
MachsomWatch
Women's Fund for Human Rights

Annual Report

2018



bruce shaffer hiddensparksphotography.com

About MachsomWatch

Since 2001, MachsomWatch, has observed, monitored, documented and raised awareness about conditions faced by Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) under Israeli military rule. In 2004, MachsomWatch became an independent legal entity, registering as the not-for-profit company called the Women's Fund for Human Rights, Ltd.

MachsomWatch is composed of 200 Israeli women volunteers. As an all-women organization, we reject hierarchy and work only through cooperative teamwork. The organization does not have an office, as we work from our homes and the field. Expenses are kept to a minimum and are only used for material needs.

MachsomWatch activists dedicate extraordinary time, energy and commitment to protesting the Occupation. We embody a democratic feminine civilian presence in military spaces. Our daily presence in front of soldiers and Palestinian civilians demonstrates that there are Israelis who oppose the Occupation. Playing the dissident role in Israeli society subjects us to challenges to our own free speech, even within a society that sees itself as democratic.

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Achievements

MONITORING CHECKPOINTS

Between January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018, we carried out close to 800 checkpoint shifts and maintained a visible, non-violent presence at checkpoints in the Jerusalem enclave, the Northern West Bank, the Hebron Region, the Central West Bank, and the Jordan Valley.



MILITARY COURTS

In 2018, our volunteer team of women observed hearings at the military courts at Ofer and Jerusalem's Russian Compound. We carried out and reported on over 50 shifts at the courts.

MASTERS RULE AND HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The Military Courts team wrote and produced an important paper about the Military Courts which was formally presented at the 70th International Human Rights Day at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque. Masters Rule is available in Hebrew and in English. The document describes how the language used at the Israeli Military Courts reflects the world view of the Occupation and it includes insights from years of monitoring and documenting legal proceedings at the Military courts at Ofer and Jerusalem's Russian Compound.



HELPING BLACKLISTED PALESTINIANS

In this past year, there has been a significant increase in requests for assistance and in the number of negative responses from the authorities. This has also led to a rise in the number of legal appeals. Palestinians requesting to be removed from the police blacklisting, mainly for entering Israel without permits in order to work, have also been almost totally refused. In addition, this year, we handled requests from people who had been blacklisted because they had the same last name as a person who participated in the individual intifada.

According to our data, 4071 workers and merchants (mainly workers) applied in 2018 to be removed from the blacklist (2292 handled by MachsomWatch and 1779 handled by two offices in Hebron). Of those 4071 workers and merchants, 248 were denied entry by the police and 3823 by the Shabak.



MachsomWatch member Sylvia leads the Blacklisting Team.

In September, Social TV produced a short film about the blacklistings, as well as a full interview with a member of MachsomWatch about this issue.

In November 2018, MachsomWatch sent a letter to the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT, which is part of the Ministry of Defense) on behalf of 105 people from a single village after 47 petitioners from the same village got their permits back. They were ready to appeal but their permits were returned in a few days. In December 2018 we sent a list of blacklisted individuals from throughout the West Bank, and they now are slowly getting their permits back.



MONITORING THE OCCUPATION IN THE VILLAGES

Together with Palestinian landowners and local councils, we have been surveying traditional Palestinian cultural, religious heritage sites (singular makam, plural makamat). These shrines were dedicated to biblical and qur'anic, real or mythical, male and female figures and played an important role in Palestinian religious and cultural life. Palestinians are denied access to these shrines because of their proximity to settlements or the army's control of them.

MAKAM

Palestinian Sacred Heritage Sites Imprisoned by the Occupation



MachsomWatch has researched, photographed, filmed, and documented 38 of these sites in the West Bank. The Hebrew report is now available on our website. MachsomWatch filmed and produced the film MAKAM, in cooperation with Israel Social TV.

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE HARASSMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

A major goal during this period has been to help coordinate support and protection to these impoverished shepherd communities who are severely harassed by settlers when taking their herds to graze. When volunteers accompany the shepherds, the settlers pull back and the harassment diminishes. MachsomWatch volunteers and other volunteer groups accompanied shepherds as often as possible.

We also monitored the Palestinian shepherding communities that are currently earmarked for forced relocation: al-Hilweh and Umm Jamal in the north of the Jordan Valley, and the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar. MachsomWatch volunteers made regular visits to this area during this time to document the situation in order to raise public awareness and to express their solidarity with the inhabitants of these communities.



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TOURS AND LECTURES TO THE PUBLIC

We were joined by hundreds of guests on our English and Hebrew tours to the West Bank and the Jordan Valley. Over 600 guests attended our lectures and talks in English and multiple other languages.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S OUTREACH

Over 600 young people met with us on our tours and discussions in Hebron and the West Bank and in high schools and pre-military academies throughout the country. These are meaningful encounters with Israeli youth experiencing, discussing and debating human rights, democratic principles and the Occupation and its implications.



RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH NEW MEDIA

Throughout 2018, MachsomWatch worked to improve its exposure on social media and new media. In June, we were targeted in the controversial bill against photographing soldiers that was advanced in the Knesset by Israel Beitenu's MK Robert Ilatov, hence we appeared in many media reports. We also continued to interest journalists in the overcrowded checkpoints.

In addition, we have increased our exposure on social media. At the end of 2018, we had 6432 followers on Facebook, an increase of 16% from the same time last year. We also conducted 30 paid Facebook campaigns, which promoted over 19000 posts. Our posts reached 148,134 people.

This year we also began our Instagram account, called People of the Barriers.

Our Twitter account now has over 1700 followers (1325 new followers in 2018). Our tweets have been viewed 174,866 times in the past year. Our profile page on Twitter was viewed 14,866 times.

Our Website was visited by 24,196 users, of which 88% had not visited before.

OUR SUPPORTERS IN 2018

New Israel Fund

SBSCT

Peace and Justice Fund

Women's Day of Prayer, Germany

SIVMO

and many individual donors

MACHSOMWATCH NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

