URGENT: B'Tselem Calls on the International Community to Act Immediately to Stop Israel's Ongoing Campaign of Ethnic Cleansing in Hebron

B'Tselem urgently calls on governments and international institutions to act now, using all means available under international law, to prevent the forcible displacement of Palestinian civilians, collective punishment and extensive unlawful destruction in Hebron. Israeli leaders are openly declaring their intentions, and actions on the ground have already begun.

Following today's shooting near Hebron, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed, Israel's Prime Minister and Defense Minister openly announced plans to forcibly displace Palestinian residents from Hebron and carry out extensive destruction in the area, explicitly invoking the military operations in the northern West Bank refugee camps as a model. Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced the establishment of four new settlement farming outposts in the South Hebron Hills, while the Israeli Civil Administration began demolishing Palestinian structures in the neighborhood of Farsh al-Hawa.

Israeli leaders are publicly announcing plans for collective punishment and acts that could constitute war crimes. They are threatening to extend to Hebron the same practice of mass displacement and destruction that Israel has already implemented in the northern West Bank which displaced over 33,000 Palestinians, and that echoes its devastating operations as part of the genocide in Gaza.

This is a further escalation of Israel's ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing and its Elimination Project in the West Bank: the systematic dismantling of Palestinian collective life while expanding settlements and entrenching permanent Israeli control.

The world cannot stand by as Israel continues its assault on Palestinians, waiting for yet more neighborhoods to be emptied and erased before intervening, despite what we have already witnessed in Gaza and the northern West Bank. **Governments and international bodies must act now to prevent these crimes and protect Palestinian civilians.**

Yuli Novak, Executive Director, B'Tselem

Annex: Israeli leadership quotes from today

Translations from the original Hebrew statements issued on 23 October 2026. The full texts have been translated without omissions.

1. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

“We will apply in the cities the successful offensive model we implemented in the refugee camps. The IDF will enter the neighborhoods from which the terrorists came, evacuate the residents, go house to house, and destroy the terrorist infrastructure. We are prepared for a large-scale operation in Judea and Samaria.”

“We warned several weeks ago about attempts by our enemies to harm us, our civilians, and our soldiers ahead of the elections. That is what they tried to do here. IDF soldiers stopped it with their own bodies, and were also injured. The soldiers not only stopped the terrorists, but also bravely charged at them and eliminated them.

First of all, we will act to destroy this place, to change it completely. But we will also do something that has not been done until now: we are going to apply the successful and aggressive model we implemented in the refugee camps, which are essentially terrorist strongholds. That is exactly what we will do here, inside a neighborhood in Hebron from which the terrorists came. We will evacuate the residents, we will go house to house, we will also remove the weapons there, and all terrorist infrastructure will be dealt with and destroyed. At the same time, we are imposing a cordon on the city of Hebron and Halhul. We will consider extending this model to other cities. We will clear away the illegal houses along the roads at an accelerated pace. They pose a threat to our forces.

We will also ensure something else: the Defense Minister and I have reviewed a very extensive IDF operation in Judea and Samaria, the likes of which has not been carried out since the Six-Day War. The IDF is prepared to carry it out, and we will determine the timing, but it is coming.

In addition, I want to say a word about our heroic settlers. You are holding the line. You are an example to the people of Israel, you are an example to the State of Israel. We are going to destroy the terrorist infrastructure, and we are going to build the settlement infrastructure. More than one hundred new communities that we are building and regularizing right here, and not only here. And of course, more than one hundred farms. We will destroy the terrorist infrastructure and establish more and more communities.”

2. Defense Minister Israel Katz:

“I have just completed a joint visit with the Prime Minister to the site of the encounter near Hebron.

As the Prime Minister and I warned and cautioned: the Shiite axis of Iran and its proxies, and the Muslim Brotherhood axis, are planning to carry out attacks and terrorist attacks against IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians in order to disrupt and influence the upcoming elections in Israel.

Today, IDF soldiers bravely thwarted an attempt by a Hamas cell from Hebron to carry out a large-scale deadly attack against civilians. The two terrorists were eliminated. The Prime Minister and I instructed the IDF to neutralize all terrorist infrastructure in the area of the attack, and also to take forceful and unprecedented action in the neighborhood in Hebron from which the terrorists came, in accordance with the Jenin refugee camp model.

The neighborhood will be evacuated of its residents, and all terrorist infrastructure there will be destroyed. The terrorists, those who sent them, and those who provide them with shelter and assistance will pay a very heavy price. We are determined to ensure the security of the Israeli communities and residents in Judea and Samaria, and we will do so by all means necessary.”

3. IDF Spokesperson

IDF forces are surrounding the city of Hebron and additional villages, entering the homes of the terrorists, and operating in the area to thwart terrorism.

During the past week, security forces arrested more than 70 inciters and individuals affiliated with the terrorist organizations Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad throughout Judea and Samaria.

Following the shooting attack earlier today (Friday) in the Judea Brigade area, IDF forces and the Israel Border Police in Judea and Samaria began offensive operations in the Hebron area. A full cordon has been imposed on the city and on additional villages in the area. The forces are currently operating in the homes of the terrorists and in the homes of additional suspects.

In addition, over the past week, IDF forces, the Israel Border Police in Judea and

Samaria, and officers of the Judea and Samaria Police District conducted dozens of offensive counterterrorism operations throughout Judea and Samaria, under the direction of the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet). During these operations, more than 70 wanted individuals were arrested, including people affiliated with the terrorist organizations Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as well as individuals inciting against the State of Israel and IDF forces.

In addition, dozens of weapons were located, including M16 rifles, Carlo firearms, airsoft guns, and four explosive devices.

The security forces will continue to operate offensively to thwart terrorism in order to safeguard the security of the citizens of the State of Israel.