



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

20 - 26 January 2010

### Latest Developments since Tuesday, 26 January

- 28 January: Nearly 500,000 litres of industrial fuel were delivered to the Gaza Power Plant (GPP). However, according to the GPP, this amount is barely enough to cover the operation of one turbine till Sunday unless additional deliveries take place.

## West Bank

### Military activities affecting civilians; 12 Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

This week, Israeli forces injured 12 Palestinians throughout the West Bank, compared to the 2009 weekly average of 17. This week's injuries bring the total number of Palestinians injured in Israeli-Palestinian violence since the beginning of 2010 to 53.

Eight of this week's injuries were sustained during the weekly anti-Barrier protest held in Ni'lin village (two), a protest that took place in Tuwani village after Israeli forces accompanied by Israeli settlers entered the village (one) and a demonstration against the expansion of Hallamish settlement in the Ramallah area (five, see below); three international activists and one Israeli soldier were also wounded in the latter. In a separate incident, Israeli forces physically assaulted and injured four Palestinians while trying to enter East Jerusalem without the Israeli-required permit. In two separate incidents that occurred at the checkpoints of Az Zayem and Jaba' (Jerusalem), Israeli forces arrested two Palestinians; both of them were detained after allegedly attempting to cross the checkpoint with a weapon.

On one occasion, Palestinians threw a pipe bomb towards Israeli forces at Qalandiya checkpoint, the main entrance for Palestinians through the Barrier into East Jerusalem from the north, known for its long lines and heavy security checks. While no injuries were reported, Israeli forces partially closed the checkpoint for almost eight hours (from 8:30 pm until 5:00 am).

During the week, Israeli forces conducted 102 search operations inside Palestinian villages, the majority of which took place in the northern West Bank (68), slightly below the weekly average during 2009 (103). Media reports indicated that Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces arrested six men who work as aides to Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) Speaker, Aziz Dwaik.

### Israeli settler-related incidents

During the week, there were ten settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians, resulting in injury to five Palestinians; three settlers were also injured in these incidents, when clashes broke out with Palestinians after settlers attacked a Palestinian community. A further six incidents affecting Israeli settlers occurred during the week, resulting in no injuries.

In the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, where Israeli settlers have evicted 53 Palestinian residents and moved into their homes, Israeli settlers physically assaulted five Palestinians, injuring two of them. Clashes subsequently took place between settlers and Palestinians, after which Israeli forces came to the area and arrested two Palestinians; both were later released. In the same area, over 400 Israeli, Palestinian and international activists held a demonstration against the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes. During the demonstration, Israeli forces blocked all entrances leading to the scene of the demonstration and arrested 20 activists; all were later released. These protests are now taking place on a weekly basis.

This week, there was an incident stemming from the “price tag” strategy, where settlers attack Palestinians after attempts to dismantle a settlement outpost; settlers entered the village of Beitillu (Ramallah) and clashed with the residents after the Israeli authorities dismantled a structure serving as a synagogue in the Givat Menachem outpost. Two Palestinians and three settlers were injured by stones and one house and two vehicles sustained damage; Israeli army and police evacuated the settlers from the area and conducted an investigation. In a report issued in November 2009, OCHA identified the Beitillu village as one of the Palestinian communities vulnerable to settler violence in the context of the “price tag” strategy.

In a separate incident, settlers from Bracha settlement (Nablus) entered the nearby village of Iraq Burin and clashed with the residents, after which Israeli forces arrived at the area and fired tear gas and rubber-coated metal bullets to disperse the settlers and the Palestinians; one Palestinian was treated for tear gas inhalation. During the week, settlers from Hallamish settlement also cut down 20 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Deir Nidham village (Ramallah). In recent weeks, there have been regular demonstrations protesting the expansion of Hallamish settlement on Deir Nidham lands that have resulted in clashes between Palestinians, the Israeli settlers and the Israeli army.

Also during the week, there were four incidents of stone-throwing by Israeli settlers at Palestinians driving vehicles on roads near settlements in the Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron areas, resulting in no injuries or damage to vehicles. In addition, there were five incidents affecting Israeli settlers involving Palestinians throwing stones and Molotov cocktails towards Israeli vehicles driving near Palestinian villages in the Ramallah and Hebron areas. No injuries were reported, but vehicles sustained some damage. In an additional incident, Palestinians threw stones at a vehicle carrying an Israeli minister while visiting Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem; no injuries were reported.

Following last week’s arrests of a number of Israeli settlers on suspicion of setting fire to and vandalizing a mosque in the village of Yasuf (Salfit) in December 2009, this week, the Israeli police arrested a rabbi suspected of involvement in the incident; he, along with a number of those arrested last week, were subsequently released. The lack of adequate law enforcement against violent Israeli settlers remains an issue of concern; during the reporting period, the Israeli human rights group, Yesh Din, demanded indictments for four settlers, who were filmed by the police attacking Bedouins in the West Bank in the summer of 2008, but whose cases were subsequently closed without charge by the police.

### **Palestinian cemetery vandalized in ‘Awarta (Nablus)**

During the week, a Palestinian graveyard was vandalized in the village of ‘Awarta (Nablus) and offensive graffiti was sprayed in Hebrew, English and Russian inside the village. The incidents happened while a group of Israeli settlers, under the protection of the Israeli army, were visiting a

nearby site. Palestinians accuse the settlers and Israeli soldiers of being responsible for the damage; the Israeli army has started to investigate the incident.

### **New demolition orders issued**

The Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) distributed demolition and stop work orders against 17 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C of the West Bank, due to the lack of ICA-required building permit: three in Beitillu (Ramallah), seven in Al Ka'abna (Jericho), two in Qizoon in Hebron City, three in Kerzliyah (Aqraba-Nablus) and two in Burin (Nablus). The orders include: five residences in Kerzliyah and Qizoon, placing 39 persons at risk of displacement; five structures under construction, two of which are planned as a mosque, a clinic and a two-storey building in Burin village and three residences in Beitillu; and seven structures in Al Ka'abneh, including five caravans belonging to the community's school, a mosque and a restroom. In 2009 and 2010, 226 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C, due to the lack of building permits, resulting in the displacement of 431 people and affecting an additional 554 people.

Also in Area C, the ICA delivered an eviction order targeting five tents and two animal shelters belonging to three families in Fasayil Al Fauqa area (Jericho), due to its location in a closed military zone for military training ("firing zone"). The order indicates that the family should evacuate their residence within 72 hours, placing 18 persons, including 11 children, at risk of displacement. Over 80 percent of the Area C demolitions in 2009 occurred in areas declared "firing zones". Since 1967, Israel has designated some 18 percent of the West Bank as a "firing zone". Many residents, however, report that they have never seen the Israeli military training in their vicinity.

## **Gaza Strip**

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### **No Palestinian direct conflict casualties for the second week in a row**

For the second week in a row, there were no Palestinian casualties recorded in the Gaza Strip in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This period follows a significant escalation in violence during the first two weeks of 2010, which resulted in nine Palestinians killed and five others injured. This week only one land-leveling operation by Israeli forces along the Gazan side of the border was reported, compared to a weekly average of three during the previous four weeks. Palestinian armed factions have continued to fire rudimentary rockets and mortars towards southern Israel, including military bases, resulting in no injuries or damage to property; a number of rockets reportedly landed inside the Gaza Strip or exploded prematurely.

### **Gaza floods update: 800 people affected**

During the week, humanitarian organizations carried out damage assessments of homes, livelihoods and agricultural lands caused by the heavy rain and flooding that occurred on 18 January in the Wadi Gaza/Al Mughraqa area of central Gaza. The total number of people affected by the floods is estimated at approximately 140 households or 800 persons, who have since received basic emergency assistance including food and non-food items from various agencies, including the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, the Ministry of Social Affairs in Gaza, UNRWA, UNICEF and several NGOs and local associations. An estimated 500 sheep and some goats, as well as hundreds of chickens, including those on two poultry farms, have perished, and many bee hives have been destroyed, as a result of the floods. Following health concerns, the carcasses of many these animals have now been

cleared from the area and disposed of by the municipality; further clean up and repair to the area continues. A number of families are still living with host families, while waiting for their houses to dry out and subsequently be cleaned.

## Gaza Power Plant partially shut down due to fuel shortage-up to 12 hour blackouts

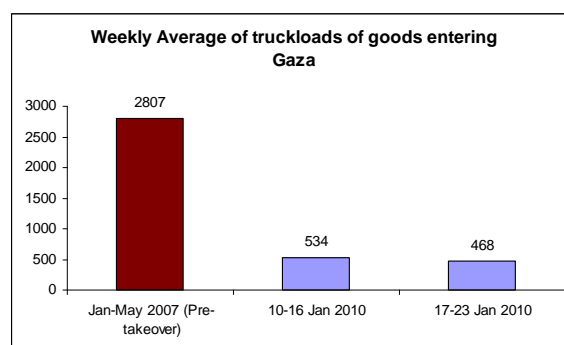
On 23 January, Gaza's Power Plant (GPP) had to shut down one of its two operating turbines and reduce its output from 65 to 30 megawatts (MW), due to a shortage of industrial fuel. The supply of industrial fuel, which is imported only from Israel, has been reduced since the beginning of 2010 from an average of 2.2 to 1.5 million liters a week.

This week's reduction in the electricity output by the GPP has triggered long rolling scheduled blackouts, which reached 10-12 hours, 4-5 days per week in Gaza City, northern Gaza and middle area and 6-8 hours, 3-4 days per week in Khan Younis and Rafah, as indicated by the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO). There are also some 40,000 people, who remain without electricity at all times due to damage incurred to electricity networks during the "Cast Lead" offensive. The GPP authority indicated that fuel reserves are available for a few additional days and, if no more fuel is delivered in the next days, the GPP will completely shut down.

According to GEDCO, the overall supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip stands now at approximately 167 MW (120 MW purchased from Israel, 30 MW produced by the GPP and 17 MW delivered by Egypt), some 60 percent of the estimated electricity demand (280 MW). Electricity cuts are directly affecting refrigerated food, water pumping and air conditioning supply in individual households, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage removal and treatment and medical treatment. As a result, public institutions are forced to rely extensively on backup generators and other alternative devices, which are extremely vulnerable due to the inconsistent supply of spare parts. WHO warned that the continued power cuts and blackouts not only put the life of hundreds of patients at risk but also may damage hospital equipment.

## Exports of flowers and strawberries continue

Despite the ongoing prohibition of exports from Gaza, Israel agreed to allow four truckloads of cut flowers and two truckloads of strawberries to be exported via Kerem Shalom this week. Since 10 December 2009, 39 truckloads exited Gaza, including 15 truckloads of cut flowers (1,674,840 stems) and 24 truckloads of strawberries (41 tonnes). Prior to this, there had not been any exports from Gaza for around seven months (since 27 April 2009). These shipments took place after the intervention of the Dutch government and are limited to the two types of goods. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC) indicated that 300 tonnes of strawberries and 30 million cut flowers are slated for export during this season (ending on 15 February for strawberries and 20 May 2010 for cut flowers).



## Cooking gas (17-23 January 2010)

There was a 34 percent increase in the amount of cooking gas that entered this week compared to last

week (764.5 tonnes vs. 571 tonnes).\* The Gas Stations Owners Association (GSOA), however, indicated that at least 2,000 tonnes of cooking gas needs to be transferred into Gaza, in addition to an uninterrupted transfer of at least 250 tonnes each day to overcome the ongoing shortfall. Since November 2009, the shortfall has led to a gas rationing scheme throughout the Gaza Strip, in which quantities of gas available at the Palestinian General Petroleum Corporation (PPC) are being distributed to bakeries and hospitals first, as a priority.

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\* The actual amount of cooking gas that entered last week was 571 tonnes during 10-16 January, while the amount reported in the previous weekly report was 914 tonnes, which includes quantities that entered via Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz crossings, when both opened on 19 January.