



New Israeli Laws in 2025:
The Legal Engineering

Behind the Genocide

For the second consecutive year, in the aftermath of the genocide in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupying authority has persistently utilized legislation as a means to impose a new reality, infringing upon the fundamental rights of Palestinians under the guise of legality. Rather than serving as instruments to uphold justice and equality, the laws are applied selectively and with discriminatory intent, thereby institutionalizing racist and retaliatory practices. For years, Israel has endeavored to reshape its legal framework into a robust system that legitimizes and intensifies oppression, fostering an environment where crimes are perpetrated openly. Oppression has evolved from being a transient behavior to becoming an integral part of the legal and administrative framework itself, shielded by texts and regulations that provide it with cover and obstruct accountability.

Since the onset of its occupation of Palestinian territories, the occupying power has expanded its legal jurisdiction over the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in clear violation of Articles 43 of the Hague Convention and 64 of the Fourth Geneva Convention..^[1] These articles emphasize the importance of adhering to the existing penal laws in occupied territories and forbid subjecting the local population to the laws of the occupying power, except to the limited extent necessary for the security needs of the occupying power. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) dismissed this justification in its 2024 Advisory Opinion regarding the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Court asserted that the extension of Israeli law to the West Bank and East Jerusalem lacks any legitimate legal foundation and cannot be defended under the pretext of safeguarding the security of the occupation..^[2]



[1] Article 43 of the Hague Regulations: "The authority of the legitimate power having actually passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all steps in his power to re-establish and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country."

Article 64 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: "The penal laws of the occupied territory shall remain in force, with the exception that they may be repealed or suspended by the Occupying Power in cases where they constitute a threat to its security or an obstacle to the application of the present Convention. Subject to the latter consideration and to the necessity for ensuring the effective administration of justice, the tribunals of the occupied territory shall continue to function in respect of all offences covered by the said laws. The Occupying Power may, however, subject the population of the occupied territory to provisions which are essential to enable the Occupying Power to fulfil its obligations under the present Convention, to maintain the orderly government of the territory, and to ensure the security of the Occupying Power, of the members and property of the occupying forces or administration, and likewise of the establishments and lines of communication used by them."

[2] See paragraph 139 of the Court's advisory opinion.

The occupying power has taken advantage of the genocide in the Gaza Strip to systematically target the entire Palestinian population, with a particular focus on prisoners and their families. Since 7 October 2023, members of the Israeli Knesset have proposed a series of racist bills designed to reinforce the apartheid system and solidify the control and repression policies enacted by the occupying power against the Palestinian people. These bills have garnered significant support from both the ruling coalition and the opposition. Consequently, the Knesset has enacted over thirty new laws addressing various issues, including freedom of expression, protest, and thought; the right to citizenship and family life; equality and social rights; as well as the rights of prisoners and detainees, bringing the total number of racist Israeli laws to nearly one hundred.^[3]

The Israeli authorities have utilized the genocide in the Gaza Strip to strengthen the supremacy of the Jewish ethno-national race, as outlined in the 2018 Basic Law: Jewish Nation State People; the government has asserted in its guiding principles that "the Jewish people have an exclusive and inalienable right over all areas of the Land of Israel."^[4]

In the wake of the events of October 7th and the ensuing severe and widespread security escalation, the implementation of emergency regulations in Israeli detention facilities has been heightened. In 2025, the Knesset and the government established two parallel legal tracks. On one side, the National Security Committee sanctioned the extension of the temporary legislation – (Iron Swords: State of Emergency in Prisons) (Amendment No. 4), which provides a general legislative framework for declaring a state of emergency in prisons, with its validity extended until 31 July 2026, while maintaining the existing emergency declaration until 15 September 2026; this allows for the continued housing of prisoners in numbers that exceed the legally mandated capacity.^[5]



[3] Adalah. "New report by Adalah: Over 30 new laws enacted by the Israeli Knesset since 7 October further entrench apartheid and Jewish ethno-national supremacy." 24 November 2025. [https://mailchi.mp/adalah/news-24-november-2025?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/adalah/news-24-november-2025?e=[UNIQID])

[4] Ibid.

[5] The Knesset. "The National Security Committee has approved the extension of the temporary legislation that governs the declaration of a state of emergency in prisons until

On the other side, the declaration of a state of emergency in prisons has been prolonged under Article 19(k)(d) of the Prisons Decree (new text) of 1971. This temporary executive action can be renewed for shorter durations and permits more stringent exceptional measures, such as surpassing the legally mandated living space standards and even leaving prisoners without beds. The National Security Committee sanctioned its extension until 15 January 2026^[6], and subsequently, on 13 January 2026, approved another extension until 15 March 2026.^[7]

This legal framework illustrates that, given the current security environment since October 7th, the state of emergency in prisons is no longer an extraordinary and time-bound measure, but has evolved into a primary mechanism for overseeing the detention system. Even after the ceasefire was announced, Israeli authorities persisted in extending the state of emergency in prisons, either through long-term temporary legislation or by renewing executive emergency declarations under Article 19(k)(d). This reinforces the notion that the state of emergency is no longer tied to a specific security context, but has transformed into a quasi-permanent administrative and legal structure employed to suspend essential standards of detention conditions, especially those concerning living space and the fundamental requirements of human dignity.

Moreover, since October 7th, we have observed an unparalleled legislative surge, evident in the introduction and modification of discriminatory laws targeting Palestinians. Freedom of expression has been under attack through the criminalization of political views, expressions of sympathy, or discussions related to current events. Furthermore, the definition of terrorism and support for terrorism has been expanded. The occupying power has also provided legal exceptions that permit the arrest of children as young as 14, and has empowered Israeli courts to impose lengthy prison sentences on those under 14, in blatant violation of international child protection standards.

These laws also aim at the deportation of families of prisoners, who the Israeli authorities allege took part in attacks against the occupying power. Legislation has been put in place that permits the expulsion of family members of any Palestinian resistance fighter to the Gaza Strip or any other location specified by the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, should they be found to have prior knowledge of or shown support for the resistance. This legal framework further encompasses laws designed to terminate social welfare payments to those labeled as 'terrorists' and their families living outside of Israel, to escalate penalties against Palestinian workers lacking permits, and to enforce collective punishments that impact various facets of life. This indicates a distinct trend of utilizing the law as a mechanism for collective punishment and systematic discrimination against Palestinians.

[6] The Knesset. "The National Security Committee has granted the government's request to prolong the state of emergency in prisons. The representative of the Public Defender during the session remarked: "It is time to put forth a plan to conclude this declaration and the state of emergency." 12 November 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/4kkpjywt>

[7] The Knesset. "The National Security Committee has approved the government's request to extend the declaration of a state of emergency in prisons, with data revealing that the current number of inmates in the Prison Service facilities is 23,110 prisoners." 13 January 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/48j7px48>

And for the second consecutive year since the onset of the genocide in the Gaza Strip, Gazan prisoners have been held under the 2002 Law on the Detention of Unlawful Combatants^[8], which fundamentally contravenes the protections established by international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Throughout 2025, the Knesset persisted in enacting retaliatory and racist laws that significantly violated the fundamental rights of prisoners and their families. This has resulted in heightened restrictions on prisoners within detention facilities, eroded any effective legal safeguards for them, and fostered a legal atmosphere that encourages impunity for offenses committed against them.

This paper centers on these laws, along with draft laws still undergoing the legislative process that represent a grave infringement of the rights of Palestinian prisoners.

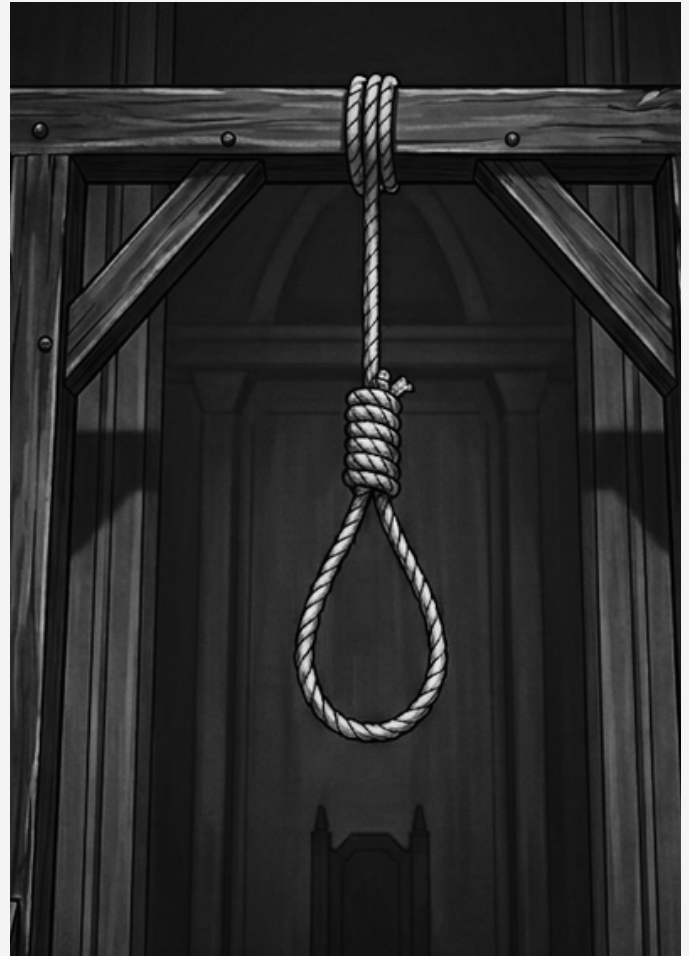


[8] The Unlawful Combatants Detention Law of 2002 is an Israeli statute that permits the occupying power to detain individuals classified as “unlawful combatants” without filing a criminal charge, if they are considered a threat to state security due to their involvement with or association with hostile groups, for preventive and security reasons rather than as a form of criminal punishment, with the decision to detain subject to regular judicial review.

“Death Penalty for Palestinians” Law

In light of the increasing violations against prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention centers, the Israeli occupation authorities have taken steps to justify their killings by enacting a law that enforces the death penalty. This action represents a formalization of the genocide being committed against Palestinian, both within and outside prison walls, since October 7th.

On 30 March 2026, the Knesset approved, during its second and third readings, a law that imposes the death penalty on Palestinians who deliberately cause the death of Israelis. This legislation has lowered the legal requirements for issuing a death sentence, enabling judges to impose it with a simple majority rather than the unanimous consent previously required in capital punishment cases, as dictated by military orders in the occupied territory.



In this scenario, two distinct legal pathways have been established; the first is a military law that applies to Palestinians living in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, while explicitly excluding settlers. This creates a framework of institutionalized racial discrimination and a dual legal system. Under this military law, the death penalty is nearly obligatory, as it cannot be reduced to life imprisonment, nor can prisoners receive pardons. As a result, the law removes judicial discretion, permitting military courts to convert the death penalty to life imprisonment only in rare and exceptional circumstances, for reasons that remain unspecified and undefined. The second pathway is a civil track that applies to Palestinians who possess Israeli citizenship, while excluding Israelis by tying the punishment to ideological motivations. This law requires the death penalty for premeditated murder committed with the intent of denying the existence of the State of Israel. In these instances, civil courts must impose one of two penalties: death or life imprisonment.^[9]

[9] The Palestinian Center for Israeli Studies – Madar. "Laws drafted and proposed for execution that are discriminatory, targeting only Palestinians while exempting Jews." 31 March 2026. <https://tinyurl.com/yxvkfptt>

The legally mandated method of execution is death by hanging, executed by specially trained prison guards who possess complete immunity from prosecution. Their identities are kept strictly confidential, and revealing any information about them constitutes a crime punishable under the penal code. The execution will take place within 90 days of the sentence being issued. The Prime Minister has the authority to request a delay for special circumstances, as long as the postponement does not exceed 180 days. Following sentencing, the condemned prisoner will be segregated from other prisoners who are not facing the death penalty. The victim's family will be allowed to attend both the court proceedings and the execution, whereas the prisoner's family will be prohibited from attending.^[10]

In relation to prisoners from the Gaza Strip, the Knesset plenum approved a bill on 13 January 2026, during its first reading, aimed at prosecuting individuals referred to as "participants in the October 7 massacre." According to the proposal, indictments would be directed to a specialized military court established under the Defense Regulations. This court would have jurisdiction over offenses under any relevant law, including severe crimes such as genocide, breaches of state sovereignty, waging war, assisting the enemy, and terrorist acts as defined by the 2016 Counter-Terrorism Law.

Furthermore, the proposal outlines the formation of a special judicial panel that includes a retired judge from a central court and the establishment of an appeals process. The procedures and evidentiary rules utilized in civilian courts would be applied, with exceptions specified in a separate appendix. The court would also be empowered to operate under extraordinary circumstances. Furthermore, the proposal encompasses regulations regarding the holding, broadcasting, and recording of public hearings, in accordance with laws established by regulation.^[11]



[10] Ibid.

[11] The Knesset. "In its initial reading, the Knesset has approved a bill aimed at prosecuting individuals connected to the massacre on October 7." 13 January 2026. <https://tinyurl.com/48j7px48>

From Emergency Legislation to Execution Initiatives

A Historical Overview of the Death Penalty Under the Occupying Power

The occupying power's laws already allow for the death penalty, as it has not signed the Second Additional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, which was adopted in December 1989 and requires signatory states to eliminate the death penalty. As a result, the occupying power is among those nations that uphold their death penalty legislation.

Since its inception in 1948, Israel has maintained the laws established under the British Mandate for Palestine, particularly the Emergency Law of 1945, which was enacted by the British Mandate authorities to suppress Palestinian resistance during the colonial era. The occupying power has integrated these laws into its domestic legal framework. It subsequently replicated and expanded this legal system in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through military orders imposed after the 1967 occupation, embedding it within the Israeli legal structure that continues to enforce domination and control over the Palestinian population.^[12]

In 1954, the occupying power abolished the death penalty for civil offenses and criminal murder, yet it retained the death penalty for crimes associated with the pursuit of Nazis, genocide, and treason. Throughout its history, the death penalty has only been executed twice – in the cases of Meir Tobianski and Adolf Eichmann.^[13]

With every Israeli election, certain Knesset members propose legislation to execute Palestinian prisoners, leveraging it as campaign rhetoric to attract votes. Since 2015, the occupying power has experienced numerous attempts to pass a law that would impose the death penalty on Palestinians accused of killing Israelis for nationalist reasons. Nevertheless, all these efforts have been unsuccessful due to political, legal, and human rights considerations.

In June 2015, Avigdor Lieberman, the leader of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, proposed a bill that would allow the death penalty for Palestinians. However, the Knesset plenum turned it down in July of that same year. MK Sharon Gal brought the bill back in October 2015, but he resigned from the Knesset before it could be passed. In June 2016, the bill was reintroduced as a prerequisite for Yisrael Beiteinu to join Benjamin Netanyahu's government. It successfully passed its preliminary reading in early 2017, but was later stalled due to objections from the legal advisors of both the government and the Knesset. The bill saw another attempt at reintroduction in November of that year, yet it still failed to pass.^[14]

[12] Madar. "The death penalty in Israel from Eichmann 1962 to Nukhba elements 2025." 27 October 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/yjynvxf6>

[13] Ibid.

[14] International Organization of Solidarity with Palestinian Prisoners – Tadamon. "Execution of Palestinian prisoners". 31 July 2023. <https://tinyurl.com/25yhp5uj>

In January 2018, the Knesset plenum approved the bill in its preliminary reading, but it encountered significant opposition from the Israeli Ministry of Justice and various local and international human rights organizations, which hindered its progress. In April 2020, Likud MK Miki Zohar reintroduced the bill, and it again passed its preliminary reading, but was once more stalled due to widespread opposition both locally and internationally..^[15]

In 2021, Knesset Member Itamar Ben-Gvir, along with members of the Likud party, attempted to discuss the bill four times, but it did not advance beyond the initial legislative stages. By 2023, two new bills were proposed to enable the death penalty for Palestinian resistance fighters in the occupied West Bank, who are tried in military courts. The first was introduced by MK Limor Har-Melech from the Otzma Yehudit party, while the second came from MK Oded Forer and his colleagues in the Yisrael Beiteinu party. These two bills were combined into one and passed their preliminary reading, but ultimately, they were not enacted into law..^[16]



[15] Ibid.

[16] Madar. "The Knesset has given its preliminary approval to two proposed laws aimed at easing the process of imposing the death penalty on Palestinian resistance fighters."

Laws Restricting Freedom of Opinion and Expression

In a bid to uphold the narrative of the occupation concerning the events of October 7th and the ensuing genocide, as well as to criminalize Palestinian discourse and infringe upon their right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Knesset enacted a law on 21 January 2025. This law imposes a five-year prison term on anyone who denies or praises the events of October 7th. Under this legislation, any written or spoken statements that are deemed a "denial of the massacre"—as defined by the lawmakers—aiming to defend Hamas or express solidarity with it, are classified as a criminal offense punishable by five years in prison. The law characterizes the "October 7th massacre" as: "the acts carried out by Hamas terrorists and their collaborators on 7 October 2023."^[17]

With this law, the legislature aims to enhance the occupying power's mechanisms for regulating public, media, and digital discourse surrounding these events, while also reinforcing legal deterrents against viewpoints considered contrary to the official Israeli position. It is important to highlight that the occupying power has yet to establish an official commission of inquiry into the events of October 7th, nor has it released any official report that outlines a sanctioned narrative of those occurrences. As a result, it remains ambiguous what actions are classified as a "denial" that is prohibited by law. This situation places individuals at risk of inadvertently violating the law, which stands in stark contrast to the principles of criminal law that necessitate clearly defined offenses, allowing individuals to manage their conduct and avoid unintentional transgressions.^[18]

Moreover, the Constitution Committee has sanctioned a bill that removes the necessity for the Public Prosecutor's consent to initiate investigations into allegations of "incitement to terrorism," thereby empowering the police with extensive authority without prior checks. A police officer holding the rank of lieutenant colonel will now have the ability to commence an investigation into incitement-related offenses without needing approval from the Attorney General's office, the Ombudsman, or any other entity^[19]. This represents a serious infringement on legal protections, heightens the likelihood of arbitrary detentions and politically driven inquiries, and curtails freedom of expression under the guise of fighting terrorism.

[17] Madar. "In its concluding reading, a proposed law mandates a five-year prison term for anyone who denies or praises October 7." 22 January 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/4pvjva66>

[18] Adalah. "Post-7 October: A new wave of anti-Palestinian Israeli laws." November 2025, p7.

[19] The Knesset. "The Constitution, Law and Justice Committee endorses a bill allowing investigations into incitement to terrorism cases without needing the Public Prosecutor's Office's approval." 10 November 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/45xkcxpm>

Similarly, the Knesset plenum finalized a bill on 22 December 2025 that permits the Minister of Communications or the government to close down any media outlet—be it visual, audio, or online—for a renewable period of ninety days, irrespective of wartime conditions. This is a stark departure from the Emergency Law, which was designed for wartime scenarios within the Israeli legal framework, where such measures were contingent upon those specific periods.^[20]

The government has framed this bill as an emergency measure, set to expire on the final day of 2027, thus lasting for two years. However, these types of oppressive laws are frequently prolonged, particularly when there is a lack of opposition from other political factions. The dissenting voices were primarily from members of the Joint List (Hadash-Democratic Front for Peace and Equality), the United Arab List, and a single member of the Labor Party.^[21]

Denying Prisoners the Guarantees of a Fair Trial

In a situation where laws are increasingly weaponized, shifting from instruments of justice to tools that protect wrongdoers and exert control over detainees, the implementation of videoconferencing (VC) court sessions emerges as part of a system where technology serves as a facade for policies designed to manipulate the justice process. It has become a fundamental component of institutional oppression. Rather than facilitating procedures and enhancing access to justice, the occupying power employs this technology as a restrictive tool that undermines the detainee's presence and the efficacy of their defense, decreases the transparency of the sessions, and limits the interaction between judges and the involved parties. Consequently, the trial is altered from a space that should be public and accessible into a screen disconnected from reality, where the security apparatus tightens its control over the proceedings and orchestrates the sessions in a manner that curtails fundamental procedural rights.

The peril of this trajectory lies not just in the technology itself, but also in the legal framework within which it is utilized. Security Restriction No. (24), permitting videoconference hearings for detainees, prisoners, and those in custody, has been repeatedly extended, with the latest extension occurring on 12 August 2025. This illustrates the ongoing application of these extraordinary powers to limit the rights of detainees and regulate their involvement in court through videoconferencing.^[22] This measure is rooted in the temporary legislation known as the 'Iron Swords' Law of 2023. Although this law was meant to be temporary, it has been renewed multiple times. Throughout 2025, all court hearings for prisoners, including those under administrative detention, were conducted using this technology. It is important to highlight that this amendment affected not only prisoners from the West Bank but also those from the Gaza Strip.

[20] Madar. "Final reading: emergency legislation allows the closure of media outlets in Israel and the West Bank not related to wartime situations." 30 December 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/y73m6zr6>

[21] Ibid.

[22] The Knesset. "The Constitution Committee has given the green light to a proposal that extends the security restriction mandating that court hearings be held through videoconferencing." 13 August 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/j55e5bjf>

The occupying power aimed to completely implement VC technology by passing the "Law on Conducting Deliberations via Videoconferencing for Security Prisoners of 2025." This legislation was approved by the Knesset during its second and third readings on 25 February 2026. The law mandates that judicial deliberations regarding security prisoners will generally take place through videoconferencing, thus eliminating the necessity of transporting the prisoner to court. According to this law, in-person deliberations will occur within the prison courtroom, with the presence of prisoners or detainees only during the phases of evidence presentation, penalty proposals, and verdict issuance. These sessions also encompass the initial hearing to establish the duration of detention, along with one substantive hearing concerning the detention itself, until all procedures are finalized. Conversely, deliberations pertaining to administrative detention will be conducted via videoconferencing, with the exception of the initial detention hearing, which will be held in person.^[23]

The implementation of videoconferencing technology in detention and trial proceedings poses significant risks. It hinders prisoners from appearing physically before judges and their attorneys, greatly restricting the judiciary's capacity to directly evaluate their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, it diminishes the prisoner's ability to consult freely and confidentially with their lawyer, limiting their opportunity to articulate case details or raise issues during the session. Moreover, this approach contributes to the concealment or obscuring of physical and visible evidence of torture or mistreatment they may have endured during interrogation or detention. This effectively eliminates the visible signs of violations and obstructs their documentation and the accountability of those responsible.

This form of trial infringes upon the detainee's right to privacy. Having a prison guard present in the courtroom with the detainee subjects them to ongoing psychological stress, hindering their freedom of expression and their capacity to mount a defense. Addameer has also recorded accounts from multiple prisoners who experienced assaults during their transport to these courtrooms, highlighting the presence of systematic practices that jeopardize the physical and psychological health of detainees.

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[23] The Knesset. "The Knesset has officially approved temporary legislation allowing court hearings for detainees, prisoners, and security detainees to be conducted using visual technologies." 26 February 2026. <https://tinyurl.com/3hd7hsts>

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Legislation of Retaliation and Collective Punishment towards Prisoners from Gaza

Since 2005, the Israeli occupation authorities have persistently enforced their laws on detainees from the Gaza Strip. However, the period following October 7th marked a perilous shift in this trend, as significant changes were made to these laws, broadening the scope of arrest and interrogation powers while extending previously established detention durations. These changes have resulted in a severe infringement of the rights of Palestinian prisoners, especially those detained after this date, as the legal modifications have been exploited as a systematic means of pressure designed to limit detainees' rights and strip them of their fundamental protections.

In the aftermath of October 7th, Israeli authorities revised multiple laws regulating the detention of prisoners from the Gaza Strip. A state of emergency was declared in prisons, leading to an unprecedented increase in arrest powers through legal changes that permitted the near-perpetual extension of detention periods and conferred extensive authority upon security agencies to limit detainees' rights to communicate with their legal representatives. The Unlawful Combatant Law stands out among these legal instruments, as it allows for the detention of individuals without specific charges or a trial, in clear violation of international justice norms.

This law has undergone several amendments to widen its applicability. In addition to that, the durations during which detainees are barred from meeting with their lawyers have been extended to various lengths, reaching as much as 180 days in certain instances. Moreover, military emergency orders have been utilized to hasten the issuance of arrest warrants without adequate judicial oversight. This further consolidates the Israeli army's control over critical decisions regarding detainees and erodes essential legal protections.^[24]

[24] For more information on the new laws and legal amendments during the years 2023 and 2024, see: <https://www.addameer.ps/media/5379> and <https://www.addameer.ps/media/5552>

2025 Legal Amendments to Laws Concerning Prisoners from Gaza

This year has seen the extension and amendment of several laws concerning detainees from the Gaza Strip, all justified by the need to enhance security measures during the ongoing state of emergency. The legislation and amendments enacted since early October 2023 have led to an unprecedented increase in the powers of Israeli authorities, while simultaneously imposing additional restrictions on the rights and legal protections of detainees.

Below is a summary of the most significant laws and amendments that have been extended during this period.

-Extension of Emergency Measures: Access to Legal Counsel for Suspects in Security Offenses

The Knesset has sanctioned the prolongation of the Emergency Regulations (Iron Swords) that restrict Palestinian detainees from consulting with their lawyers until 29 January 2026. The recent amendment to this legislation allows the investigating officer to block meetings with a lawyer for a maximum of 20 days. If the head of the investigations department of the intelligence service requests an extension, the prohibition can be prolonged multiple times, as long as the total duration does not surpass 60 days. Judicial extensions of up to 120 days are permissible when the ban is considered essential due to a "danger to human life in connection with military operations."^[25]

The explanatory note that accompanies the proposed law articulates: "Given the persistent security and investigative requirements, including the new arrests that have taken place since the last extension of the regulations, which necessitate the ongoing arrangement regarding the denial of access to legal counsel, and in alignment with the demands of law enforcement and security agencies, the proposal seeks to amend the law and once again extend the emergency regulations."^[26]

The explanatory note that accompanies the proposed legislation highlights the increasing dominance of security considerations in the legislative process, marked by an almost total dependence on the advice of security and law enforcement agencies, while completely neglecting human rights and judicial protections. As a result, the extension of emergency regulations has evolved from a temporary response into a regular practice that normalizes exceptions and institutionalizes restrictions that violate the basic rights of detainees. Thus, what were once exceptional and temporary emergency measures have now become systematic instruments for controlling detention and interrogation.

[25] See the amendment to the law at https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25_Isr_7829936.pdf

[26] The Knesset. "The Knesset has granted its final approval to the emergency regulations that enable the prohibition of meetings between prisoners of war and their legal representatives." 21 July 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/ye2765fk>

Furthermore, these amendments seek to provide authorities with broader powers to conduct mass arrests in rapid succession, significantly undermining the legal protections that safeguard individuals. This tactic was previously utilized during the Second Intifada in the West Bank, illustrating a persistent strategy of enhancing control mechanisms at the cost of fundamental rights. Consequently, these amendments pose critical concerns regarding their discriminatory implications and their alignment with the principles of justice and the rule of law.

-Extension of Emergency Measures: Extension of Detention of Suspects in Terrorism Offenses

On 21 July 2025, the Knesset sanctioned, for the sixth time, the prolongation of emergency regulations that permit the extension of detention for individuals held under the guise of what the Israeli occupation authorities labeled as "hostile operations" that transpired between October 7 and October 13, 2023, in addition to those arrested during the mass arrests campaign that followed October 7. Under this extension, the emergency regulations will be in force until 29 January 2026.^[27]

According to these regulations, a judge is authorized to mandate the detention of a suspect for a maximum of 45 days at a time without the necessity of filing charges, which is a threefold increase from the prior maximum of 15 days. Furthermore, the judge can extend the detention for an additional 45 days, with any extension surpassing 90 days requiring the consent of the Attorney General.^[28]

The ongoing extension of this amendment illustrates the manipulation of the state of emergency as a legal framework to broaden detention powers beyond conventional criminal protections, effectively legitimizing arbitrary detention and eroding even the most fundamental rights to defense and judicial scrutiny. Rather than being an exceptional measure confined in duration and scope, emergency regulations have been morphed into a permanent mechanism for managing arrests and interrogations, significantly enhancing the authorities' capacity to detain individuals without explicit charges or adequate oversight, as dozens of detainees from the Gaza Strip continue to face repeated extensions of their detentions, each time for 45 days, with their confinement now surpassing two years.

[27] The Knesset. "The Knesset has granted its final approval to prolong the effectiveness of the emergency regulations that permit the extension of detention for prisoners of war." 21 July 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/yju7tjmx>

[28] See the amendment to the law at https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25_lsr_7832389.pdf

-Amendment to the Unlawful Combatants Law

The Unlawful Combatants Law of 2002 empowers Israeli authorities with extensive authority to detain individuals indefinitely without any charges, trials, or convictions, utilizing open-ended detention orders that undergo review every six months. Since December 2023, the Knesset has enacted temporary orders that further extend these powers, significantly eroding the rights to a fair trial and personal freedom. These orders have resulted in the detention of thousands of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, in serious breach of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, especially concerning genocide.

In this scenario, on 8 October 2023, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant issued an order classifying Palestinian detainees from the Gaza Strip as "unlawful combatants" under the previously mentioned law. This was followed by a series of amendments that widened the range of individuals authorized to issue arrest warrants, lengthened detention durations, extended judicial review timelines, and increased the authority to deny access to legal representation.

On 18 December 2023, a new amendment was introduced permitting the issuance of an arrest warrant within 45 days of the arrest if the warrant was issued by officers of specific ranks. The judicial review was mandated to be completed within 75 days, and access to legal counsel could be restricted for as long as 180 days. This amendment was effective for four months. Subsequently, the law was revised to shorten the duration of the prohibition on meeting with a lawyer to 90 days, then to 75 days, while also reducing the judicial review period to 45 days and the timeframe for issuing an arrest warrant to 30 days.^[29]

As amendments progressed throughout 2025, a significant amendment was issued on 31 July 2025, remaining in effect until 29 December 2025.^[30] This amendment preserved the 30-day detention period starting from the date of arrest and the 45-day judicial review period, while also reducing the timeframe in which a detainee could be barred from meeting with their lawyer to 30 days. This was in addition to the 45 days already allocated to the occupation authorities, resulting in a total of 75 consecutive days during which a detainee could be denied access to legal counsel.^[31] Following this, a new amendment was ratified on 25 December 25, effective until 31 March 2026. This amendment mandated a reduction in the maximum duration for issuing a permanent detention order to 25 days, the initial judicial review period to 40 days, and the timeframe during which an official could obstruct a meeting with a lawyer to 25 days.^[32]

[29] Addameer. "New Laws and Legal Amendments During 2024." 24 March 2024, p. 8. <https://www.addameer.ps/media/5552>

[30] The Knesset. "The Knesset has given its final approval to extend the temporary legislation that governs the treatment of illegal combatants." 23 July 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/y5xd597b>

[31] See the amendment to the law at https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25_lsr_7926200.pdf

[32] The Knesset. "The Knesset plenum has granted its approval for the legislation regarding the detention of unlawful combatants during its second and third readings." 25 December 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/4tscha24>

The implementation of the Unlawful Combatants Law exemplifies a blatant infringement of international human rights norms and humanitarian law. It obstructs detainees and their legal representatives from accessing the evidence that justifies their detention, thereby stripping them of their essential right to a defense and converting their detention into arbitrary imprisonment. Moreover, the total separation from their families and the prohibition of any external contact intensify the impacts of psychological and physical torture, eliminating any chance of legally contesting the reasons for their arrest.

This law also functions as a systematic mechanism for hiding evidence and ensuring impunity, effectively obscuring violations that occur during arrest and interrogation. These practices highlight the authoritarian and arbitrary essence of the law, empowering authorities with unchecked authority to make critical decisions regarding detainees without any authentic judicial oversight, thus rendering it a tool of oppression and control.

In addition to the physical and psychological torment inflicted on prisoners, which amounts to a crime of genocide,^[33] the laws and regulations enacted have also indirectly facilitated the genocide of prisoners by offering legal justification for extended arbitrary detention, total isolation from the outside world, and the denial of fundamental legal and humanitarian protections. These laws evidently seek to evade international accountability, as the occupying authorities strive to legitimize the violations and oppressive actions taken against Palestinians. Furthermore, these policies bolster the authorities' attempts to enforce a complete silence regarding the torture and inhumane treatment endured by prisoners in various detention facilities, thereby ensuring the persistence of these violations without oversight or accountability.

Consequently, it becomes evident that these laws serve as a legal instrument for undermining the rights of Palestinian prisoners and shielding perpetrators of crimes from any form of accountability. This shifts their role from a supposed means of ensuring security to a tool of repression and control, illustrating the ongoing Israeli policies that target the lives and dignity of Palestinians through official legislation. This intensifies their suffering and represents a blatant violation of all international human rights and humanitarian law standards, while numerous draft laws seek to further entrench practices of political persecution by converting them into legal and institutional policies, thereby legitimizing these actions and granting them permanent legal protection.

[33] To learn more about the legal categorization of offenses against prisoners, refer to the document "Beyond Accountability" available at: <https://addameer.ps/media/5683>