

Christian Peacemaker Teams

Incident Report: October- December
2019



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Introduction

[Christian Peacemaker Teams \(CPT\)](#) Palestine is a faith-based human rights organization that supports Palestinian-led, nonviolent, grassroots resistance to the Israeli occupation and the unjust structures that uphold it. By working with local Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers and educating people in our home communities, we strive to help create a space for justice and peace. CPT Palestine monitors the human rights violations that occur on a daily basis in the Israeli-occupied Old City of al-Khalil/Hebron and in the villages of the South Hebron Hills, West Bank. This report documents incidents from the fourth quarter of 2019, October through December, which were witnessed by CPT or given to CPT as first-hand testimony. We recognize that CPT cannot be present for all incidents that occur on the ground, and this report details only a small sample of violations committed by the Israeli occupying forces and illegal Israeli settlers against the Palestinian community. Our limitations are as follows: (1) incidents occur across an area of several kilometers and at any time of day, and our limited human resources prevent us from being physically present; (2) Israeli occupying forces maintain hundreds of obstacles and checkpoints throughout the Old City that slow or completely prevent access to areas where incidents occur; (3) the Palestinian community does not always notify CPT of incidents for fear of repercussion by settlers or Israeli forces, or because these incidents happen so frequently.

CPT documentation adheres to International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law. The presence of Israeli settlements within the West Bank is illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We consider the rights of the child as applicable to all children under the age of 18. By contrast, Israeli occupying forces prosecute Palestinian children as adults from the age of 12 under military law, but prosecute Israeli settler children under 18 as children under Israeli civilian law.

Definitions and key terms

Al-Khalil has been divided into two areas as detailed in the Hebron Protocol (1997), called **H1** and **H2**.

H1: Under Palestinian Authority control.

H2: Under complete Israeli military control, housing 20% of the Palestinian population as well as five illegal Israeli settlements.

Occupied Palestine Gathers its Olives



It's autumn in Palestine. The olive trees - some of them centuries old - stand ready to provide their Palestinian farmers and families another season's worth of their precious crop. Precious in at least three ways:

1. About 80,000 households depend directly or indirectly on olive tree products, including table olives, olive oil, and the excess olive wood. Most of the output is used by Palestinians themselves, but olive products are also one of the few sustainable exports from Palestine to the world.
2. The trees themselves are a direct legacy of many generations of Palestinian care for their land and its fruits. Almost half of Palestine's agricultural area is devoted to olive trees.
3. The annual harvest involves intense work at the best of times - harvesting one average-sized tree can take one person two or three hours - but these are not the best of times. The Israeli government and

its settlement policies complicate farmers' lives in numerous ways, separating many farmers from their groves and granting only limited access by permits to those lands. The permits may not allow enough time to complete the harvest. In some places, tractors are not allowed. Farmers have no defense against settler violence, sabotage, pollution, and theft. Israeli forces destroy trees to build roads, settlements, and clear-fire zones for military use.

In al-Khalil (Hebron) and the South Hebron Hills, the dedication of Palestinian olive growers to their work, and the challenges imposed by Israeli occupation are piercingly evident. By invitation, CPT assisted seven Palestinian families with the harvest this season, picking olives and monitoring settler and military activity.

During these visits, we saw entire families involved with the olive harvest - some climbing the trees or reaching from ladders to pick or rake the olives, which fall to the tarps surrounding the trees. Others sit nearby, separating olives from twigs and leaves; others prepare meals and drinks for the harvesters.

As we pass the time together, they explain their situations. The families whose groves adjoin illegal settlements have particular challenges: "The Israeli settlers took a lot of these trees here," said one Palestinian. "They opened the sewage pipe from [the illegal settlement next door] into our land and damaged most of the trees." Another olive farmer, a retired school director whose property is squeezed between two Israeli compounds, summed up her view of the situation: "We are not here to make anyone sad. We are not here to make anyone happy. We are here...because we are here." *Find a full UN report on the olive harvest season [here](#).*

Beit Kahil Demolition



Israeli forces destroyed four Palestinian homes in Beit Kahil shortly after midnight on 28 November, directly affecting 22 family members, many of them children. The homes belonged to the Assafrah and Zhur families, five of whose family members have been charged in the death of an Israeli settler, but not one person has been convicted in this case. Israeli forces also deployed teargas, stun grenades, and rubber-coated bullets against local Palestinians resisting the demolitions.

The Palestinian families in the town of Beit Kahil, northwest of al-Khalil (Hebron), have been facing collective punishment from Israeli forces since August. With the support of our partners, CPT has been accompanying these families and following their case from the beginning.

1. *For more background information about the struggle of the Beit Kahil community, read the previously published CPT article available [here](#).*
2. *CPT was able to document the home demolitions as part of our ongoing accompaniment. Watch the video [here](#).*

Palestinians have been praying en masse at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron as resistance to Israel's militarized settler-colonialism.

Morning Prayers Friday



For several weeks starting in November, thousands of community members responded to a call to attend the 4:00am Friday prayer at the Ibrahimi Mosque. This came after the United States administration's declaration that U.S. policy no longer recognizes international law as applying to Israeli settlements* and the subsequent occupation of a new Israeli settlement in the heart of Hebron.

The Ibrahimi Mosque could not hold all of the Palestinian worshippers, so the crowd spilled out into the street surrounded by Israeli forces. After the prayer, Palestinians distributed bread and soup to the community members in attendance.

**Demonstrators in Hebron were among thousands throughout the West Bank who observed a "Day of Rage" in response to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's statement on Israeli settlements. Read more here.*

In the heart of Hebron: New Israeli settlement would have severe repercussions for the Palestinian community

“I’ve always had the hope that Shuhada Street will be reopened to Palestinians and that we will be able to restore the shops and community life in that area,” says Abu Adam, who grew up in al-Khalil (Hebron). “My dad used to tell me stories of when he would shop from the vegetable market in the Old City. It’s hard for me to see that the life my dad experienced in his hometown, I am not going to experience. And there’s a possibility that the next generation won’t see that life either, because of the Israeli strategy of stealing land.”

New Settlement on Shuhada Street



On 1 December, the Israeli Civil Administration informed the Hebron Municipality its intentions to demolish the old Palestinian vegetable market, located in the heart of Hebron’s Old City on Shuhada Street, and construct an Israeli settlement in its place. The Hebron Municipality stated that under instructions from the Palestinian leadership, it will exert all its efforts to protect Palestinian land and preserve the property and presence of its citizens. Ultimately, the land belongs to the Hebron Municipality. Its residents thus have a protected tenancy that prevents them from being evicted without legal grounds. Despite this, the Israeli Civil Administration is

still putting pressure on the Hebron Municipality and plans to build the settlement.

The location of this potential settlement is particularly significant to Palestinians in Hebron. Shuhada Street used to be the main thoroughfare and commercial center of Hebron. Israeli forces started closing Shuhada Street in 1994 after the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, when Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein stormed the mosque, killing 29 Palestinians and wounding 150. By 2000, Israeli forces had completely closed Shuhada Street to Palestinians, resulting in Palestinian residents not being able to access their homes and shops.

Sufyan al-Junaidi was one of the dozens of merchants who operated a shop in the vegetable market before it was closed. “The army closed my vegetable shop by a military decision, and since then I have not been able to visit it, not even once,” Sufyan told media source Al-Monitor. Sufyan explained that his father began renting the shop from the Hebron Municipality in 1965. The market, he said, was once full of shoppers and visitors. “[Tons] of fruits and vegetables would flow into this important commercial area, but we have been denied access to it for decades,” he added.

The establishment of a new Israeli settlement would have severe repercussions for the Palestinian community: increased military presence, increased settler violence, and increased displacement of Palestinians. Settlements are illegal under international law: the Fourth Geneva Convention forbids the transfer by an occupying power of its people to occupied territory. The new settlement would also contribute to Israel’s creation of a settler-only corridor extending from the large settlement of Kiryat Arba, which is just outside Hebron city limits, to the Ibrahimi Mosque in the center of the Old City. Abu Adam says, “We already have Palestinians who are concerned to visit or open shops in the Old City because of the military and settler presence. It’s hard for me to imagine a new big settlement being built in the heart of my city.”

The Hebron Municipality is currently in legal proceedings to protect the vegetable market property. CPT Palestine will continue to share updates on further developments.

Use of Force Report

Israeli forces regularly use excessive force on Palestinian civilians, including tear gas, stun grenades (or sound bombs), rubber coated bullets and live ammunition. In addition, the Jewish settler-colonizers in Hebron, under the protection of the Israeli Occupying Army, also use excessive force and intimidation against Palestinians.

Background

Late In 2019 two Jewish holidays were used as an excuse by Jewish settlers and the Israel Occupying Forces (IOF) to use violence and excessive intimidation to terrorize the Palestinian population of Hebron (Al-Khalil). In addition, disproportionate violence by the occupying forces was used to disrupt a subsequent 'Day of Rage' on the 26th November - a Palestinian demonstration across the West Bank to protest the U.S. announcement that it no longer believes Israeli settlements violate international law; here.

The Jewish Festivals, Sukkot, and Sara's day (Shabbat Chayei), took place in Al Khalil (also known as Hebron), on the 16th October 2019, and over the weekend of 22-23 November 2019 respectively. On Sukkot hundreds of illegal settler-colonists, and observant Jews from elsewhere, invade Hebron, come into the Old City, and harass the civilian Palestinian population. They do this under the protection of the IOF. CPT (Christian Peacemaker Teams) were on the ground to be a presence, to monitor and record criminal and human rights violations.

Violations and Use of Force:

Sukkot

The Sukkot invasion of H1, Hebron by the military and settlers: Sukkot, is an annual event to visit the tomb of Othniel Ben Knaz, a biblical character, alleged to have led the Jewish people after the death of Joshua.

CPT monitored an area outside of the settler-colonists high security zone, outside checkpoint 56, and outside of official IOF jurisdiction. The IOF came out of checkpoint 56 (and the high security settler zone) into the Palestinian civilian area around Bab al-Zawiye.

In other parts of The Old City, such as Tel Rumeida in H2, settlers terrorized Palestinians invading their property and preventing free movement: "Over a

period of two hours dozens of them continuously invaded the roof of the Palestinian Abu Shamsiyye family home where several small children live.”
 Reed More



At Bab az-Zawiye, around 12 noon, about ten heavily armed soldiers invaded and took over a Butcher’s shop at whilst from about 500m away at Bab al-Baladiyah, three jeeps and three armored vehicles came out of the military base into the Palestinian civilian area, and proceeded up through the vegetable market street to join the soldiers at the Butcher’s shop.

The IOF then ‘secured’ the area by forcing businesses and shops to close from 12 noon to 4pm. During this time scores of Jewish settlers and other Jews, people under military protection, come and go through checkpoint 56 to visit the cave of Othniel Ben Knaz which is in area H1 (ostensibly under Palestinian jurisdiction).

After 4pm as the military withdrew some stones were thrown and the military threw two concussion grenades and one tear gas canister.

CPT YouTube video of military closing shops and harassing civilians on Sukkot Day; here.

Sarah's Day



A Settler Banner Proclaiming “Palestine never existed – and never will”

This is celebrated by religious Jews to mark Abraham’s purchase of a cave for Sarah’s burial place. The preparations for this event begin days before the festival, and it attracts the incredible number of 40-50,000 Jewish people into Hebron, this is in addition to the 6000 or so at the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba, and the 600 settler-colonists illegally occupying land and property in Hebron Old City itself. The streets are festooned with Zionist adverts and propaganda (see above). The whole event is advertised widely, tickets are expensive and enable visitors to rub shoulders with military and political elites at special dinners.

During the preparation and the event itself there is an intensification of the military presence, more barriers are erected restricting movement, and settler-colonists, under military protection enter Palestinian civilian areas, go on ‘parades’ provocatively and insultingly singing and dancing in Palestinian neighborhoods.

In 2019, the number of settlers was greater than ever before, possibly because of the recent USA state pronouncement that settlements were not illegal under International Law (a statement which contradicts numerous UN

resolutions and the 1949 Geneva Convention). Note that the conduct of the celebration, and the accompanying violence, made a mockery of the principles of righteousness, generosity and love for which Sarah is revered.

Incidents

On November 22nd, at 3:00 pm group of settlers entered the market of the old city under the protection of Israeli forces and installed a stone plaque with three menorahs carving on it. This was an unusual and bold move by settler-colonists, and represented another attempt to stake sovereignty over some properties in that area. The plaque was subsequently removed.

Most of the other incidents took place in the High Security zone of the settler-colonist corridor, between Kiryat Arba settlement and the Tel Rumeida settlement within which there are Palestinian areas. On the night of the 22nd November approximately 50 settlers attacked and injured 8 Palestinians, two of whom had to be taken to hospital. In a separate incident a 9 yrs old Palestinian boy was attacked by settler-colonists using pepper spray and had to be hospitalized. That evening settlers attacked the home of Arif Jaber, a Palestinian active with a group called Human Rights Defenders who train people to use camera and social media to document and publicize violations. (footnotes)? The IOF came and occupied his house and roof top. Moutasem Jaber's house was also invaded by the IOF and occupied for one hour.

On the next day, the 23rd, the IOF came from checkpoint 56 forcing Palestinian shopkeepers in Bir Sabah street to close their shops and move their cars from the street as preparation for settler's incursion coming out to visit Ibn Kanaz tomb. Israeli military vehicles blocked the road from Bab az-Zawiyeh side all the way up to the back door of the bus station. Between 3:30 pm and 6:30 pm at Bab az-Zawiyeh rubber bullets, stun grenades, teargas was used by Israeli forces to disperse a group of teenagers who were throwing stones at the fortified checkpoint.

Settlers then attacked Emad Abu Shamsiyeh's house, another member of Human Right Defenders. Emad helps to teach others to use cameras to

monitor violations, and still lives on Tel Rumeida inside the High Security Zone, despite all the restrictions and harassments, and vulnerable to both the IOF and settler-colonists. (footnotes)? That evening settlers besieged his house, spitting, shouting insults and throwing stones and bottles, and climbing on his roof. He called friends to help but they were unable to prevent the settlers throwing stones. Emad heard his 18-month-old grandson crying upstairs and discovered that he had been hit on the head by a stone thrown by a settler through the window. He needed to go to hospital, but because this is an area restricted by the IOF, the ambulance was not allowed to access the house and they had to carry the child to checkpoint 56 whilst still under attack by settlers shouting abuse and throwing stones and bottles. Human Right Observers, and journalists stayed at Emad's house until things calmed down and until Emad was fine with people leaving.

Day of Rage



Fatah, the Palestinian Authority call for a Day of Rage on Tuesday the 26th November 2019 to protest against the recent announcement by the United

States that it believes Israeli settlements in the West Bank are legal, in violation of international law. [Read More](#)

Thousands of Palestinians demonstrated across the occupied West Bank, including Hebron where CPT were on the ground monitoring and recording violation of human rights. IOF responded to the Day of Rage demonstration at Bab az-Zawiyeh in Hebron with an armed formation at Bab az-Zawiyeh, using riot shields, teargas launchers, stun grenades, and rubber-coated bullets.

Overall, the IOF fired 31 tear gas canisters and 25 stun grenades during the ten hours that followed the main demonstration. During the course of the demonstrations, one ambulance arrived at Bab az-Zawiyeh, and medics treated one Palestinian with a burn injury at the scene. The Palestinian Red Crescent documented 77 injuries throughout the Palestinian cities participating in Day of Rage demonstrations, including teargas inhalation, rubber bullet wounds, and burns. [Read More](#)

Note that: according to several United Nations Security Council resolutions, the most recent in 2016, Israeli settlements are illegal under international law as they violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its population to the area it occupies.

Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the 1967 war and quickly began settling the newly conquered territory.

Today, some 700,000 Israeli settlers live in the two areas, in addition to three million Palestinians. The city of Hebron and especially the Old City, where CPT maintain a team on the ground, is badly affected by increasing settler-occupation efforts to build more settlements, and where there are already severe restrictions on movement at checkpoints which guard a high security settler-colonization corridor about 2Km long from Kiryat Area to Tel Rumeida. This corridor has shut down one of the Old City's main arterial roads, Shuhada St. closing some 1800 shops and homes decimating the economic productivity of this area, and dividing civilian populations from their families, friends, schools, shops and places of work.

Detention and Arrest

Detention



11 December :Abed checkpoint

The Israeli Border police stopped a Palestinian on the CP, got into an argument with this man because the Palestinian refused to take his jacket off which resulted to some detention for about 20 minutes for one child and adult.

17 December: A Palestinian boy was walking done the road from the Ibrahimi Mosque toward Abed shop when the Israeli Border Police was running towards the child. The soldier dragged the child to the Ibrahimi Mosque checkpoint, and he was released after 10 minutes.

Hani, 16 years old

Arrest

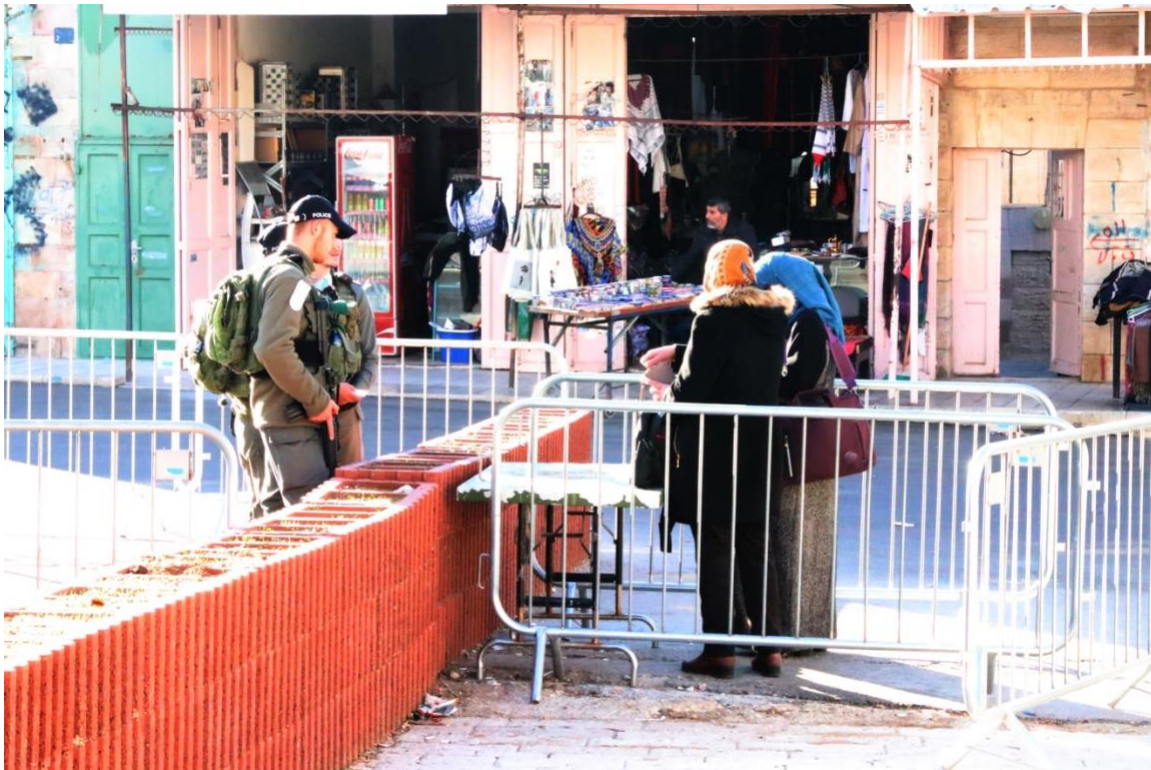
10 December: Abed checkpoint

A Palestinian man got taken from the checkpoint by Abed's shop to the police station and eventually got released.

18 December: Qitoun Checkpoint 209

A 19 year old Palestinian female (Amira) got arrested at Qitoun CP 209 and transferred to the Police station by the mosque. After we asked the Border Police about the reason of the arrest, they said it is for investigation and she will be released. After about an hour and 20 minutes the female got released.

Resection of movement



ID check

Children: 2

Adults: 183

Bag search

**we did not consistently count bag searches this quarter*

Adults: 38

Body search (from a distance)

Children: 10

Adults: 156

Body search (physical, hands-on)

Adults: 14

Vehicle stop / search

30 November: Souk in Old City

During the settler's incursion, 2 Palestinian were trying to move their motorcycles in one of the tunnels (Al-Sawakna Quarter), so they stopped and Searched their Vehicles.

Checkpoint closure



6 October: The Mosque Checkpoint was closed for the entirety of the day, denying Palestinians access to the Ibrahimi Mosque for the day. Reason given was Jewish holiday.

10 October

Israeli soldiers closed Checkpoint 56 from about 12:00pm to 2:00pm, due to the fact someone throw a Molotov can to the checkpoint. A lot of Palestinians got stuck (about 150 person) from both sides of the checkpoint, 80% of them are students and teachers. A group of soldiers went out of the checkpoint to Bab az-Zawiyeh, and a military jeep was out by Checkpoint 56. Israeli soldiers got on one Palestinian rooftop and they remained on that rooftop for about 7 hours.

27 November: Salaymeh Checkpoint 160 for 20 minutes

22 December: Salaymeh Checkpoint 160 for 40 minutes

Movement through checkpoint denied

1 October: Palestinian women marched through the Old City of Hebron holding banners advocating for breast cancer awareness and promoting a campaign by the Palestinian Health Ministry and Health Work Committees that offer free screenings for all women. However, when the women tried to enter the Ibrahimi Mosque area, some of them were not carrying their IDs, and the Israeli Border Police denied their entry.

Other restriction of movement

16 October: The soldiers brought out portable spike strips and placed them at two of the three road entrances coming into the souq from the direction of Shalaleh St, with the jeep blocking the third road. A woman from civil administration was also present. After several minutes, soldiers started to enter the souk/market and position themselves at a number of tunnel entrances, but it was not clear how many. The two CPTers were instructed by the woman working for the civil administration that they had to leave the souq and would not be allowed back in until after 6PM.

Other Incidents

30 October: Mosque checkpoint

Soldiers shot a 37 woman from Ithna accusing her of having a knife, an Israeli ambulance came and took her.

Home Invasions

7 November: Jabal Takrouri



Fourth of four similar invasions on 5-6 Nov and 6-7 November; two invasions in daylight and two around the midnight hour. In this last invasion, reported on this form, 25 soldiers invaded and climbed stairs to roof. The front door was locked for the night (despite previous command to keep it open) and was battered open. Front door battered. Hardware damaged, door remains usable. Twenty minutes; incident actually began a few minutes before midnight on 6th.

Home Demolitions



28 November: Beit Kahil

On the 28th of November 2019, Israeli soldiers destroyed four homes in Beit Kahil, northwest of Hebron. The Israeli High Court decided to demolish four Palestinian family homes that will directly affect 22 family members, many of them children. The Israelis' massive operation hit the town shortly after midnight. The homes belonged to the Assafrah and Zhur families. The Israeli military is accusing these families of involvement in the murder of an Israeli soldier. Massive numbers of tear gas and percussion grenades were deployed against local Palestinians resisting the operation; rubber-coated bullets caused a number of injuries. The bulldozer that took part in the destruction was involved in a fatal traffic accident west of Hebron later this morning, killing 56-year-old Mohammad Nassar Nawaj'a and injuring his son, Thaer, according to the Wafa agency.

Settlements expansion



Settlers celebrating at Shuhada Street

2 December: Mosque checkpoint area

Last night, civil administrative came to Maswadeh Family (who has animals inside the "cave") asked them to empty the place Tomorrow's afternoon because it was to settlers. The second day 2nd of December, the family started to empty the place and civil administration officer came in to check the process. The Military has an order to evacuate the place, but the owner showed up there "Ahmad Alsharee" and said he didn't sell anything. But settlers say they have a document.

Harassments of human right observers

CPT members were stopped several times by Israeli soldiers and border police.

In this reporting period the main issues CPT faced are:

- ID or Passport check.
- Commanded to delete photos from camera.
- Asked to move from certain places.
- Checked at checkpoint and ask mainly local staff to empty their pockets/bags.

Conclusion

CPT-Palestine document what the observe first hand, incidents in this report are not the only incidents that occur in the reporting period.

CPT noticed an increase in settler presence and violence after every decision that US president announce in their favor.

More security check in all checkpoints, mainly the checkpoints that leads to the Ibrahimi Mosque.

Moreover, After the action Palestinian call for attending the morning prayers on Fridays more security measures were taken by having more Israeli soldiers and border police at the mosque area.