

Israel 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists launched a brutal attack on Israel. By the end of 2024 there were close to 100 hostages still being held by Hamas, among them seven U.S. citizens. The resulting conflict led to a rise in reports of human rights violations.

Issues included: reports of arbitrary or unlawful killings; enforced disappearance; degrading treatment by government officials; and arbitrary arrest or detention.

The government took several credible steps to identify officials who committed human rights abuses, with multiple trials pending at year's end.

The United States recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017. It is the position of the United States that the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties. The Palestinian Authority exercises no authority over Jerusalem.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

According to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), at least 43 Palestinians died in Israeli custody during the year.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

c. War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity, and Evidence of Acts that May Constitute Genocide, or Conflict-related Abuses

Terrorist organizations Hamas and Hizballah continue to engage in the indiscriminate targeting of Israeli civilians in violation of the law of armed conflict.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The law generally provided for freedom of expression, including for

members of the press and other media, and the government generally respected this right for most Israelis. NGOs and journalists reported authorities restricted press coverage and limited certain forms of expression, especially in the context of criticism against the war or sympathy for Palestinians in Gaza.

Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure

The Union of Journalists in Israel received reports of five journalist detentions and 13 physical attacks by security forces against journalists during the year.

Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups

Israel prohibited hate speech and content liable to incite violence, terrorism, or discrimination on grounds of race, origin, religion, nationality, and sex. The Israeli government regularly enacted gag orders on sensitive security information and information relating to continuing investigations. The law empowered authorities to limit certain freedom of expression in cases of speech defined as incitement to violence or hate speech. Israel occasionally ordered the closing of Palestinian radio stations in the West Bank for “inciting behavior that could harm public safety or public order” including support for terrorism.

b. Worker Rights

The law provided for the right of workers to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The law prohibited antiunion discrimination. A labor court had discretionary authority to order the reinstatement of a worker fired for union activity.

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The government generally enforced all applicable laws protecting freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike, including prohibitions on antiunion discrimination. The government sometimes levied penalties against violators. Penalties were commensurate with other laws related to civil rights. Worker unions reported some employers actively discouraged union participation, delayed or refused to engage in collective bargaining, or harassed workers attempting to form a union.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

Israel provided for a national minimum wage above the individual poverty

income level for all sectors of the economy. On April 1, the minimum wage for a full-time position was raised consistent with the Minimum Wage Law that set the minimum wage at 47.5 percent of the average wage in Israel. Israeli law required certain protection for workers including advance notice of dismissal, maternity leave for women employees, and paid family leave.

Occupational Safety and Health

Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards existed for the main industries, but regulations were insufficient for some other industries in the country, particularly construction and agriculture.

There was no available information regarding the government's responsiveness to workers' complaints.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The government did not effectively enforce minimum wage, overtime, and OSH law. Authorities rarely enforced penalties for violators, and the penalties were not commensurate with those for similar crimes such as fraud or negligence.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

The exact whereabouts of many of the hostages abducted to Gaza by Hamas in the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack remained unknown at year's end.

There were reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities. Most of the individuals were Palestinians taken into Israeli custody during raids in Gaza and transferred to Israeli detention facilities.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

Israeli law generally prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court for nonsecurity related criminal charges. Israeli citizens arrested by the IDF in the West Bank were subject to Israeli law and trial in civilian courts within Israel, whereas Palestinians in the West Bank arrested by the IDF were subject to trial in Israeli military courts under military law – which was based on the governing structure under the Oslo Accords. Per this setting, Israel’s Ministry of Defense had the authority to administratively detain Palestinians suspected of engaging in unlawful activities for a period of up to six months without charge or trial and had the authority to extend administrative detention orders. Israeli authorities relocated most Palestinian prisoners detained in the West Bank or Gaza to detention facilities inside Israel. As part of Israel’s military operation in Gaza, Israel arrested hundreds of Palestinians it suspected were Hamas militants or otherwise supported terrorists.

During military operations in Gaza beginning in October 2023, the government arrested hundreds of Palestinians it suspected were Hamas militants under the authority of the Unlawful Combatants Law (UCL),

amended following the October 7, 2023, attacks to extend authorities' ability to lawfully hold detainees without charge, trial, or access to counsel.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Hostages who returned from Hamas captivity testified that they were sexually abused or that they witnessed sexual abuse of other hostages. Hostages recounted being deprived of sufficient food, water, and medical treatment, and suffering other forms of physical and psychological abuse.

The government acknowledged Shin Bet (the Israel Security Agency) and police used violent interrogation methods that it referred to as "exceptional measures," but the Ministry of Justice did not provide information regarding

the frequency of interrogations or the specific interrogation methods used.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

There was no significant presence of the worst forms of child labor. The law prohibited all the worst forms of child labor, provided for a minimum age of employment, included limitations on working hours, and specified OSH restrictions for children.

The government generally enforced the law and conducted year-round inspections to identify cases of underage employment, with special emphasis on summer and school vacation periods. Penalties for child labor violations were not commensurate with those for analogous serious crimes.

Child Marriage

The law set the minimum age of marriage at 18, with some exceptions in cases of pregnancy and for couples older than 16 with court permission.

c. Protection to Refugees

The government continued to communicate with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations.

Provision of First Asylum

The law generally provided for granting asylum or refugee status, and the government had an established system for providing protection to refugees.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

Jews constituted approximately 77 percent of the population, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. The government treated crimes targeting Jews as nationalistic crimes relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than as resulting from antisemitism.