pandemic and reported on. These breaches became public knowledge in April 2021. The closure of the breaches has caused the Barta'a Checkpoint to be crowded once again.
- In September, hearing and reporting about the attack on Hafez Hurani, a Palestinian farmer who was cultivating his land when attacked by settlers from Havat Maon. Hafez defended himself with his shovel but still had both his hands broken. A settler was also

seriously injured by Hurani. The settlers also punctured the tires of the ambulance that came to treat and evacuate him. The police only spoke to the settlers and arrested Hafez on attempted murder.

- In October, we observed that at the entrances to al-Tuwani, Samu', and Abu Safi in the South Hebron Hills, the army was working to create dirt embankments to prevent exit and entry.
- At Qalandiya, one of our volunteers who was verbally attacked by army personnel, being told that she hampered their work and that she was breaking the law, reported regularly on how seriously ill or injured Palestinians were delayed at the checkpoint in the back-to-back ambulance procedure that regularly takes place. In one case, a one year old child from Kfar Aqeb (considered part of Jerusalem), who had been wounded in his ear, was delayed passage through Qalandiya in order to receive medical attention in Jerusalem.



MachsomWatch members visiting Susiya, photographed with Member of Knesset Issawi Fredj, January 25, 2022

## Maintaining a Regular Presence in the Jordan Valley

We made **50 visits** to the Jordan Valley in 2022. This year, as in past years, MachsomWatch volunteers regularly accompanied Palestinian shepherds to protect them from aggressive settlers who have attacked the shepherds as their flocks graze. We are convinced that without our presence, the attacks on the shepherds and the confiscation of their animals would be much worse.

In May, MachsomWatch activists, together with members of the Jordan Valley Coalition, helped to build a natural water reservoir for Palestinians, where they could bring their flocks to drink.

We brought toys and books in Arabic for children, which they fought over and regularly took a Palestinian woman for medical treatment in Jericho. We also brought a hospital bed to the Jordan Valley for a patient who needed it. In September, we distributed bags of 16 sacks of wheat, fava, and lupine beans to needy families in both Fasa'il and Khalat Makhoul. The food was provided by Pesia's Kitchen in Jaffa, which receives donations from factories or anyone who wishes to give to it and delivers to the needy.

While accompanying shepherds our activists were sometimes subjected to violence by settlers. Our volunteers reported on staying the night in villages, to protect them from hilltop settler youths, who arrive daily.

In November, we took the representative of Palestinian affairs at the US Embassy to the Jordan Valley, together with a member of the group Looking the Occupation in the Eye. We met with shepherds from Murja'at close to the Mevo Jericho settlement and the Omer outpost who told us about the settlers harassment. We also explained the water problems in Auja and facing Palestinians in the Jordan Valley as a whole.



Left: Escorting Palestinian shepherds in the Jordan Valley on April 29, 2022. Photo by Rachel Afek.  
Right: Building a new irrigation pool in Ein Hilwe, May 21, 2022.

## Helping Blacklisted Palestinians

Our work helping Palestinians to remove themselves from Israel’s blacklist continued in 2022. Out of 2115 requests submitted (more than double that of 2021), we heard back about 1849 requests (87%). Of those 1849 requests, we received positive answers for only 503 requests (27%). And despite our efforts to help Palestinians remove themselves from the blacklists, we received many outright refusals from the authorities. Nonetheless, appeals to the Court were successful even for those who received outright refusals, as apparently, the requests were never really considered.

Given the chaos in the unit that handles these requests, we had no choice but to submit protest letters. We protested twice this year and this had a positive effect in the handling of the requests, but not in the results.

In contrast to previous years but similar to 2021, those whose requests were rejected were not told that they could try again after 3 or 6 months. But many people discovered that they were no longer blacklisted without even trying again. (On the website of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories—COGAT—an IDF unit that handles civilian issues relating to the Palestinians, people can easily check their status.)

In addition, we encountered many changes regarding the police blacklistings. People are now able to get work permits, which allow them to cross the checkpoints for work in Israel, even if they are blacklisted by the Police. This change solved the problem of many people, especially in Hebron, Tul Karem, Ramallah, and Nablus, enabling them to get work permits.

## The Maqam Project: Surveying Israel’s Takeover of Traditional Palestinian Heritage Sites

Our team continued to monitor and report on the Palestinian heritage sites in the West Bank and the ongoing Israel takeover of these sites.



In the Nablus area, Maqam Sheikh Bilal, fenced on all sides, as seen on April 25, 2022. Photo: Nurit Popper

## Public Outreach

### Talks with Israeli Youth about the Occupation and Human Rights

During this period, we continued to meet young Israelis in the pre-military academies and high schools to talk about the occupation and human rights, as well as to take them on tours. Several teams of Machsom Watch volunteers met with 15 groups, reaching an estimated 450 young people total, either in their classrooms with power point presentations or on short tours of checkpoints and the West Bank. We consider listening to these young people, whose parents were already born into the Occupation, and sharing with them our views on Human Rights and our knowledge of the situation in the West Bank, one of our most important tasks.

### Weekly Protests

[Throughout 2022, MachsomWatch activists, together with other peace and human rights activists, regularly stood together on Saturdays](#) at the KKL Bridge in Ramat Aviv and at Sarona Market, protesting the occupation, in an effort to raise awareness to the wider public about the damage it causes Israel and our democracy. We stood with signboards and passed out pamphlets and talked to passersby. This regular protest drew much attention, similar to the protests of Women in Black. Many people honked in support while some also swore at us and even attacked us. We had several women join us as new members through this activity, which we plan to continue.



MachsomWatch members standing on KKL Bridge in protest of the Occupation. Photo: Orna Naor.



Our members held a few meetings with groups from abroad. One member gave a talk about MachsomWatch at the Senior Scientists' Club of the Weizmann Institute. We also met with some researchers and students from Europe and the US who are conducting research on conflict resolution, women's empowerment, and the Middle East, for interviews and individual tours of the West Bank. In October, we met with 30 people from Germany who were under the guidance of EAPPI and who were interested in learning more about our work.

### **Media Outreach, Website, and Social Media**

In 2022, we completed five films: 1. [The checkpoints and villages in the northern part of the West Bank](#); 2. [Susya and Hebron](#); 3. [The Etzion DCO - The blacklisting group](#); 4. [Jerusalem: The Forbidden city](#); and 5. [The Jordan Valley](#) for use in our public outreach work. The films were all narrated by Adi Tufak from the New Israel Fund and all appear on our YouTube channel.

Our Hebrew-language Facebook page reached 86,664 people this year. Overall, 10,000 people visited our Facebook page, representing an increase by 57.6%. Our engagement with people on Facebook also increased this year, reaching over 1,600 people who reacted to our posts, commented, and/or shared them. In 2022, we received a total of 332 new Facebook likes, increasing by 14.6% from the previous year. By the end of 2022, we had 7,795 followers on Facebook, slowly but steadily increasing since 2019. Nearly 69% of our followers are from Israel.

We also continue to promote our work and awareness about the Occupation via Twitter. At the end of 2022, we had 1,965 followers. Our work on Twitter is rather low key, however, as Israelis tend to be on Facebook. In contrast, on [Instagram](#), our account has 845 followers.

During this time, we had over 70,000 visitors to our website, most of whom were new users. While all ages visited our site, over 25% were aged 35 to 44 and 77% of all visitors were from Israel! Other visitors were from Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, France, India, and the Netherlands.

During this period, we had a number of mentions in the local Israeli press. In addition, SIVMO, a Dutch organization that supports Israeli peace and human rights organizations, [published an interview with one of our members in its Fall newsletter](#). We also published 3 [newsletters](#) in Hebrew and English, which we shared with over **3,000** subscribers.

## **Thank You for Your Support:**

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And many individual donors