



VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRCS MEDICAL MISSIONS

2022

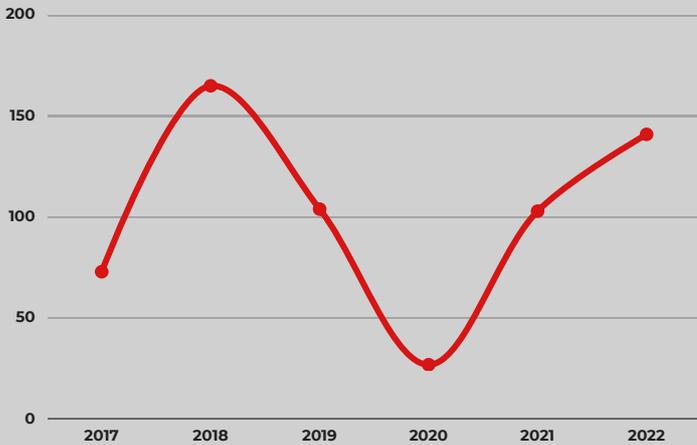
Israeli Occupation Authorities continue to disrupt the conduct of medical missions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This policy has been translated into direct attacks against medical personnel, vehicles, and units.

As a voluntary relief organization providing various medical and health services, Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has also been subjected to Israeli occupation violations.

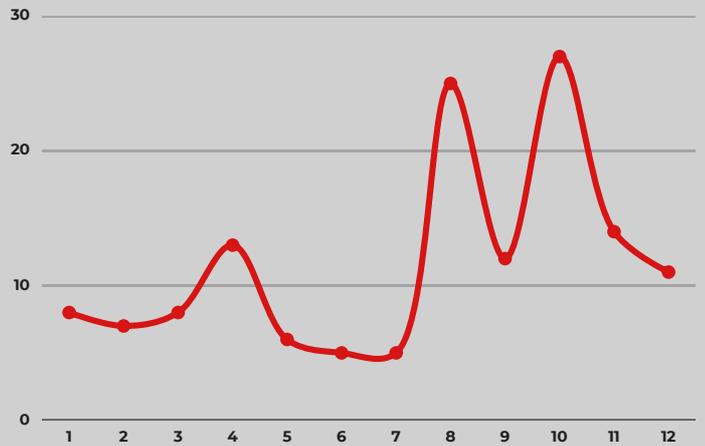
During 2022, PRCS recorded 141 violations against its medical missions*, which consisted of denial or delay of access to the sick and wounded, in addition to harassments and attacks attacks against medical teams and vehicles.

Noting that this violates the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law related to the protection of medical missions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Violations against PRCS medical missions compared with previous years*



Violations against PRCS medical missions on a monthly basis (2022)*



TYPES OF VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRCS MEDICAL MISSIONS 2022



29

violations against medical teams



37

violations against ambulances



34

cases of delay of access



40

cases of denial of access



1

violation against the sick and wounded



798

cases of denial of access to Jerusalem (Back to Back)

* Without denial of access to Jerusalem (back to back).



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2022 IN NUMBERS



209

Palestinians killed in the Occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Israel, including 53 children.*



10,587

Palestinians injured in the oPt, including 1,203 children and 228 women.*

155

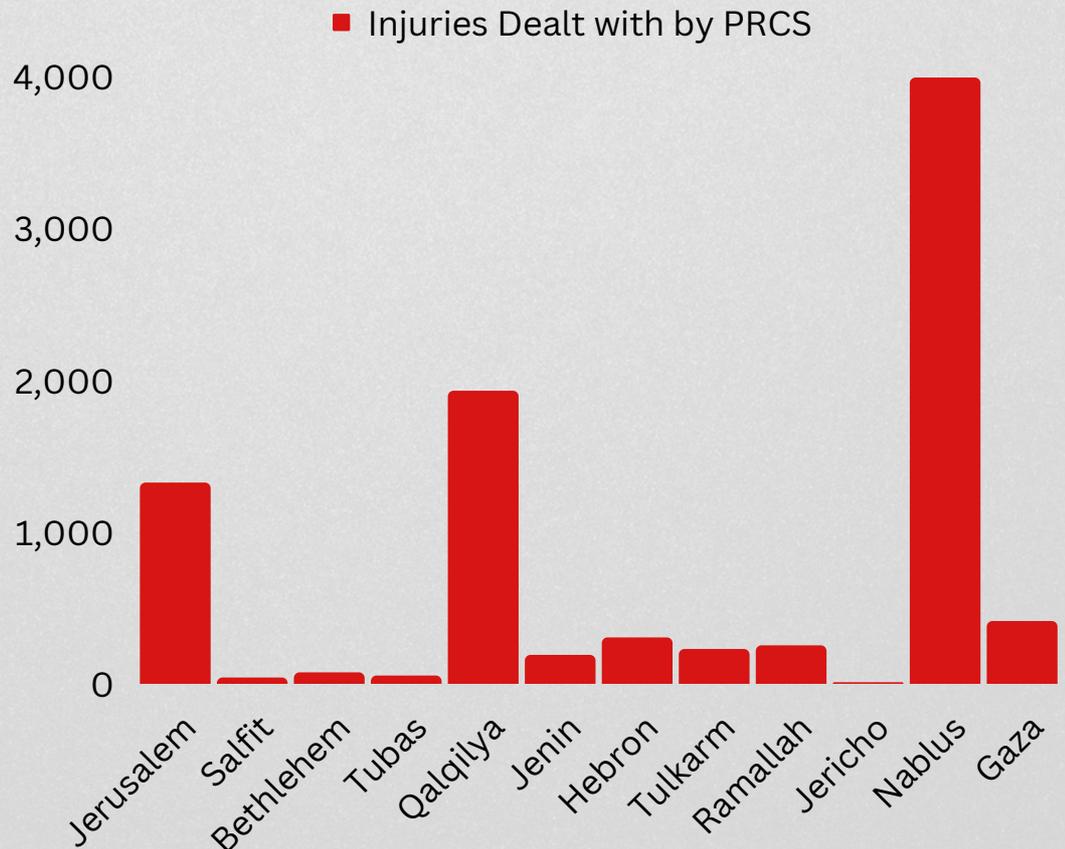
Palestinians killed in the West Bank, **highest number** of fatalities recorded by the United Nations (UN) in the West Bank **since 2005**.*



50

Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip.*

PRCS medical teams have dealt with 8,770 out of the 10,587 injuries. These numbers show that the situation in the oPt has escalated in 2022, with an 81% increase of Palestinians killed by Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank.



* OCHA, occupied Palestinian Territory - 2022 overview.

APPLICABLE LAW

There are two main legal regimes that apply in the case of occupation, both of which aim to minimize human suffering and protect human life and dignity.



International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

- Automatically enters into force in the event of an armed conflict or **occupation**.
- The applicable laws in case of occupation are:
- The **Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention** Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land of **1907**.
- The **Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949**, and the **first additional protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1977***, in addition to **customary IHL** rules.



International Human Rights Law (IHRL)

- Consists of a number of multilateral conventions related to **fundamental human rights**, whether collective or individual, in addition to customary IHRL rules
- Human rights conventions applicable in the case of occupation, according to the ICJ advisory opinion on the wall (2004), are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, and other conventions.

* Israel, as an occupying power, has not ratified the First Additional Protocol. However, many of its articles are considered customary legal rules and therefore apply to all states.



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PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is the national society of Palestine. It enjoys a legal personality and is a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and a component of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Society, which operates in Palestine and the diaspora, is guided by the Geneva Conventions and the Movement's Fundamental Principles, i.e., Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality.



“ *Recognized National Red Cross (Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun) Societies shall be able to pursue their activities in accordance with Red Cross Principles, as defined by the International Red Cross Conferences...* ”



Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), Article 63.

PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

PRCS is the leading Emergency Medical Services provider in the oPt. In 2022, its medical teams dealt with 8,361 injuries, of which 1,245 cases were transported to medical facilities, and 7,116 were attended on-site. Being on the frontlines responding to the call of humanitarian duty, PRCS missions are highly challenging, as medical missions are constantly subjected to Israeli Occupation forces' attacks and obstructions.



“ Attacks directed against medical and religious personnel and objects displaying the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law are prohibited. ”



ICRC's study on customary IHL rules, rule 30.



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VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRCS MEDICAL MISSIONS

Despite the fact that all PRCS medical vehicles, teams, and premises display the protection (Red Crescent) emblem clearly, PRCS medical missions continue to encounter obstacles and attacks by Israeli Occupation forces.

2021

847

Violations documented against PRCS medical missions



10.8%

2022

939

Violations documented against PRCS medical missions

The majority of these violations constituted a denial of access to Jerusalem, which forced PRCS crews to transfer patients from different areas of the West Bank to Jerusalem through a **back-to-back (B2B)** process.



DENIAL OF ACCESS TO JERUSALEM (B2B)

back-to-back (B2B) process



The host hospital facilitates the process of obtaining a permit for the patient



The patient obtains a permit, and the hospital coordinates his entry



A PRCS ambulance, coming from different areas (other than Jerusalem) of the West Bank, tries to enter Jerusalem through Israeli occupation military checkpoints surrounding the city.



The patient is transferred at the checkpoint from one ambulance to another. Finally, the patient arrives to the host hospital



PRCS ambulance coming from Jerusalem arrives to the checkpoint



In 92.8% of the cases, PRCS ambulances are denied the right to enter Jerusalem and are only allowed to transfer the patient by moving him/her to another ambulance coming from Jerusalem

DENIAL / DELAY OF ACCESS

In many cases, Israeli Occupation Forces deny or delay PRCs medical teams from accessing the sick and wounded. Such obstructions violate their right to treatment and health access and put their lives at grave risk



DENIAL OF ACCESS



DELAY OF ACCESS

This is usually done through



Military Checkpoints



Earthmounds



Concrete Blocks



Military Vehicles



Digging Roads



Closing Gates*

“ The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. ”



International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), article 12.

* Gates set up by Israeli Occupation Authorities and surrounding various areas of the West Bank



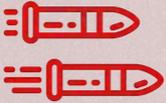
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VIOLATIONS AGAINST MEDICAL TEAMS



VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRCS MEDICAL TEAMS

Violations against medical teams include attacks with



Live Ammunition



**Rubber-coated
Bullets**



**Tear-gas / Sound
Canisters**



Physical Attacks

Or



Threats



**Verbal Harassments
/ attacks**



Detention



VIOLATION AGAINST THE SICK AND WOUNDED*

Those include harassment and attacks against sick and wounded persons whom PRCS medical teams are engaged in dealing with at the moment of the violation.

* The types of those violations are similar to the ones against medical teams



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VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRCS AMBULANCES



VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRCS AMBULANCES

The majority of those violations were through attacks with



Live Ammunition



**Rubber-coated
Bullets**



**Tear-gas / Sound
Canisters**

Resulting in



Smashed Glass



Damaged Tires



Damaged Body

Such attacks force ambulances to get out of service, hence, hindering PRCS's capacity to continue its response operations. Some attacks occurred with patients and wounded persons inside the vehicles, which endangers the safety and well-being of both PRCS crews; and sick and wounded persons.

CASES (DENIAL / DELAY OF ACCESS)



31 March 2022, Jenin

PRCS ambulance was delayed from transferring a serious injury case in Jenin by blocking the road through an Israeli military vehicle. The injured person was shot in the chest and head and left bleeding for 17 minutes until the crew was allowed to access him.



* Picture taken in Beita, Nablus, on 29 October 2021.



7 December 2022, Nablus

Three PRCS ambulances were denied access to the site of clashes in the old city, even though a person was critically injured with a bullet in the head. The following video shows a military jeep blocking the way of the ambulances.

<https://www.facebook.com/PalestineRCS/videos/703257817729664/>



CASES (VIOLATIONS AGAINST MEDICAL TEAMS)

18 February 2022, Beita (Nablus)

Israeli Occupying Forces targeted Palestinian demonstrators on Jabal Sabih in Beita village (South of Nablus) with live ammunitions, rubber coated bullets and tear gas canisters.



PRCS Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and volunteers treated more than 100 injuries, amongst them a 19-year-old PRCS volunteer who was shot with live ammunition. The bullet tore through his right arm as he was attending to a wounded journalist. Another PRCS volunteer was shot in the foot with a rubber-coated bullet.



CASES (VIOLATIONS AGAINST MEDICAL TEAMS)

2 October 2022, Beit Furik (Nablus)



Two PRCS EMS officers were pushed, kicked, and beaten by more than 5 Israeli soldiers after being stopped by an Israeli military checkpoint for inspection, as they insisted to have the ambulance searched on their sight. As a result, both EMS officers sustained injuries and were transferred to the hospital, one of them was only able to return to work after 40 days. The incident was recorded by a bystander and went viral on social media.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1084002165641659>



“This attack had a significant impact on our mental health. We were shocked and scared. The attack came out of nowhere without any prior warning. We felt humiliated. If our work as health workers is not respected, if our PRCS vest and ambulance that display the red crescent emblem can be brutally attacked like this, what is left? This had a significant scar on my life. I still feel insecure and humiliated.”



Testimony of one of the two EMTs that were attacked in Beit Furik.

CASES (VIOLATIONS AGAINST AMBULANCES)



7 September 2022, Yatta (Hebron)

Israeli settlers tried to prevent PRCS medical crew from moving a wounded person into the ambulance. Moreover, after the crew successfully moved the injured person into the ambulance, the settlers damaged two of the ambulance's tires with knives while the EMS officer and the wounded person were inside the vehicle. Afterward, the injured person was arrested by Israeli occupation forces and moved to a military ambulance. The crew was compelled to drive the damaged ambulance for around 400 meters in a rough area to reach the main street and call somebody to help them replace the damaged tires.



4 March 2022, Bayt Dajan (Nablus)

Israeli occupation forces targeted a PRCS ambulance with rubber-coated bullets, smashing the rear windshield of the vehicle. As a result, the EMTs were injured in the hand and shoulder, and a wounded person inside the vehicle sustained another injury in the abdomen resulting from a rubber-coated bullet directed at the ambulance.



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FINAL REMARKS

In the context of a protracted protection crisis, mainly caused by an ongoing military occupation, ensuring a safe and protected humanitarian space that respects International Humanitarian Law and its Conventions is crucial.

As the United Nations reported 2022 to be the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since 2005; and while it called out the Excessive Use of Force and called for using live ammunition as a last resort; PRCS continues responding to the call of duty under extreme conditions and highly volatile context, with a sharp increase of the need to respond to emergency situations across occupied Palestine.

As stated in the report, PRCS medical missions operate under challenging circumstances where the occupying power does not abide by its responsibilities. The 10% increase in violations recorded in 2022 constitute a blatant violation of IHL, with attacks against the protected emblem of the Red Crescent and forcing medical missions to provide life-saving services in unsafe and unprotected context.

PRCS calls on the international community and member states to take concrete steps against the occupying power to attain its responsibilities towards the occupied population and ensure a safe and protected humanitarian space where medical missions are respected, and the wounded get their right to safe medical treatment.