

Personal stories

The Salayme family's house on Shuhada Street is over 200 years old. Israeli settlers occupy the surround houses and the settlers regularly throw stones and dirty water at the house. Settlers have come into the Salayme house many times. Israeli police will not protect the family. So, the Temporary International Presence in Hebron and Hebron Rehabilitation Committee had to place a grill ceiling over the yard to the house and barbed wire around the entrance.

The family suffers from water supply problems, especially in the summer. While there is no problem with the main electricity supply, settlers often cut the electricity wires and water pipes to the house, forcing the family to set new wires inside the walls.

For the past 25 years that retired kindergarten teacher, Jamila Salayme, has lived in the house, there have been countless attacks on the house. One year during Ramadan, soldiers threw sound bombs into the house and then entered wearing masks and war paint. Another time, a teenage settler came into her hallway, throwing stones to break the glass. Jamila went to a soldier to complain she was arrested and charged 1000 shekels.

The Salayme family doesn't think the situation will get better they still maintain hope.

The Sharabati family had lived in their home on Shuhada Street in the old city of Hebron for more than 65 years when soldiers and settlers decided to weld the door shut while the family was still inside. After two days the family managed to get out. The home is now abandoned and the family cannot renter it because it is in the closed military zone. The family had to disperse but Zidan, his wife, Rajha, their four children and Zidan's mother moved to a new house on Shuhada Street. They have not been able to walk down the main section of Shuhada Street since 2000.

In 1999, while in the old family house, Zidane was in the street just outside the home when soldiers started to beat him. His father, an old man at the time, saw what was happening from the window. He hurried down the stairs to reach his son but slipped on the stairs. Not realizing that her husband was badly hurt, Zidan's mother and other son went down to the street to help Zidane. When she reached the street, she and her other son were detained and taken to the police station. Zidan was taken to the hospital. There was no-one left to help Zidan's father, who died of his injuries falling down the stairs.

Right now Zidan and Rajha's four children all go to a nearby school in the H2 section of Hebron, but soon the oldest son will soon go to school in the H1 section, requiring him to go through checkpoints to get to and from school. Like other Palestinian children in Hebron who go to school in the H1 section, he will need international observers to be present during his trip to and from school in order to keep him safe from attacks by settlers. In the beginning of the 2011 school year, the school teachers were refused entry through the checkpoint for 17 days. During this time, they had to teach their classes on the street outside the checkpoint. The military restrictions mean that ambulances cannot reach the Sharabati home. When Zidan's mother is ill she has to be carried to the checkpoint where the ambulance can pick her up.

Zidan has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. His children frequently suffer from nightmares and wet the bed.

The Abu Haikal family have lived on their land in the Tel Runeida area of Hebron for many generations. In 1994, a military base was built next to the house. In 2003, a new settlement was built right next to them. The Abu Haikal family's land is surrounded by Israeli cameras and they have difficulty accessing the olive trees on their land. During olive picking season, soldiers often prevent them from walking to their olive trees.

The family has put grates in front of their windows to protect them from when the settlers throw stones. In May 2000, a group of around 50 settlers tried to enter their house. One settler shot into the air with his gun. That same year, the Israeli military arrested four members of the family from the home.

Every three or four months when there is a new military patrol assigned in the area, the home is raided. They come after midnight, check everyone's IDs, and then search through everything in the house.

At the beginning of each day, when the family goes to work or school, they are stopped by soldiers. Sometimes they are held for an hour without being given any reason. Since 2000 there have blocked of concrete 200 meters from their home, preventing them from bringing cars onto their land. They have constructed a trolley system to bring heavy loads into their house.

Despite the difficulties they face, the family has never considered moving and continues to wait for the occupation to end and their freedom to return.

Abu Samir Eisheh was born in 1935 in Hebron's old city. Because Abu Samir's house is in the Tel Rumeida area of Hebron 5 of Abu's 6 need special permission from Israel to come to his house. There were 7 siblings in Abu Samir's generation. The first 4 were born in the Old City, the last 3 in Beit Hadassah neighborhood where Abu Samir's father had a business keeping sheep and goats with Yakob Isra, a Jewish man. Abu Samir's father would gather the milk and Yakob Isra would turn it into cheese and other dairy products. Abu Samir remembers the Jews and Muslims living happily together. When the settlers arrived in Tel Rumeida in 1983, Abu Samir thought the new arrivals would be neighborly, but instead they started to throw stones, shouting "go to Jordan" and "this land is for us".

The Eisheh family has filed countless police reports of settlers attacking them. Once settlers shot bullets shot into their home through the front windows. The human rights organization, B'Tselem installed cameras so the family would have documentation of the attacks on them, but despite the footage, there has only ever been one arrest made when a settler from another settlement, broke through the door to their house and attacked Abu Saamir's son, who had to go to the hospital.

Abu Samir says he has stopped going to the police station every time something happens because if he did he would be living at the police station, not in his home. Abu Samir has made the most police reports in Hebron. When the Israeli Prime Minister at the time, Ehud Olmert, heard about this, he publicly apologized to the family for the settler violence. Yet this was followed by absolutely no change on the ground. In 1997 the Eisheh family met Yasser Arafat and told him about the settler violence. Arafat paid for protective wire mesh grill and corrugated iron sheeting to be installed on the front of the house and over the courtyard.

The land next door to the Eisheh home belongs to Abu Samir's father. The family used to have a brass factory there. About 4 years ago the army forbid the family from opening their factory. At this point Abu Samir and his son, Taiser, opened up two clothes shops in the H1 area of Hebron. To get to and from their shops they have to go past 4 checkpoints. Even though the soldier at the checkpoint sees them every day he still asks to see their identification cards almost every time.

Abu Samir is no longer allowed to bring his car onto the street where his house is. When he asked how he would be able to bring things to the home without his car, the soldiers told him to buy a donkey. Settlers now use his parking space, and often park right in front of the entrance to the house, making it difficult for the Eisheh family to get in and out of their home.

Even when Abu Samir's first wife died he was still not given permission to drive to his house to bring his wife's body to the house for their religious cleaning rituals. The family they had to carry her body to the house on their shoulders.

When Taiser's wife was pregnant with twins the family applied for one month in advance of her due date for permission to have an ambulance come to the house. When she went into

labor the ambulance was held for an hour at the checkpoint before being able to take her to the hospital. One of the twins died during labor.