

حملة - المركز العربي  
لتطوير الإعلام الاجتماعي  
7amleh - The Arab Center For  
the Advancement of Social Media



**Palestine 2017**

**Palestinian Digital  
Activism Report**

March 2018

7amleh – Arab Center for Social Media Advancement  
Hashtag Palestine 2017: Palestinian Digital Activism Report

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# Executive Summary

Palestinian social media activities throughout 2017 have focused on expressing their frustration with various oppressive Israeli policies by launching campaigns and expressing their views on the current political events that are affecting their lives. Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians residing in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), however, were targeted for expressing their views and exercising their rights to freedom of speech, expression and dismantling sharing information.

In 2017, a total of 1,110,582 Palestinian citizens of Israel were using the internet, and 3,018,770 internet users were registered in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Telecommunication Provider, Watanyia, finally started operating in the Gaza Strip after Israel released allocated frequencies for its use. Most notably, Palestinians in the West Bank tested 3G services for the first time in December, and services were available for customers starting January 23, 2018 nine years after Palestinians made the initial request to use the service. Customers in the Gaza Strip still cannot enjoy the service. In December, the cities of Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho were available on the Street View feature on Google Maps.

Major social media campaigns throughout 2017 focused on highlighting violations in the Gaza Strip, boycotting Hyundai, violence against women and LGBTQs within Palestinian society, the Palestinian Authority Cybercrimes Law in the West Bank, and a digital awareness campaign on digital security. Viral hashtags responded to the plight of Palestinians and engaged with various political affairs and events taking place in the region. Most notably are campaigns and viral hashtags highlighting the various political events that took place in Jerusalem throughout the year, including the American announcement of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, as well as Israel's attempt to install electronic gates at the entrance of Al-Aqsa mosque compound. Other viral hashtags shed light on and supported the plight of Palestinian political prisoners after they announced a hunger strike protesting Israeli prison conditions. Some active hashtags have reflected on Palestinian internal issues, such as violations of the rights to freedom of expression and privacy by Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

All three authorities, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas authorities, targeted Palestinians for their activism on various social media networks, specifically Facebook. In 2017, Israel arrested about 300 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem for charges related to posts on Facebook. On the other hand, 530 violations against media freedoms were reported in the oPt, including 376 violations committed by Israel and 154 attacks carried out by the Palestinian factions. Both

the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip continued throughout 2017 to arrest political dissidents, journalists and activists. Most notable violations relating to the Palestinian Authority included the blocking of 29 websites in the West Bank in June and the adoption of the cybercrime law in July to justify the arrest of journalists, activists and political dissidents.

Israel continued to monitor and censor Palestinian content on social media in 2017, specifically on Facebook. The Israeli cyber unit reported that 85 percent of Israeli government requests to “remove content deemed harmful or dangerous” from social media services such as Facebook and Twitter, were accepted in 2017.

# Introduction

The Arab Center for Social Media Advancement (7amleh) presents its annual report titled “Hashtag Palestine 2017: Palestinian Digital Activism Report” for the third consecutive year. The report focuses on social media activities of Palestinians, including Palestinian citizens of Israel (Palestinians residing in the 1948 territory) and Palestinians residing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), including the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem (which Israel illegally annexed).<sup>1</sup>

The report monitors Palestinian social media activism throughout the year 2017. The first chapter provides information and statistics on Palestinians’ social media usage, including the challenges in obtaining accurate information on social media use by Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents of East Jerusalem. In its second chapter, the report presents some of the most prominent social media campaigns that focused on political and social issues within Palestinian society, and which aimed at protesting unlawful violations as well as to raise awareness on social issues. The third chapter documents Palestinian digital rights violations by various authorities (Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas authorities) and analyses the laws enacted by the various authorities to limit and censor online activity and access. In the last chapter, the report focuses on exploring Israeli surveillance and policing practices targeting the Palestinian cyber space. The report relied on reports, news articles, organizations press releases, interviews and secondary sources such as videos and images to present its findings.

This year, Palestinians marked 50 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem on June 4, 2017, and 100 years since the Balfour Declaration was issued on November 2, 1917. With the marking of both anniversaries, they stand as a reminder of the state of human rights abuses against all Palestinians, in which Israeli policies are increasingly becoming oppressive and intrusive of the lives of Palestinians regardless of their location. In addition to the more apparent physical rights abuses, such as killings, arrests, house demolitions, and forcible transfer of Palestinians, the violations of Palestinians digital rights and control of cyberspace, marks a ‘new’ type of abuse, specifically targeting Palestinians and their activities on social media platforms.<sup>2</sup>

As such, 7amleh presents this report to express the importance of reporting and documenting Palestinians social media activities as well as digital rights abuses. Social media platforms have become an integral part of Palestinian daily life, giving them a platform where they can express their frustration with various oppressive Israeli policies by launching campaigns and expressing their views on the current

political events that are affecting their lives. However, social media platforms have increasingly become a space in which Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the occupied territory ‘meet’ and unite over campaigns and hashtags. Palestinians are also using social media platforms to criticize internal policies of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas authorities, that are also targeting Palestinians and restricting their online activities. In addition, social media platforms have provided a space for organizations and activists to raise awareness on social issues that aim at empowering and shedding light on the plight of marginalized groups and communities within Palestinian society.

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1. Following its occupation in 1967, Israel illegally annexed East Jerusalem and applied its civil law. Under international law, East Jerusalem remains an occupied territory.

2. For an extensive discussion on the violations of Palestinian digital rights, see 7amleh, ‘Internet Freedoms in Palestine: Mapping of Digital Rights Violations and Threats’, (22 January 2017) <<http://7amleh.org/2018/01/22/7amleh-publishes-innovative-research-on-internet-freedoms-in-palestine-mapping-of-digital-rights-violations-and-threats/>>

# Chapter One: Data and Statistics

This chapter provides data and statistical information on Palestinian internet and social platform usage of Palestinian citizens of Israel and in the oPt. As 7amleh highlighted in its previous reports, the geographic separation of Palestinians affects the accuracy of data provided. Further, such separation is also apparent in the quality and type of services available for Palestinians residing in the various areas of the territories. Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as Palestinian residents of Occupied East Jerusalem (Jerusalemites) receive their telecommunication services from Israeli service companies, whilst Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip receive their services from Palestinian companies, which can only operate through Israeli companies and after obtaining approval from Israeli authorities. However, Israeli mobile operators provide services for illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and some Palestinians use such services, as they are provided at a lower cost and available in areas in the West Bank where Palestinian operators do not have access due to Israeli restrictions on the Palestinian telecommunication sector.

## Palestinian Citizens of Israel (and Palestinian residents of Occupied East Jerusalem)

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According to Ipoke 2017 *Social Media in Palestine report*,<sup>3</sup> there were 1,110,582 internet users of Palestinian citizens of Israel in 2017.<sup>4</sup> The annual statistical abstract on *Persons Aged 20 and Over, by Use of Computer and Internet and by Selected Characteristics* released by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics for 2017, demonstrate that in 2016, there were 872,300 Palestinians users over the age 20, amounting to 65 percent of Palestinians in Israel,<sup>5</sup> which according to Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, amounted for 1,797,300 persons in 2016.<sup>6</sup>

As for internet users, 25.8 percent Palestinian users used the internet for study, while 21.6 percent used it for work. 57.8 percent users said they used the internet every day or almost every day, and 61.6 percent said they used internet on their mobile phones, compared to 43.4 percent who used it on a computer.<sup>7</sup>

3. Ipoke. 'Social Palestine: Social Media in Palestine in 2017', (23 January 2017) <<http://ipoke.co/SocialMediaOnPalestine2017.pdf>>

4. Statistical Abstract of Israel. '9.7 Persons Aged 20 and Over, by Use of Computer and Internet and by Selected Characteristics', (13 September 2017) <[www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton\\_e.html](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html)>

5. Statistical Abstract of Israel. '9.7 Persons Aged 20 and Over, by Use of Computer and Internet and by Selected Characteristics', (13 September 2017) <[www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton\\_e.html](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html)>

6. Ibid, '2.1 Population, by Population Group', (6 September 2017) <[www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton\\_e.html](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html)>

7. The numbers provided may also include Palestinians in Occupied East Jerusalem or/and Syrians in the occupied Golan Heights, as there is no clear data on the numbers of internet users of Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem.

## The Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank and Gaza Strip)<sup>8</sup>

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According to *Ipoke Social Media in Palestine in 2017* report,<sup>9</sup> in 2017 there were 3,018,770 internet users in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which amounts to 60.5 percent of the population (4,985,506 persons). There were 1.60 million active social media users, with 1.40 million social media users accessing through their mobile phones,<sup>10</sup> with Facebook and WhatsApp being the most widely used social media platforms followed by Instagram and YouTube.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017 annual report on *Transportation and Communication Statistics in Palestine*, the number of ADSL subscribers amounted to 320,500 users, including 226,855 in the West Bank and 93,645 in the Gaza Strip.<sup>11</sup> The Social Studio 2017 *Social Media Report in Palestine* noted that the average internet speed was recorded at 9 megabits per second (Mbps) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip compared to 43 Mbps in Israel.<sup>12</sup> The ICT Development Index, published by the United Nations International Telecommunications Union, which ranks countries based on their information and communication technology development, ranked Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) in 2017 at 123 out of 167, while Israel was ranked at a high 23.<sup>13</sup>

The discrepancy in the ranking and in the quality of telecommunication services between Israel and Palestine is caused to a large degree by the restrictions Israel continues to impose on the Palestinian Telecommunication and Information Technology sector. Under the Oslo Accords, Israel retains control over the Palestinian sector under the pretext of security, by retaining control over the international telecommunications gateways, electromagnetic field (frequency spectrum), telephone numbering plan, access to areas labelled as Area C,<sup>14</sup> and the importing of equipment. Such restrictions have undermined and limited the ability of Palestinian operators to provide adequate and up to-date telecommunication services to Palestinian users in various parts of the oPt. In contrast, Israeli telecommunication operators cover most areas in the West Bank, without licenses from the Palestinian Authority or paying fees or contributing

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8. The data provided is unclear to include East Jerusalem, it has proven hard for 7amleh to provide precise data on the numbers of users and the quality of services provided in East Jerusalem, as services are provided by Israeli operators. In addition, it remains unclear if numbers of Palestinian users in East Jerusalem are part of the overall Israeli statistics on internet and social media users.

9. Ipoke (n 3).

10. We Are Social. 'Digital in 2018 in Western Asia Part 1 – North-West', (29 January 2018) <<https://www.slideshare.net/wearesocial/digital-in-2018-in-western-asia-part-1-northwest-86865983>>

11. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. '2017 annual report on Transportation and Communication Statistics in Palestine', (July 2017) <[www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2278.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2278.pdf)>

12. Social Studio. 'Report of Social and Digital Media in Palestine for 2017', (26 February 2018) <<http://socialstudio.ps/smrp2017/#firstPage>>, p.10.

13. CT Development Index 2017. 'IDI 2017 Rank', <[www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2017/index.html](http://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2017/index.html)>

14. Area C consists 60 percent of the West Bank, and is under full Israeli control.

any value-added services to their Palestinian customers.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Israeli operators provide customized services for Israeli settlers and Israeli soldiers in the occupied territory, which they do not provide for Palestinian customers.<sup>16</sup>

## Wataniya (Palestinian Telecommunication Provider)

### Finally Operating in the Gaza Strip

On October 24, 2017, Wataniya officially launched its services to customers in the Gaza Strip, ending Jawwal's 18-year monopoly over the telecommunication sector in the Strip<sup>17</sup>. Wataniya is the second Palestinian cellular communication provider after Jawwal. At the end of June 2017, Wataniya reported 786,000 customers in the West Bank<sup>18</sup>. While licensed to operate in Palestine since 2006, Wataniya could not start operating in the West Bank until November 2009, after Israel finally released allocated frequencies for its use<sup>19</sup>. Since then, Wataniya operated in the West Bank only, and was prevented by Israel from importing its equipment to the Gaza Strip until 2017.

A 2016-World Bank report on *The Telecommunication Sector in the Palestinian Territories: A Missed Opportunity for Economic Development*, estimated the total revenue loss for Palestinian mobile operators due to Israeli restrictions at over USD 1 billion between 2013-2015<sup>20</sup>. In contrast, unauthorized Israeli operators that fail to obtain permits from the Palestinian Authority, and provide services in the same area, have 3G and 4G capabilities and offer their services at a lower cost. Due to Israeli restrictions, Wataniya and Jawwal, are unable to provide 3G, 4G, or LTE services in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These restrictions limit the Palestinian operators' ability to deliver mobile data services and widespread mobile access to the Internet<sup>21</sup>. In 2017, Jawwal provided 2G services to customers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while Wataniya provided the service to its customers in the West Bank only. Israel agreed to release frequencies for 2G services for Wataniya in the Gaza Strip, and 3G services for Wataniya and Jawwal for the West Bank only<sup>22</sup>. Palestinians made the initial request to use 3G about nine years ago. The services were supposed to be available for Palestinian users in mid-2017, but both Wataniya and Jawwal tested the service for the first time in December during the 2017 Palestine's Technology Week (Expotech) held in Ramallah. Services were finally available to Palestinian users on January 23, 2018. According to Social Studio, in 2017 there were 4,400,000 sim cards in the West Bank in Gaza Strip<sup>23</sup>. Of those sim cards, 67 percent are operated by Jawwal, 23 percent are operated by Wataniya and 10 percent are operated by Israeli operators.

15. In January 2016, Orange, France's leading telecommunication company, terminated its contract with Partner, an Israeli telecommunications company operating in the OPT and in Israeli settlement. Under the contract, Orange authorized Partner to use its brand for advertising and other purposes. See FIDH, 'Dangerous liaisons in Israeli settlements: Orange and its shareholder the French State', (6 May 2015) <<https://goo.gl/Mf1BZm>>

16. Ibid.

17. Al-Ayyam, 'Wataniya Begins Its Commercial Operations in the Gaza Strip', Arabic. (24 October 2017) <[http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar\\_page.php?id=12530caf307432623Y12530caf](http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar_page.php?id=12530caf307432623Y12530caf)>

18. TeleGeography. 'Wataniya Mobile Palestine reports net loss on Gaza launch plan costs', (25 July 2017) <<https://goo.gl/j48gbc>>

## Street View of Palestine on Google Maps

In December 2017, the Palestinian minister of Telecommunication and Information announced that the cities of Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho were available on the Street View feature on Google Maps<sup>24</sup>. Street view on Google Maps is a feature launched in 2007 that provides panoramic views of streets in cities around the world for users. Such feature is added, while Google continues not to label Palestine on its maps. In 2016, the terms West Bank and Gaza Strip were erased from Google Maps, which was later clarified as a bug. However, Google still refuses to put unrecognized Palestinian villages on the map and prioritises settlers bypass routes and roads, that many Palestinians have no access to.

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19. WhoProfits, 'The Cellular Companies and the Occupation Flash Report', (August 2009) <[whoprofits.org/content/cellular-companies-and-occupation](http://whoprofits.org/content/cellular-companies-and-occupation)>

20. The World Bank. 'The Telecommunication Sector in the Palestinian Territories: A Missed Opportunity for Economic Development', (1 February 2016) <<https://goo.gl/8Ecpe6>>

21. Abudaka, M. 'The Telecommunication and IT Sector in Palestine' This Week in Palestine (November 2017) <[thisweekinpalestine.com/telecommunication-sector-palestine](http://thisweekinpalestine.com/telecommunication-sector-palestine)>

22. Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MTIT) signed a final agreement with Israel on April 5 to allow Palestinian telecommunications companies to provide 3G services in the West Bank governorates and to allow Wataniya Mobile to operate a 2G mobile system in the Gaza Strip. It remains unclear why 3G services will not be available in the Gaza Strip. See Abu Amer, K. 'West Bank to get 3G mobile service', (20 April 2017) <<https://goo.gl/RcTFQd>>

23. Social Studio (n 12) p.15.

24. Wafa. 'Palestine on Street View Feature on Google Maps', Arabic. (21 December 2017) <[www.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx](http://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx)>

# Chapter Two: Media Campaigns and Viral Hashtags

Social media platforms have become an 'active' place to organize online campaigns and to engage in viral hashtags for Palestinians, thereby becoming a focal point to focus on political and social causes in order to mobilize action and public opinion. In 2017, several campaigns were organized to focus on Israeli violations and raise awareness of internal Palestinian issues. Viral hashtags, on the other hand, focused on highlighting violations committed by authorities, criticizing the violations and uniting to demand an end to abuses.

## 1. CAMPAIGNS

### Lights On Gaza

On August 10, 2017, 7amleh in partnership with Oxfam launched the campaign “#LightsOnGaza” to “raise awareness of the Gaza electricity crisis and its terrible consequences on the Palestinians living there.<sup>25</sup>” In April 2017, the Palestinian Authority decided to halt fuel payments for the Gaza electricity power plant after a dispute with rival party Hamas regarding these payments, exacerbating the conditions for the people of Gaza, which primarily is a result of the over 10-years Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. Gazans already live on two to four hours electricity per day. Israel responded to the request by the Palestinian President and further cut electricity to pressure Hamas in June 2017.

A Facebook for the campaign was also launched<sup>26</sup> and social media activists engaged with the viral hashtags #LightsOnGaza, #Save\_Gaza and #Gaza\_Deserves\_To\_Live to express solidarity with Palestinian Gazans and to demand the end of Israel's 10-year long blockade and light Gaza with electricity<sup>27</sup>.



25. 7amleh. 'Campaigns: #LightsOnGaza', (10 August 2017) <[7amleh.org/2017/08/10/lightsongaza](https://7amleh.org/2017/08/10/lightsongaza)>

26. Lights on Gaza Facebook page: <<https://www.facebook.com/lightsongaza/>>

27. Quds News Network. '#Light\_Gaza: A Call to Restore Electricity in Gaza', Arabic. (7 August 2017) <<https://www.qudsn.ps/article/124630>>

## “Where did it go” Campaign in Gaza

On October 23, 2017, the Southern Media Forum and the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN) launched a 15-day media campaign “Where Did It Go” in Rafah, aimed at highlighting the disparity in distribution of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip over the last 11 years, by shedding light on organizations involved and exposing abuses and corruption in order to ensure equitable distribution of aid<sup>28</sup>. Organizers and activists used the hashtags: #Where\_Did\_it\_Go and #To\_Whom\_Did\_it\_Go to raise questions about humanitarian distribution mechanisms in the Gaza Strip and to criticize the unfair distribution system, that often negatively impacts the most vulnerable.

## #BoycottHyundai

On February 7, 2017, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Committee of Palestinian Citizens of Israel (BDS48) launched a campaign on the boycott of products of the South Korean company Hyundai by Palestinians and people around the world<sup>29</sup>. The campaign calls on Hyundai to end its involvement in Israel’s “ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities in Jerusalem and the Naqab” by being actively complicit in the Israeli crime of home demolitions. The call for the campaign came following “the extensive use of Hyundai machinery” by Israeli authorities in their demolitions of homes belonging to Palestinian citizens of Israel in the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in the Naqab (Negev) and in the city of Qalansawe, in the north. The campaign is the first ever launched from within Israel against corporate responsibility with a focus on the violations of the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel.



28. Al-Ayyam. 'A Campaign Launched in Rafah to Ensure Aid Reaches its Beneficiaries', Arabic. (24 October 2017) <[http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar\\_page.php?id=125331d5y307442133Y125331d5](http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar_page.php?id=125331d5y307442133Y125331d5)>

29. BDS Movement. 'Hyundai Targeted for Boycott Campaign by Palestinian Human Rights Defenders in Israel', (7 February 2017) <<https://goo.gl/SDzmha>>

## 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaigns

The United Nations designates the 25th of November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and every year from November 25 until December 10, Human Rights Day, for 16 days, an international campaign is launched to raise awareness and call for the end of violence against women and girls around the world. Palestinian women organizations engage with the campaign every year, and in 2017 the theme for the international campaign was: “Leave No One Behind - End Violence against Women and Girls.”<sup>30</sup> In the West Bank, the Women Media and Development Center launched a 16-day campaign in partnership with the Palestinian Basketball Federation, titled “No to Dropping the Personal Right in Crimes of Femicide”. Posters of the campaign were put up in major cities including Ramallah and Bethlehem.<sup>31</sup>



In the Gaza Strip, the Women’s Affairs Center also launched a 16-day campaign titled “No to violence... Our lives are better without violence” which is part of a bigger initiative focused on reducing gender-based violence against women and girls in the Gaza Strip.<sup>32</sup> Organizers and activists also used the viral hashtag #No\_to\_Violence\_our\_Lives\_are\_Better\_without\_Violence as part of the campaign.

For Palestinian women citizens of Israel, the Women Against Violence (WAV) human rights organization also launched a ‘training bag’ on violence against women<sup>33</sup>, including activities on how to better understand the meaning of gender-based violence.

30. UN Women. ‘In Focus: Leave No One Behind – End Violence against Women and Girls’ (November 2017) <<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women>>

31. Women Media and Development Center. ‘TAM Launches the 16-Day International Campaign to for the Elimination of Violence Against Women during a Press Release’, Arabic. (November 2017) <<http://tam.ps/ar/arabic/7082.html>>

32. Al Watan. ‘Women’s Affairs Concludes a 16-day Campaign to Eliminate Violence Against Women’, Arabic. (31 December 2017) <<https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2017/12/31/1112250.html>>

## “Difference never Justifies Violence – stand up against violence toward LGBTQs!”

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On July 9, 2017, alQaws: for Sexual & Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society and 7amleh released a video campaign to combat violence against LGBTQ individuals and groups within Palestinian society<sup>34</sup>. The campaign website<sup>35</sup> includes all material produced by the campaign including three videos that focus, firstly, on misconceptions and myths that legitimize violence against LGBTQ in Palestine; secondly, on the daily experiences of violence against LGBTQ Palestinians; and thirdly, an animated video about verbal violence. The campaign also included a series of posters and educational materials to raise awareness of challenges faced by the Palestinian LGBTQ community. The campaign provides that “gender and sexual diversity issues were considered “too sensitive” for the current political, social, and cultural environment in Palestine”, and through the campaign, alQaws and 7amleh provide that the Palestinian society is “ready for change on gender and sexual diversity issues” and, through the campaign, hope to stand firmly and openly against violence against LGBTQs within the Palestinian society.



33. Women Against Violence. 'Training Bag- International Day to Eliminate and Combat Violence Against Women', Arabic. (25 November 2017) <<http://www.wavo.org/nv/?todo=news&nid=523>>

34. 7amleh. 'Difference never justifies violence – New Social Media Campaign', (9 July 2017) <<http://7amleh.org/2017/07/09/difference-never-justifies-violence-new-social-media-campaign/>>

35. Difference never justifies violence Campaign's website: <http://www.alqaws.org/7amleh/>

# Campaigns against the Palestinian Authority Cybercrimes Law

On June 24, 2017, the Palestinian president signed the cybercrime law by a presidential decree. The law was officially adopted on July 9, 2017. The law has been criticized for its adaptation without the approval of the Palestinian Legislative Council and without consultations with Palestinian civil society<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore, the law has been criticized for its infringement on basic rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and privacy and for its vague language that allows for such rights violations. When the law was first introduced, it imposed prison sentences and hefty fines on online users, including journalists and critics, and allowed the government to arrest anyone on charges of “national unity” and “public order”.

In the month following the adoption of the cybercrime law, the Palestinian Authority security forces arrested at least five Palestinian journalists in separate incidents across the West Bank and charged them under the law. The five journalists in the West Bank arrested were: Tareq Abu Zaid, Amer Abu Arfeh, Mamdouh Hamamra, Qutiba Qasim, and Ahmed Haliqa. Some of the charges were related to the use of social media websites to “spread harmful information”. The arrest of journalists in the West Bank has also been viewed as a bargaining chip



between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip, following the arrest of the journalist Fouad Jarada by Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip<sup>37</sup>. The Palestinian authority released all journalists in the West Bank following the release of the journalist in the Gaza Strip. Protesting the detention of activists and journalists used the viral hashtag: #Where\_are\_the\_Journalists and #Journalism\_is\_not\_a\_Crime.

The National Coordination Committee for the Defense of Freedoms called for a sit-in on October 10, 2017, to demand the Palestinian government to repeal the Law, in front of the Palestinian Legislative Council. On October 23, 2017, the Committee also announced a digital campaign, and the viral hashtag: #Jail\_Us and #Cybercrime\_

Law\_is\_a\_Crimee to protest the use of the law and demand its repeal<sup>38</sup>. On October 24, the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) also launched a media campaign against the law, aiming at mobilizing activists, journalists and Palestinian civil society to pressure the Palestinian government to amend the law<sup>39</sup>. In December 2017, the Palestinian government presented an amended draft of the law, which responded to some concerns raised by Palestinian civil society, however, Palestinian civil society, including 7amleh continued to call on the government to ensure that the law “fully complies with international standards, and Palestine’s obligations under international law”<sup>40</sup>. No further changes were made to the amended draft since December, until the release of this report in March 2018.

## Digital Security Awareness Campaign

7amleh launched another social-media campaign in Arabic raising awareness on the issue of digital security, as a response to the increasing harassment, arrests and interrogations by government and security forces in the region, including Israeli forces, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. The campaign included a series of short videos, posters and stickers, which were disseminated online through social media and a mini-site<sup>41</sup>, which included specialised materials on digital security as well as recommendations on how to safely surf the net and how to navigate social media networks.



36. Amnesty International. 'Palestine: Dangerous escalation in attacks on freedom of expression', press release, (23 August 2017) <<https://goo.gl/R5z8g3>>

37. Amnesty International. 'STATE OF PALESTINE: ALARMING ATTACK ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION', report, (23 August 2017) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6983/2017/en/>>

38. SMEX News. '#Jail\_Us: A Digital Campaign Against Cybercrimes Law in Palestine', Arabic. (25 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/sm7uVh>>

39. MADA: Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedom. 'MADA Center Launches a Campaign Against Cybercrimes Law', Arabic. (24 October 2017) <<http://www.madacenter.org/news.php?lang=2&id=331>>

40. 7amleh. 'Joint Letter to the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers Salah Alayan About the Law on Electronic Crimes', (25 December 2017) <<http://7amleh.org/2017/12/25/joint-letter-to-the-secretary-general-of-the-council-of-ministers-salah-alayan-about-the-law-on-electronic-crimes/>>

41. 7amleh. '7amleh Center Releases Digital Security Awareness-Campaign', (5 November 2017) <<http://7amleh.org/2017/11/05/7amleh-center-releases-digital-security-awareness-campaign/>>

## 2. ACTIVE HASHTAGS

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Throughout 2017, many active hashtags responded to the plight of Palestinians and engaged with various political affairs and events taking place in the region. Most notably are campaigns and viral hashtags highlighting the various political events that took place in Jerusalem throughout the year, including the American announcement of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, as well as Israel's attempt to install electronic gates at the entrance of Al-Aqsa mosque compound. Other viral hashtags shed light on and supported the plight of Palestinian political prisoners after they announced a hunger strike protesting Israeli prison conditions. Some active hashtags have reflected on Palestinian internal issues, such as violations of the rights to freedom of expression and privacy by Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The hashtags were in Arabic and the following section provides translations of them.

### A. Pertaining to the Lives of All Palestinians

#### #JerusalemIsTheCapitalOfPalestine

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On December 6, 2017, the American President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, despite warnings from the international community that such recognition might unleash violence in the region. Trump's decision has sparked outrage among Palestinians, who took to the street en masse in protest of the decision only to be met with excessive use of force by Israeli Occupying Forces, especially in East Jerusalem. Israeli forces have stifled protests all over the region. According to Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, since America's decision on December 6 until December 26, Israel killed 15 Palestinians, injured thousands and arrested 585, including 184 children and 11 women<sup>42</sup>. On social media platforms Palestinians used the viral hashtags: #Jerusalem\_is\_the\_Capital\_of\_Palestine (mostly in English) and #Jerusalem\_is\_the\_Eternal\_Capital\_of\_Palestine (mostly in Arabic).

Protests against Trump's decision continued after the end of the year 2017. On December 15, 2017, an Israeli sniper killed the 29-year old Palestinian Ibrahim Abu Thurayya, near the Gaza seam zone. Israel killed three other Palestinians in the Strip during protests against Trump's decision on the same day. Abu Thurayya, who lost both of his legs and a kidney in an Israeli airstrike during Israel's 2008-military offense in the Gaza Strip and moved using a wheelchair since then, became a symbol for protests against Trump decision. Many Palestinians shared the viral hashtag: #Ibrhaim\_Abu\_Thurayya<sup>43</sup>, and shared videos of previous interviews with him and a video in the aftermath of his killing. The Israeli military cleared the Israeli sniper of any wrongdoing and provided that it found "no moral or professional failures" in December. However, new evidence has emerged that indicates that the Israeli army will reopen the probe<sup>44</sup>.

## #Hunger\_Strike\_Dignity and #Salt\_Water\_Challenge \_\_\_\_\_

More than 1,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons declared an open hunger strike on April 17, 2017, primarily demanding an improvement of prison conditions and to protest administrative detention, a detention without charge or trial, and solitary confinement<sup>45</sup>. Palestinian and international activists across the world expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners and posted videos of themselves on social media drinking saltwater, calling for engagement with the “Salt Water Challenge”<sup>46</sup>. The challenge involves drinking saltwater to show support to hunger strikers and then calling on others to take part in the challenge. The hunger strikers only drink saltwater as means to stabilize their health. Thousands of people took part in the challenge, along with the viral hashtag #Hunger\_Strike\_Dignity.

The 40-day hunger strike was suspended on May 27, 2017, after an agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Although the details of the agreement were not published, Israeli Prison Service said that it would reinstate a second family visit, after it has been removed<sup>47</sup>. As of December 2017, there are 6171 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons, including 350 children, 58 female prisoners and 434 administrative detainees, according to Addameer statistics<sup>48</sup>.

## #Except\_Al-Aqsa and #No\_To\_Electronic\_Gates \_\_\_\_\_

On July 14, 2017, the Israeli police cancelled Friday prayer and closed Al-Aqsa compound following a gun clash which resulted in the killing of three Palestinian citizens of Israel and two Israeli police officers in the compound. Israeli forces imposed a 48-hour closure for visitors and worshipers, which was followed by the installation of metal (electronic) gates at the entrance of the compound.

Worshipers and religious administrators of the compound refused to pray at Al-Aqsa compound as long as the electronic gates were present. Many worshipers gathered and prayed at the entrance of the old city and launched mass prayer protests over the week. The tensions heightened on Friday July 22, 2017, with clashes across the

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42. Addameer, '15 Palestinian Martyrs, Thousand Injured Persons and 585 Detainees since Trump's Declaration on Jerusalem', (26 December 2017) <<https://goo.gl/yWgQgm>>

43. Twitter, '#Ibrahim\_Abu\_Thurayya', Arabic. <<https://goo.gl/SqhA9K>>

44. Al Araby. 'Israel to reopen probe into killing of disabled Palestinian protester Ibrahim Abu Thuraya', (4 January 2017) <<https://goo.gl/X4dSXX>>

45. For list of demands see Addameer, 'On seventh day: Mass hunger strike continues despite escalation', (23 April 2017) <<https://goo.gl/Mw9RBG>>

46. ee Al Jazeera English. '#SaltWaterChallenge: Palestinian solidarity goes viral', (28 April 2017) <<https://goo.gl/Y82GvX>> and Muaddi, N. 'Palestinians highlight prisoners' strike with 'Salt Water Challenge', CNN (28 April 2017) <<https://goo.gl/9Myvjv>>

47. Al Jazeera English. 'Palestinian Prisoners in Israel Suspend Hunger Strike', (27 May 2017) <<https://goo.gl/6675mM>>

48. According to Addameer Statistics available on: <http://www.addameer.org/statistics/20171106>

West Bank and in East Jerusalem taking place. Israeli forces killed three Palestinians and injured more than 400 protesters. The protests were accompanied by social media engagement using the hashtag #No\_To\_Electronic\_Gates. On July 25, 2017, Israel removed the electronic gates after a decision by the Israeli cabinet to replace them with smart cameras. Following the removal of the electronic gates, Palestinians used the hashtag #Jerusalem\_Wins.

## **#UmmalHiran**

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On January 18, 2017, Israeli police killed the Palestinian citizen of Israel, Yakoub Abu Al-Qi'an, a 50-year old teacher and resident of the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran, an unrecognized Palestinian village in the Negev, for an alleged "car ramming attack". Nevertheless, such claim is refuted by villagers as well as activists who witnessed the incident. Earlier that day in a pre-dawn raid, a large force of Israeli police and Israeli Land Authority arrived at the village to enforce home demolition orders, including Al-Qi'an home, as part of an Israeli state plan to forcibly transfer and displace the Palestinian residents and build a Jewish-only town in its place<sup>49</sup>.

Activists engaged in the hashtag #UmmalHiran following the killing in January and in the following month during the funeral of Abu Al-Qi'an. A year later, the Israeli Police Investigations Unit officially closed the investigations, clearing the officers involved of any misconduct<sup>50</sup>.

## **#Rafah\_Border\_Crossing**

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On December 12, 2017, social media activists used the hashtag: #Rafah\_Border\_Crossing after Egyptian authorities held over a 100 students leaving the Gaza Strip, interrogated them and then sent them back to Gaza after long waiting hours<sup>51</sup>. Activists showed solidarity by also using the hashtags: #Gaza\_Wants\_to\_Breathe, #Let\_the\_Students\_Travel and #Open\_Rafah\_Crossing.

## **#BaselAlAraj**

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On March 6, 2017, Israeli soldiers killed Basel AlAraj, a prominent youth activist, during a night raid in the city of Ramallah. AlAraj was also the subject of a viral hashtag last year (mentioned in 7amleh 2016 report – #The Kidnapped 6), after the Palestinian security forces arrested him along with five others in early April 2016, held them without charges, and reportedly subjected them to harsh interrogation as well as ill-treatment. After Basel's release from Palestinian prisons, the Israeli army arrested him. In September 2017, following his release from Israeli prisons, he went into hiding until the Israeli army killed him in March<sup>52</sup>. Many Palestinians engaged in the viral hashtag #BaselAlAraj and #The\_Revolutinoary\_Basel following his killing,

praising his activism, calling him the “Educated Martyr” and criticizing the Palestinian Authority for “their continuous security coordination with Israel”<sup>53</sup>.

## B. Social Media and the Crackdown on the Right to Freedom of Expression

### #No\_to\_Blocking\_the\_Websites

On June 19, 2017, activists and journalists launched the hashtag to protest the decision by the general prosecutor to block a dozen media outlet websites that are affiliated to the opposition ( Hamas and Mohammad Dahlan) and independent media outlets that are critical of the Palestinian Authority<sup>54</sup>. MADA Center for Development and Media Freedoms, noted that since the initial decision on June 12, 2019, 29 websites have been blocked in the West Bank<sup>55</sup>. The general prosecutor never disclosed the reasons for blocking the websites or the list of websites blocked. Following the online blockage, Al Quds News Network petitioned the decision before the Palestinian High Court. On November 7, 2017, the court requested the general prosecutor to provide the original order to block the websites<sup>56</sup>.

## C. On the Reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas

### #With\_Reconciliation

Thousands of Palestinians used the hashtag: #With\_Reconciliation, to support the reconciliation efforts between the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas government, following the official visit of the Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah to Gaza on October 2, 2017<sup>57</sup>.

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49. Najjar, F. 'Village demolition based on Israel's 'racist' plan', Al Jazeera English (23 August 2017) <<https://goo.gl/CfdXZu>>

50. Khoury, F. 'In Umm al-Hiran Palestinians Lives Don't Matter', The Jerusalem Post (1 January 2018) <<https://goo.gl/6LaAcq>>

51. Wattan. '#Rafah\_Crossing Tops Twitter and Users Tweet "In Gaza, Dreams End at the Crossing', Arabic. (17 December 2017) <<http://www.wattan.tv/news/229975.html>>

52. Hammad, S et al. "", Al Jazeera English (7 March 2017) <<https://goo.gl/BRmLpM>>

53. Twitter, '#BaselAlAraj', Arabic. <<https://goo.gl/h4GaRS>>

54. Pal Today. '#No\_to\_Blocking: An Angry Hashtag Against the Policy of the Palestinian Authority to Block Websites', Arabic. (19 June 2017) <<https://goo.gl/NScgPd>>

55. MADA: Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedom. 'MADA: 51 Violations Against Press Freedoms in June in Palestine', Arabic. (4 July 2017) <<https://goo.gl/fHQQZM>>

56. Al Quds News Network. 'Al-Quds Fights for its Rights: The High Court Requests a Copy of Decision to Block Websites', Arabic. (7 November 2017) <<https://www.qudsn.co/article/131408>>

57. Pal Tweets. 'Activists Start the Hashtag #With\_Reconciliation', Arabic. (2 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/9Li6JL>>

## Chapter Three:

# Violations of Palestinians Digital Rights in 2017

In 2017, the various authorities including Israeli police and occupying forces, the Palestinian Authority security forces, as well as Hamas authorities' security forces continued to target Palestinians for their activism on various social media networks, specifically Facebook. Indeed, all authorities have continued to target and intimidate Palestinian activists and journalists for what they share on their social media accounts, including posts, videos, and images. Palestinian security forces also continued to silence any critical voices that have attempted to shed light on the unjust or illegal practices of any of the abovementioned authorities. According to MADA – the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms, 2017 witnessed an increase of 38 percent of media violations in comparison to 2016. The center documented 530 violations against media freedoms, including 376 violations committed by Israel and 154 attacks carried out by the Palestinian factions<sup>58</sup>. MADA noted that Israeli violations included assaulting and arresting journalists, in addition to damaging and confiscating their equipment, and increased its efforts to close media institutions and confiscate their equipment. Israel closed 17 media institutions in 2017, compared to only four in 2016<sup>59</sup>. Palestinian authorities' main violations on the other hand, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, focused on carrying out interrogations by calling journalists and questioning them about their work, arresting journalists and blocking websites<sup>60</sup>.

### Laws Permitting Arrests of Palestinians for Social Media Posts

In addition to arrests, the three authorities, Israel, the PA and Hamas, have relied on enacting laws and legislations that limit the digital rights of Palestinians. On January 3, 2017, the Israeli Knesset approved the first reading of the so-called “Facebook Bill”, which gives power to the Israeli administrative courts to order social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and Google, to block internet content that “incites violence” at the request of Israeli government<sup>61</sup>. The bill defines online incitement as content which “the very posting of is a criminal offense, and whose public visibility has a real potential to put personal, public and national security at risk.”<sup>62</sup> Although the legal territorial jurisdiction of the bill is not specified, Palestinian citizens of Israel and Jerusalemite residents fear that the bill will target them<sup>63</sup>. About six months later, on July 17, the Israeli Knesset passed the “Law on Authorities for the Prevention of Committing Crimes Through Use of an Internet Site”, which authorizes district courts, upon the request of the Israeli State Prosecutors Office, to fully or partially block access to internet websites<sup>64</sup>.

The law is expected to go hand-in-hand with the “Facebook Bill,<sup>65</sup>” and to target Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority on the other hand, relied on the Cybercrimes Law it adopted in July, 2017, mentioned above, to block websites and justify the arrest of journalists and activists. 7amleh, along with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Avaaz, called on the Palestinian Authority to amend the law and to bring it in line with their international legal obligations, in a letter they addressed to the Palestinian Prime Minister Office on December 20, 2017<sup>66</sup>. The letter offered recommendations to amend the law, to ensure that the law will not be used as “a tool to silence legitimate free expression and criticism of the authorities” or to violate the “Palestinian rights to freedom of expression, privacy and protection of data.”

Lastly, Hamas authorities rely on the use of Article 262 on the “misuse of technology” of the 1963 Penal Code in the Gaza Strip, allowing security authorities to arrest and criminalize activists for social media posts, including posts that are seen to be critical of authorities.

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58. Mada – the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms. 'The Violations of Media Freedoms in Palestine in 2017' (4 Feb 2018) <[http://www.madacenter.org/images/text\\_editor/annualrepE2017.pdf](http://www.madacenter.org/images/text_editor/annualrepE2017.pdf)> p 2.

59. Ibid, p 2 and 21.

60. Ibid, p 26.

61. Goichman, R. 'Knesset Gives First Nod to So-called Facebook Bill That Would Allow Court to Censor Internet', Haaretz (3 January 2017) <<https://goo.gl/dtK93Q>>

62. Fatafta, M. 'Israel Advances New 'Facebook Bill', Threatening Free Speech', Global Voices (13 January 2017) <<https://goo.gl/c7GHTp>>

63. Ibid.

64. Global Legal Monitor. 'Israel: Law Authorizes Court to Restrict Access to Internet Sites in Order to Prevent Criminal Activity', (10 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/T5oYD5>>

65. Goichman, R. 'Knesset Panel Clears Bill Allowing Court to Censor Internet', Haaretz (3 July 2017) <<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.799335>>

66. 7amleh (n 40).

# Arrests for Social Media Posts in 2017

The following section highlights some of the prominent arrests of Palestinians for their social media posts by all authorities, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas.

## 1. Arrests of Palestinian Citizens of Israel:

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Following the agreement between Israel and Facebook to combat “inciteful” social media posts in 2016, Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights expressed concern in a letter to Facebook that such agreement will be used by the Israeli government to discriminately target Palestinian citizens of Israel<sup>67</sup>. In 2016, 82 percent of incitement-related arrests in Israel were of Palestinian citizens, compared to only 18 percent of Israeli Jewish citizens. In November 2017, Israeli police arrested a number of Palestinians in the Palestinian city of Al-Tayibe in central Israel for their Facebook posts and charged them with incitement and making threats<sup>68</sup>. According to Adalah, about 400 “Facebook arrests” have been made over the years 2015 and 2016 by Israeli police, which target Palestinian citizens of Israel<sup>69</sup>.

### Mohammad Khalaf

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On September 15, 2017, Israeli police arrested Mohammad Khalaf, a 25-year old college student and activists, from Tamra, northern Israel<sup>70</sup>. On October 15, the Haifa District Court indicted him with “inciting terror” and other charges for Facebook and Instagram posts he shared relating Al-Aqsa compound and Jerusalem over the course of the year<sup>71</sup>.

### Loay Azeri

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Israeli Police arrested Loay Azeri on October 1, 2017 and held him for three days in Beersheba. The 22-year old university student was charged with “writing posts that incite violence on Facebook”. Azeri was released on a bail and forbidden from posting on social media for 15 days<sup>72</sup>.

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67. Adalah. ‘Adalah fears Facebook’s online incitement deal with Israel will selectively target Palestinian citizens’, (9 November 2016) <<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/8948>>

68. Arab48. ‘Police Arrests Youngsters for Accusations of Inciting on Facebook’, Arabic. (18 November 2017) <<https://goo.gl/8US8BE>>

69. Adalah. ‘Women Human Rights Defenders Speak Out’, (8 March 2017) <<https://goo.gl/8xt7gF>>

70. Arab48. ‘Tamra: A Charge List Against University Student Mohammad Khalaf’, Arabic. (15 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/QZ9FrD>>

71. The Times of Israel. ‘Arab Israeli indicted for social media posts supporting terror’, (15 October 2017) <<https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-indicted-for-social-media-posts-supporting-terror/>>

72. Arab48. ‘Nazareth: The Release of Two University Students After Arrest Over Posts on Facebook’, Arabic. (4 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/qWY79r>>

## 2. Arrests of Palestinians in the oPt

### 2.1 Arrests by the Israeli Occupying Forces

According to Addameer, in 2017 the Israeli Occupying Forces arrested about 300 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, for their Facebook posts or pressed charges that included Facebook posts<sup>73</sup>.

The overall number of Palestinians from the oPt, detained by Israel in 2017 was around 7000, including around 2436 Jerusalemites, the highest number of arrests in the oPt<sup>74</sup>.

In February, Israel arrested the 26-year old Laith Barakat, while he was passing through the Israeli checkpoint of al-Jib, northwest of Jerusalem, for a Facebook post<sup>75</sup>. A month later, Israel arrested 18 Palestinians from the West Bank and East Jerusalem for being members of a WhatsApp group with a Palestinian who allegedly carried out an attack in East Jerusalem<sup>76</sup>. In the same month, Israel charged the Jerusalemite journalist Mohammad Batroukh with “incitement on Facebook”, and sentenced Jerusalemite Walid Rajabi to 10 months of actual imprisonment, plus 7-month suspended sentence (valid for 3 years), over charges of “incitement” on Facebook.<sup>77</sup> Other Palestinians from the West Bank arrested in 2017 included: Abdelsalam al-Masri and Mohammad al-Bargouthi<sup>78</sup>.

Charges for ‘Facebook’ or social media arrests in Israeli civil and military courts for Palestinians are as follows: Palestinians from occupied East Jerusalem are charged under Israeli civil courts, which rely on Article 144 of the 1977 Penal Code on “incitement to violence and terrorism” to prosecute individuals with a sentence of up to five years in prison if their so-called incitement has allegedly caused violent or terrorist activities, including for social media posts<sup>79</sup>. On the other hand, Palestinians in the West Bank are tried in Israeli military courts, and are prosecuted under Article 85 from the Emergency Regulations (1945) which also deals with alleged incitement and those who express sympathy with “terrorist activities”<sup>80</sup>.

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73. According to Addameer this is an approximate number, collected by Addameer and Palestinian Prisoner’s Club. The number also includes the number of people who are not necessarily arrested for social media posts, but were presented with charges relating to social media usage.

74. Addameer, ‘Palestinian Prisoners Organizations: Israeli Occupation Forces Detained around 7000 Palestinian in 2017’, (15 January 2018) <<https://goo.gl/6oymth>>

75. Maan. ‘Israeli forces detain Palestinian youth over Facebook post’, (22 February 2017) <<https://goo.gl/to6eMs>>

76. Maan. ‘Israeli forces detain 18 Palestinians for being in WhatsApp group’, (19 March 2017) <<https://goo.gl/vErQhT>>

77. Maan. ‘Israel prosecutes 2 Palestinians, including journalist for alleged ‘Facebook incitement’’, (20 March 2017) <<https://goo.gl/aZZXqx>>

78. Ipoke (n 3).

79. Addameer, ‘Daring to Post: Arrests of Palestinians for Alleged Incitement’, (24 August 2016) <<https://goo.gl/r3BEzH>>

80. Ibid.

Palestinian children have also been targeted by the Israeli forces for their Facebook posts. According to Defense for Children – Palestine (DCIP), between February and November of 2017, there were an average of 310 Palestinian children from the oPt each month in Israeli prisons, 60 percent of which are children between the ages of 12 and 15<sup>81</sup>. According to DCIP, 74.5 percent of Palestinian children endured some form of physical violence following arrest in Israeli prisons and 62 percent were verbally abused, intimidated, or humiliated<sup>82</sup>.

## Nour Issa

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Israeli forces arrested 16-year-old child Nour Issa, in an early morning raid on his home in East Jerusalem, on April 3, 2017. Israeli forces interrogated him for 11 days in Ofer prison, and then charged him with “incitement” on Facebook. The military judge ordered Issa’s release on April 13, but the prosecution ordered for him to be administratively detained for four months<sup>83</sup>. At that time, Issa was the youngest prisoner held in administrative detention.

## Ahmed Sa’ida

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On May 14, 2017, Israeli Occupying Forces arrested the 17-year old child Ahmed Sai’da from his home in Wadi al-Jooz, in Occupied East Jerusalem. On July 14, the Israeli court sentenced Sa’ida for 11 months in prison for charges of “incitement” on Facebook, for a Facebook post he wrote about a stabbing attack in Jerusalem earlier in May<sup>84</sup>.

## Ahed Tamimi

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Two days following the viral spread of a video<sup>85</sup> of the 16-year old Ahed Tamimi and her cousin Nour Tamimi, 20, slapping and pushing two Israeli soldiers on social media, the Israeli army arrested Ahed from her home in the village of Nabi Saleh, central West Bank, during a raid in the early morning of December 19. Israeli army arrested her mother, Nariman, later in the day, and arrested Nour the following day. The video stirred outrage among some in the Israeli public who demanded the immediate arrest of Ahed. The Israeli education minister even requested that Ahed, Nour and Nariman “should finish their lives in prison.”<sup>86</sup> In January 2018, the Israeli military

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81, DCIP. ‘YEAR-IN-REVIEW: WORST ABUSES AGAINST PALESTINIAN CHILDREN IN 2017’, (18 January 2018) <<https://goo.gl/8ogWka>>

82. Ibid.

83. Addameer, ‘Prisoner’s Profile: Nour Issa’, Arabic. (29 August 2017) <<https://goo.gl/dghk44>>

84. Al Quds News Network. ‘450 Detainees during Al-Aqsa Uprising on the Pretext of Incitement over Facebook’, Arabic. (7 October 2017) <<https://www.qudsn.ps/article/128840>>

85. Khoury J. et al, ‘Israeli Army Arrests Palestinian Teenage Girl Who Slapped Soldiers; ‘She Should Finish Her Life in Prison’’, (20 December 2017) <<https://goo.gl/2ymRx6>>

86. Ibid.

court indicted Ahd for charges of incitement and posting the video on Facebook, among other charges<sup>87</sup>. The active hashtag #FreeAhdTamimi went viral after her arrest. Ahd's twitter account was reportedly deleted, although it remains unclear whether Twitter deleted the account<sup>88</sup>. On January 5, 2018, Israeli army released Nour on bail<sup>89</sup>, while, Ahd and Nariman remain in custody<sup>90</sup>.

## 2.2 Arrests by the Palestinian Authority Security Forces in the West Bank

According to a 2016 report by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, the Palestinian Authority security forces arbitrarily detained 1,274 and summoned 1,089 Palestinians in the West Bank, including journalists, activists and organizers for their political affiliations, participation in peaceful protests and voicing opinions in 2015<sup>91</sup>. The report indicated that many reported torture, physical and verbal assault as well as humiliating treatment. In the section below, the report highlights some of the most prominent cases, in which Palestinian journalists, students, and activists were arrested and summoned by the Palestinian Authority security forces for being critical of the Palestinian president and of security coordination with the Israeli occupation on social media. Palestinian security forces also arrested: Mashaal al-Kouk from Ramallah, Baha al-Jayyousi from Tulkarem, Abdelmohsen Shalaldeh from Hebron, Ahmed AbdelAziz from Nablus and Baraa al-Amer from Nablus<sup>92</sup>.

### Thafer Al-Shmali and Nassar Jaradat

On June 4, 2017, journalist Thafer Al-Shmali published an article criticizing the Palestinian President following his meeting with the US President<sup>93</sup>. On June 6, the Palestinian preventive security forces arrested him from his home in Ramallah. Security forces detained Al-Shmali for 15 days, during which he said security forces humiliated and subjected him to verbal assault<sup>94</sup>. The general prosecutor charged him with "insulting higher authorities and causing strife"<sup>95</sup>. The following day, Nassar Jaradat, a journalism student in Ramallah, was arrested by the preventative security forces after he re-posted Al-Shmali's article on his Facebook page. The general prosecutor charged Jaradat with the same charges, and security forces detained him for 15 days.

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87. See Kane, A. 'Israel Is Now Jailing Palestinians For Posting On Facebook, Forward'. (4 January 2018) <<https://goo.gl/h71B5D>>

88. RT. 'Twitter account of imprisoned Palestinian teenage girl Ahd Tamimi deleted', (27 December 2017) <<https://www.rt.com/usa/414396-twitter-delete-ahed-tamimi/>>

89. Al Jazeera English. 'Palestinian Nour Tamimi released on bail', (5 January 2018) <<https://goo.gl/9voztj>>

90. Ahd and Nariman Tamimi remained in custody until the release of this report in March 2018.

91. Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor. 'Strangulation Twice: Oppressive Practices of Palestinian Security Forces', (April 2016) <<http://www.euromedmonitor.org/uploads/reports/StrangulationTwiceEN.pdf>>

92. Ipoke (n 3)

93. Original article published by Thafer Al-Shmali can be found here: <http://www.raialyoum.com/?p=686603>

94. Amnesty International (n 36).

95. Ibid.

## Issa Amro

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On September 4, 2017, the Palestinian preventive security forces arrested Issa Amro, 37, the founder and coordinator of Youth Against Settlements in Hebron over a Facebook post criticizing the Palestinian authority for the arrest of the journalist Ayman al-Qawasma<sup>96</sup>. Prosecution charged Amro with “incitement” and “stirring strife” under the penal code, as well as charges under Article 20 of the Cybercrimes Law<sup>97</sup>. Authorities released Amro on September 10, on a bail of 1000 Jordanian dinars.

## Mohammad Al-Haj

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Mohammad Al-Haj, 37 years old, is an independent photojournalist working in Ramallah, in the West Bank. On September 14, 2017, Mohamad said Palestinian military intelligence security forces summoned him and questioned him about a Facebook post he had re-published to a news group he administers. Al-Haj posted a picture of an internal memo from the Palestinian Ministry of Interior instructing security forces to carry on with “security coordination” with Israel, even after President Abbas declared that such coordination was suspended<sup>98</sup>. After being summoned to retrieve his phone a few days later, al-Haj fled the country to Amman, Jordan, for the fear of persecution and imprisonment, and has been residing there since.

### 2.3 Arrests by Hamas Authorities Security Forces in the Gaza Strip

Similar to authorities in the West Bank, Hamas authorities have been arresting journalists, activists and students for their posts on social media. According to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, Hamas authorities arbitrary arrested 117 Palestinians, and summoned 98 in the Gaza Strip in 2015. Similar to accounts of the West Bank, torture, physical and verbal assault as well as humiliating treatment were also reported by detainees. In January 2017, Hamas authorities arrested and interrogated a number of activists, as well as participants, who posted on Facebook and called on people to participate in a peaceful demonstration to protest the severe electricity shortage in the Strip<sup>99</sup>. Security authorities also arrested Mohammad Lafi and Ismael al-Bazam<sup>100</sup>.

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96. Al-Qawasmeh is chairman of Manbar al-Huriyya radio and appears in a video criticizing the Palestinian Authority for not providing protection in areas under its control, after an Israeli raid on the radio station in Hebron.

97. Pal Info. ‘A Court in Hebron Releases the Coordinator for ‘Youth Against Settlements’ in Hebron’, Arabic. (10 September 2017) <<https://goo.gl/3QdXU3>>

98. Electronic Intifada. ‘Photojournalist flees persecution by Palestinian Authority’, (2 November 2017) <<https://electronicintifada.net/content/photojournalist-flees-persecution-palestinian-authority/22146>>

99. Al Ayyam. ‘Hamas Authorities Arrest Activists in Electricity Protests’, Arabic (13 January 2017) <[http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar\\_page.php?id=11c7cd0by298306827Y11c7cd0b](http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar_page.php?id=11c7cd0by298306827Y11c7cd0b)>

100. Ipoke (n 3).

## Adel Meshoukhi

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On January 11, 2017, Hamas authorities arrested Adel Meshoukhi, a Palestinian singer-comedian, for 15 days after he published a video on the electricity-crisis and unemployment in the Gaza Strip with the line “Hamas enough”, on his Facebook<sup>101</sup>. The video has been viewed more than 150,000 times, but was later removed. The police released Meshoukhi on January 25, 2017.

## Amer Baalousha

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On July 4, 2017, Amer Baalousha, an activist and a journalist with al-Hadath Newspaper, reported to the internal security of Hamas authorities after he received a summon on July 2, 2017, after a post on his Facebook, in which he wrote: "I wonder if the children of our leaders sleep on the floor like ours?". Hamas authorities detained Baalousha for 15 days, and the general prosecutor charged him with “misuse of technology”<sup>102</sup>. Authorities released Baalousha after his father signed a pledge of 100,000 NIS to attend his court hearings, and after he signed a commitment not to post against the Hamas government.

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101. Daily Mail. 'Gaza comedian arrested after video on electricity crisis', (11 January 2017) <<https://goo.gl/Vo37m9>>

102. SMEX News. “Misuse of Technology”: A Threat to Freedom of Press and Expression Online in Gaza’, Arabic. (14 December 2017) <<https://goo.gl/wHG1rG>>

**Table 1: A Partial List of Palestinians Arrested for Social Media Posts by Various Authorities in 2017<sup>103</sup>**

Name	From	Arresting Authority
Mohammad Khalaf	Tamra	Israeli Police
Loay Azeri	Beersheba	Israeli Police
Sami al-Hazel	Negav	Israeli Police
Nour Issa	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Ahmed Sa'ida	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Ahed Tamimi	Ramallah	Israeli Forces
Laith Barakat	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Mohammad Batroukh	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Walid Rajabi	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Abdelsalam al-Masri	Toubas	Israeli Forces
Mohammad al-Bargouthi	Ramallah	Israeli Forces
Ibrahim Abu Snina	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Ahmed al-Shawesh	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Saleh al-Zghari	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Ibrahim Abu Nea	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Ahmed Aweisat	East Jerusalem	Israeli Forces
Thaher Al-Shmali	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Nassar Jaradat	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Issa Amro	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Mohammad Al-Haj	Ramallah	Summoned by Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Mashaal al-Kouk	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Baraa al-Qadi	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Baha al-Jayyousi	Tulkarem	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Abdelmohsen Shalaldehy	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Baraa al-Amer	Nablus	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Tareq Abu Zaid	Nablus	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Amer Abu Arfeh	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Mamdouh Hamamra	Bethlehem	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Qutiba Qasim	Bethlehem	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Ahmed Haliqa	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Oroba Abu Arfeh	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Ahmed AbdelAziz	Nablus	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Shadi Krakra	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Loay Shlalada	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Salam al-Atrash	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces

103. The data provided in the Table includes data collected by 7amleh as well as information from Ipoke and Social Studio. The Table may not include all social media arrests during 2017.

Alaa al-Teiti	Bethlehem	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Mosab Qafesha	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Jamal al-Swaiti	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Ameer Abu Aram	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Ashraf Abu Aram	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Fadi al-Arouri	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Ayman al-Qawasmeh	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Diaa Hroub	Ramallah	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Thaer al-Fakhouri	Hebron	Palestinian Authority Security Forces
Ismael al-Bazam	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Adel Meshoukhi	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Amer Baalousha	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Mohammad Lafi	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Mohammad Othman	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Hazem Madi	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Nasir Abu Ful	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Shukri Abu Oun	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Mohammad Sawali	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Ahmed Qadeh	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Mohammad al-Bar'ai	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Khaled Hammad	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces
Khader Mehjar	Gaza	Hamas Authorities Security Forces

## Chapter Four:

# Israel's Surveillance and Control of Palestinian Digital Space

In October 2017, Israel arrested a Palestinian worker after posting “good morning” in Arabic on his Facebook. Israeli police arrested him after the automatic translation of Facebook translated “good morning” to “attack them” in Hebrew and “hurt them” in English. Reports pointed out that no Arabic-speaking Israeli police man looked at the post before the arrest was made<sup>104</sup>, and after realizing their mistake, the police released the Palestinian worker. Facebook, on the other hand apologized for the incident claiming that “mistakes like these might happen from time to time”<sup>105</sup>.



In recent years, Israel has increased its monitoring of Palestinian online content, specifically material deemed a threat to Israel's security by Israel. In fact, Israel has developed a “predictive policing system”, or what is also known as a ‘computer algorithm’, to monitor hundreds of thousands of Facebook accounts of Palestinians, analyze their social media posts and identify “suspects” likely to carry out attacks against Israel by monitoring of posts that include photos of Palestinians killed or imprisoned by Israel<sup>106</sup>. Israel's policing of Palestinian content on social media has become a pretext for arrests and abuse of Palestinian rights, the collection of this information is being used to persecute Palestinians. Israel has also used the cyber space to attack human rights defenders, invade their privacy through cyber-attacks, including sending them death threats and launching defamation campaigns<sup>107</sup>.

104. Berger, Y. 'Israel Arrests Palestinian Because Facebook Translated 'Good Morning' to 'Attack Them'', Haaretz (22 October 2017) <<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.818437>>

105. Fussell, S. 'Palestinian Man Arrested After Facebook Auto-Translates 'Good Morning' as 'Attack Them'', GIZMODO (23 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/Gx39WF>>

106. Nashif, N. et al. 'The Israeli algorithm criminalizing Palestinians for online dissent', Open Democracy (4 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/WsSq1N>>

107. Al Mezan. 'Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council Calls for Immediate Investigations into Threats against Human Rights Defenders', (14 August 2016) <<http://mezan.org/en/post/21477>>

In addition to the Israeli government setting-up cybersecurity units, tech companies such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have enabled Israel to monitor and censor Palestinian content. In 2016, the Israeli government announced an agreement with Facebook to set up teams to monitor and remove “inciteful” content<sup>108</sup>. Indeed, Israel has relied on this cooperation, and Facebook has been “praised” by Israeli officials for deleting Palestinian posts labelled by Israeli security agencies as incitement, as well as censoring and deleting Palestinian pages and personal accounts of Palestinian users<sup>109</sup>. In 2017, The head of the Israeli cyber unit at the Israeli State Attorney’s Office, reported to an Israeli parliamentary committee that 85 percent of Israeli government requests to “remove content deemed harmful or dangerous” from social media services such as Facebook and Twitter, were accepted<sup>110</sup>. According to a Facebook transparency report for the period from January to June, 2017, Facebook granted 472 request from Israel to restrict content<sup>111</sup>. Adalah sent a letter to the Israeli Attorney General and the Israeli Cyber Unit director, calling on them to “immediately cease the illegal operations of the state attorney's Cyber Unit,” providing that such “censorship operations are conducted without any basis in Israeli law,” and that “there is no explicit directive in [Israeli] law authorizing the removal of content determined to amount to a criminal offense, even by a court.”<sup>112</sup>

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108. Greenwald, G. ‘Facebook Says It Is Deleting Accounts at the Direction of the U.S. and Israeli Governments’, The Intercept (30 December 2017) <<https://goo.gl/UqZxHK>>

109. Ibid.

110. Ilan, S. ‘Israeli Official Reports Increased Cooperation on Removing Content from Social Media’, Calcalist (29 December 2017) <<https://www.calcalistech.com/ctech/articles/0.7340.L-3728439.00.html>>

111. Facebook. ‘Transparency Report: Israel January 2017 – June 2017’, <<https://goo.gl/W3tZie>>

112. Adalah. ‘Israel’s ‘Cyber Unit’ operating illegally to censor social media content’, (14 September 2017) <<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9228>>

**Table 2: A Partial List of Palestinian Accounts and Pages Deleted by Facebook in 2017<sup>113</sup>**

Name	Type	Removal Date
Samer Hamdan	Personal Account	January 7, 2017
Mousa Ghaithan	Personal Account	March 2017
Abdelrahman Abu Zgharet	Personal Account	July 15, 2017
Monjed Ashour	Personal Account	July 2017
Yassin Izz al-Deen	Personal Account	September 4, 2017
Sami Youssef	Personal Account	September 9, 2017
Tareq Ali	Personal Account	September 22, 2017
Ali Abeidat	Personal Account	October 10, 2017
Karam Zghaer	Personal Account	October 18, 2017
Faisal al-Rifaai	Personal Account	October 30, 2017
Shadi Wahedi	Personal Account	October 2017
Hamza Hamdan	Personal Account	October 2017
Issa Amro	Personal Account	November 1, 2017
Sa'id Basher	Personal Account	November 2, 2017
Sami AsSai	Personal Account	November 7, 2017
Omar al-Khtaib	Personal Account	November 2017
Aqel al-Awawda	Personal Account	December 6, 2017
Hamza Akram	Personal Account	December 2017
Tareq Omar	Personal Account	December 2017
Saif Qafisha	Personal Account	December 2017
Fadi Thabet	Personal Account	December 2017
Mosab Qafisha	Personal Account	December 2017
Housaiba Bohali	Personal Account	December 2017
Alaa Barqan	Personal Account	December 2017
Hassan Isleh	Personal Account	December 2017
Mo'men Miqdad	Personal Account	December 2017
Wisam Ahmad	Personal Account	December 2017
Hisham al-Nwajha	Personal Account	December 2017
Mousab Darwish	Personal Account	December 2017
Waleed Imad	Personal Account	December 2017
Haitham Abu Obeida	Personal Account	December 2017
Rahel al-Qwafi	Personal Account	December 2017
Mohanad Romana	Personal Account	December 2017
Mesh Heik	Page	September 28, 2017 and November 2017
Yomiyat Maqdisya	Page	October 8, 2017

113. Information on deleted accounts and pages deleted by Facebook for Table 2 were obtained from Sada Social.

Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades	Page	October 16, 2017
Falstini Plus	Page	November 2017
48 News	Page	December 7, 2017
Al-Khalil News	Page	December 2017
Ramallah News	Page	December 2017
MP Fathi al-Qarawi Book	Page	December 2017
Hadith al-Yom	Page	December 2017
Hamas West Bank	Page	December 2017
Al-Najah Bloc	Page	December 2017
Al-Defah News	Page	December 2017

**Table 3: A Partial List of Palestinian Accounts and Pages Deleted by YouTube in 2017<sup>114</sup>**

Name	Type	Removal Date
Naser al-Marghami	Personal Account	September 11, 2017
Laith Awes	Personal Account	September 12, 2017
Faisal al-Rifaa'i	Personal Account	October 2017
Hasan Isleh	Personal Account	November 2017
Mohammad Abu Qouider	Personal Account	November 2017
Mohammad al-Kouifi	Personal Account	December 2017
Wahat Shahid	Channel	August 28, 2017
Palestine Dialogue Network	Channel	September 11, 2017
Ghorba Team for Islamic Art	Channel	August 2017 and September 11, 2017
Njoom Ghorba for Islamic Art	Channel	September 2017
Miqlaa Media	Channel	September 2017
Palestine Today	Channel	September 2017
Al Quds Network	Channel	September 2017
Gaza Story	Channel	October 1, 2017
Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades	Channel	October 21, 2017
Al-Andalus	Channel	November 2017
Palestine 27	Channel	November 2017
Palestine Plus	Channel	November 2017
Hadith al-Youm	Channel	December 2017

114. Information on deleted accounts and pages deleted by YouTube for Table 3 were obtained from Sada Social.

# The Militarization of the Palestinian Cyber Space

In addition to Israel's systematic measures of surveillance of the Palestinian cyberspace, Israel has been relying on infiltrating and militarizing the Palestinian cyber space. This is embodied by the "Israel in Arabic" websites<sup>115</sup> and other Israeli official social media accounts in Arabic, which are administered by cybersecurity units affiliated with the Israeli intelligence and Israeli police<sup>116</sup>. Facebook pages in Arabic include for example the "Coordinator", head of the Office Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) under which the Israeli government implements its policy and administers in the oPt by military law and orders. On August 10, 2017, the Israeli military commander of COGAT posted a status on Facebook threatening a potential Israeli army attack after the Israeli military "had discovered two tunnels and related infrastructure constructed by Hamas under a mosque and apartment building in the village of Beit Lahiya." in the Gaza Strip<sup>117</sup>. The post included aerial images of the mosque and the apartment building, in which 21 people live, including four women and 12 children<sup>118</sup>.

 المنسق added 2 new photos. August 10 · 🌟

أفدق حماس الإرهابية تحت مسجد و صارة مؤهلة ذات 6 طوابق في عزه و تعرض كل من يسكن حوالها للخطر  
إذا سكتكم قرب #مسجد\_التقوى في #بيت\_لاهايا أو قرب ظلمية #الخزندار في منطقة #الشاطئ فاعلموا أن حياتكم في خطر شديد!  
أزاح اليوم #جيش\_الدفاع\_الإسرائيلي الستار عن نفقين لـ #حماس\_الإرهابية لهما فتحات و بنية تحتية تحت الأرض توجد تحت صارات سكنية مؤهلة و مسجد في #القطاع. حماس بنت هذه الأنفاق في تلك الأماكن لاستخدام ساكنيها ك #دروع\_بشرية أثناء القيام من داخلها بأعمال إرهابية هجومية في أي عنوان قادم.  
أولاً هناك صارة سكنية ذات 6 طوابق في منطقة الشاطئ فيها موقف للسيارات تحت الأرض، وداخلها توجد فتحة لفق إرهابي لحماس. وفي بيت لاهايا هناك مبيتان: بيت الشاطئ في حماس، #محمد\_محمود\_حماد و مسجد التقوى المتاحم له. و تحتها توجد بنية تحتية للنفق و فتحة له. (الصور مرفقة تحت).  
يبنو أن حماس الإرهابية تستمر بالتقرص خلف المصلين الأبرياء أو سكان المزارع في عزه لتحمي البنية التحتية الإرهابية لأنفاقها. إذا سكتكم بالقرب من المصلين المذكور أعلاه أو أمثالهما فاعلموا أنه خلال أي استخدام عنواني بالأسلحة من هذه الأماكن في المستقبل ضد #إسرائيل قد يسبب قصفها.  
أيها #الغزويون، هل تفتنون حياتكم من أجل الإرهابيين الحسوبيين الذين يستخدمونكم كدروع بشرية. يستغلونكم ويستهبونون بحياتكم؟؟؟



The page also often posts announcements of lifting "security bans" for the Palestinian residents in various areas of the West Bank, enabling them to apply for permits to access Jerusalem and Israel. Such tactics are often used to pressure Palestinians to become collaborators.

115. See for example 'Israel in Arabic' website: <http://www.israelinarabic.com/>; Israel Speaks Arabic Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IsraelArabic/>, and Israel in Arabic Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/IsraelinArabic/?hc\\_ref=ARTrjXhKsJGpl95adAv7fyQOPmd52mVOKRnizRQ-Lfo67ZTNzTruM\\_bkC\\_kX\\_KZKk&fref=nf](https://www.facebook.com/IsraelinArabic/?hc_ref=ARTrjXhKsJGpl95adAv7fyQOPmd52mVOKRnizRQ-Lfo67ZTNzTruM_bkC_kX_KZKk&fref=nf)

116. For more information see Zameh, 'Hashtag Palestine 2016: Digital Activism Report', (March 2017) < <https://7ameh.org/2017/06/05/7ameh-presents-hashtag-palestine-2016/>>

117. Adalah. 'Israeli army threatens Gaza family in Facebook post', (30 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/L4tAh4>>

118. Ibid.



7amleh has also documented the use of Facebook pages which call on Palestinians to collaborate with Israeli intelligence in exchange for personal and economic “help”. Indeed, Israel has relied on the use of personal and economic necessity to pressure Palestinians to become collaborators, through surveillance methods that invade and intrude one’s personal autonomy and dignity<sup>119</sup>. For example, the Facebook page “Bidna Naish”<sup>120</sup> (Arabic for “We want to live”) states that the page is set-up to “enable you [Palestinian audience] to provide us [unclear which Israeli security authority] with information about attackers and the wanted”. The page states that providing such “security information” can help “save lives and homes from demolition”. The page provides a free toll number for calls and offers to provide monetary compensation or any required services in exchange for information.



119. Zureik, E. 'Strategies of Surveillance: The Israeli Gaze', (2016) <<https://goo.gl/S3GzZ3>>

120. Bidna Naish Facebook page in Arabic: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/bidnanaish/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/bidnanaish/about/?ref=page_internal)

## ||| Conclusion

For the third year, 7amleh presents numbers and general trends of social media activism of Palestinians in various geographical locations, with an embedded belief that such activism has opened opportunities for Palestinians to build solidarity for daily life experiences, to protest unjust policies and rights violations via the digital space, and to share information when many of them are separated by various physical barriers that forcibly cut them from each other.

The targeting of the Palestinian digital online sphere has become a systematic policy of the three authorities: Israel, the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip. Any discussion of the implications of restrictions of the digital space, therefore, must be positioned within the larger context of 'policing', suppressive policies and practices targeting Palestinians, individually and collectively. In addition to the restrictions imposed by 'local' authorities on the Palestinian digital space, big social media corporations, primarily Facebook, are also complicit in the violations of Palestinian digital rights alongside the Israeli government. Despite such restrictions, or in light of such restrictions, Palestinian social media activism has been developing and growing in ways in which many Palestinians in the digital sphere advocate for their rights and empower their 'existence' in that space<sup>121</sup>.

Additionally, the digital space is being targeted by all the authorities, often in ways where domestic laws are non-existent in order to protect Palestinian digital rights. Therefore, the repression of Palestinians' free speech and censorship online needs to be protested and the different authorities, in contrast, need to take on their responsibilities in respecting, protecting and guaranteeing Palestinian basic human rights to freedom of expression, right to access and share information through social media platforms and the right to privacy. Furthermore, all the concerned authorities need to establish adequate accountability-mechanisms that allow Palestinians to report abuses and violations of their rights, whether committed by private individuals or state authorities.

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121. For example, Palestinians are trying to increase their mapping of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to use traffic and navigations applications for the areas where famous navigation applications offer no service, see Berger, M. 'When Waze Won't Help, Palestinians Make their own Maps', Wired (12 October 2017) <<https://goo.gl/M4U7qC>>





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