



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

14 - 20 April 2010

### Latest Developments since Tuesday, 20 April

- 21 April: Upon release from prison, the Israeli authorities deported to the Gaza Strip a Palestinian man that had finished serving a nine year prison sentence. Prior to his imprisonment, the man had been living for several years in the West Bank with his wife and two children, who remain there. He is currently staying in a protest tent next to Erez Crossing.

## West Bank

### Six Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

Israeli forces injured six Palestinians, including three children, compared to 19 Palestinians wounded last week. Three members of Israeli forces were also injured. Since the beginning of the year, five Palestinians were killed and 538 Palestinians and 70 members of Israeli forces were injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Demonstrations were held in protest of Barrier construction (Beit Jala, Bethlehem governorate), restrictions on access to land near Israeli settlements (Beit Ummar, Hebron governorate), expansion of Hallamish settlement (Ramallah governorate) and to mark Palestinian Prisoner's Day (Hebron, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Jericho governorates). Four Palestinians were injured during the course of these demonstrations, as well as two international activists and one Israeli soldier. The remaining two Palestinians sustained injuries during search operations.

Israeli forces conducted 100 search operations inside Palestinian towns and villages. In one of the operations in the Silwan area of East Jerusalem, Israeli forces searched several houses and a mosque and arrested three Palestinians, reportedly, for throwing stones. The arrest triggered clashes between the Palestinian residents and Israeli forces, during which stones and tear gas canisters were thrown. According to the residents, Israeli forces also fired rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition. Two Israeli policemen were injured and several cases of tear gas inhalation were reported.

Israeli forces opened fire towards an Israeli-plated vehicle attempting to cross Al Kafriyat Barrier checkpoint (Tulkarm) at high speed, injuring the Israeli driver, who was smuggling eight Palestinian workers into Israel; the workers were arrested.

### Israeli settler-related incidents continue

There were six Israeli settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians that resulted in property damage, along with several other incidents of intimidation, access prevention and trespass. There were an additional eight incidents resulting in property damage that affected Israeli settlers, according to the Israeli military. None of this week's incidents resulted in injuries.

In separate incidents, Israeli settlers sprayed Hebrew graffiti on the walls of a mosque and two houses and set four vehicles on fire inside the Palestinian villages of Jinsafut and Huwwara in the northern West Bank. This is the third recorded settler incident targeting a mosque since 11 December 2009. In another two incidents, settlers caused damages to the walls of a house in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem and destroyed construction materials in a house under construction in Burin village (Nablus). Also, settlers uprooted 120 newly planted olive seedlings located on Palestinian land belonging to Qaryut village (Nablus).

There were eight incidents in which Israeli vehicles were damaged due to Palestinian stone throwing on roads in the West Bank near Palestinian villages in the Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem and Jerusalem governorates. In addition, a shooting incident was reported at an Israeli vehicle near the village of 'Azzun (Qalqilya), resulting in no casualties or damage. Israeli forces conducted a search operation in the village after the incident.

Ten international activists accompanying Palestinian farmers in an area next to the Israeli settlement of Ma'on (Hebron) were arrested by Israeli soldiers for helping the farmers reach their land near the settlement. Three of the internationals were charged with attacking soldiers and were later released.

### **Area C demolitions resume after a one month lull**

In Area C of the West Bank, the Israeli Civil Administration demolished eight Palestinian-owned structures due to the lack of building permits in the localities of Haris (Salfit), Al Khader and Beit Sahur (Bethlehem). Two of the structures were residential, leading to the displacement of seven people, while the remaining included commercial structures and the foundation of a house. In addition, the Israeli Civil Administration delivered stop work orders against five structures in the villages of Halhul (Hebron) and Nabi Elyas (Qalqilya). Stop work orders are administrative measures preceding the issuance of a demolition order.

This week's demolitions are the first recorded in Area C since 14 March 2010. Since the beginning of 2010, the Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 65 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, while three houses were self-demolished in East Jerusalem. In one incident, Israeli forces requisitioned construction vehicles belonging to a Palestinian from Imreiha village (Jenin) due to the lack of permit for his quarry. In a similar incident, Israeli forces confiscated construction materials from a quarry belonging to a Palestinian from Beit Fajjar (Bethlehem).

Also this week, five Palestinian families, comprising 40 people, living in the Beit Safafa neighborhood of East Jerusalem, are at-risk of imminent displacement, as the deadline for their eviction issued by the Israeli High Court of Justice in December 2009 passed this week. The Israeli police also verbally demanded that they evacuate their homes. The High Court of Justice ruling was issued in the context of a dispute over ownership of the houses and the land between the families and Israeli settlers living in the Kiryat Arba settlement (Hebron).

### **Barrier and access updates**

The Israeli army imposed a general closure on the West Bank, running from 17 through 20 April 2010, due to Israeli Memorial Day and Independence Day. With limited exceptions, this measure prevented West Bank ID holders with valid permits from accessing East Jerusalem and Israel.

A unit of the Palestinian Fire Brigade, en route to a fire incident affecting two warehouses in Barta'a ash Sharqiyia village (Jenin), was delayed for more than an hour at the nearby Barrier checkpoint of

Reikhan Barta'a, before being allowed passage; a fire brigade from Israel that tried to reach the area was also blocked by the Israeli police due to the lack of authorization to operate in the West Bank. According to the village's mayor, the late arrival of the fire brigade exacerbated the damage caused by the fire, which is estimated at one million shekels (around US \$270,000). Barta'a ash Sharqya (population around 4,450) is the largest village in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line, which in 2003 was declared a "closed military area"; since then, non-residents must obtain "visitors" permits, while emergency services must perform "prior coordination" with the Israeli military, in order to access the village.

## Gaza Strip

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### One Palestinian killed and four others injured near the Gaza-Israel border

Sporadic incidents along the Gaza-Israel border resulted in the death of a Palestinian militant and the injury of four Palestinian civilians. Since the beginning of 2010, 16 Palestinians (including five civilians), three Israeli soldiers and one foreign worker have been killed and another 67 Palestinians (including 55 civilians), and four Israeli soldiers have been injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel.

On 16 April, Israeli forces shot and killed one Palestinian militant, reportedly after they spotted a group of armed Palestinians attempting to plant an improvised explosive device next to the border, east of Gaza City.

Also near the Gaza-Israel border, one Palestinian civilian was wounded when Israeli forces opened fire towards a group of Palestinians collecting scrap metal, north of Beit Lahiya. In another incident, Israeli forces opened fire at a demonstration organized by the Popular Committee against the "Buffer Zone", injuring three Palestinian protestors. The incident occurred after the demonstrators marched towards the border fence, and reportedly, threw stones towards Israeli forces. Such demonstrations are conducted on a weekly basis against the ongoing ban on Palestinian access to the Israeli-declared "buffer zone" along the Gaza-Israel border. Also, Israeli tanks and bulldozers launched incursions a few hundred metres inside Gaza on seven different occasions and withdrew after conducting land leveling operations.

Palestinian armed factions fired a limited number of rudimentary rockets towards southern Israel, including military bases, resulting in no injuries or damage to property. Also in one incident, two children, aged 15, and a female passerby were slightly injured when an UXO being handled by the children exploded in Beit Lahiya, north of Gaza city.

### Two death sentences carried out in Gaza

On 15 April, the Hamas authorities in Gaza executed two prisoners convicted of collaborating with Israel, the first such executions since the Hamas takeover in June 2007. According to Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, those executed are among a group of 17 who have been sentenced to death by the Hamas courts in Gaza. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights reports that Palestinian courts have handed down 68 death sentences since the establishment of the PA in 1994. Fourteen executions took place between 1994 and 2000, 12 of which were carried out in Gaza; no executions were carried out after 2000.

## Tunnel-related incidents continue to claim lives

One Palestinian died and three others were injured this week in incidents involving the collapse of a tunnel and the explosion of a gas canister inside tunnels running under the Gaza-Egypt border. Since the beginning of 2010, 14 Palestinians have been killed and 22 others injured in various tunnel-related incidents, including airstrikes, tunnel collapse and electrocution. In two unconnected incidents during the week, the Egyptian border police located and destroyed six tunnels; no injuries were reported. Also, the Hamas authorities in Gaza destroyed several tunnels, which were allegedly used for smuggling the addictive drug, Tramadol, which has become widely used by young people in Gaza as an anti-depressant.

## Despite an increase in fuel and cooking gas imports, shortfalls continue

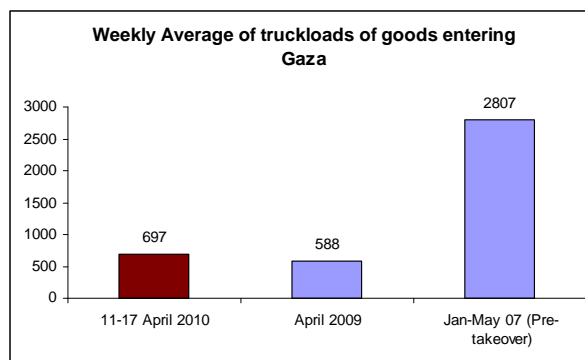
Imports of industrial fuel significantly increased: approximately 1.8 million litres of industrial fuel entered Gaza this week compared to 0.7 million litres the previous week. According to the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) authority, this increase was planned in advance of the closure of the Gaza crossings during the Israeli Memorial and Independence Day holidays on 19 and 20 April. This week's quantities represent 57 percent of the estimated weekly needs of fuel to operate the GPP at full capacity (80 megawatts (MW)). As a result, the GPP continues to produce only 30 MW of electricity, leaving the majority of the population in Gaza with power cuts of 8-12 hours per day.

Similarly, cooking gas imports increased this week compared to last week (957 vs. 700 tonnes), although it remained 32 percent below the weekly needs of 1,400 tonnes of cooking gas, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association.

## Limited shipments of new items continue to enter Gaza (11-17 April)

A total of 697 truckloads of goods entered Gaza this week, a 44 percent increase compared to the number of truckloads that entered during the previous week (483). This week's figure constitutes around one fourth of the weekly average of truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007 (2,807), before the Hamas takeover.

This week, three truckloads of wood and two of aluminum were allowed to enter Gaza. This is the first time that aluminum and wood are allowed into Gaza for commercial purposes since June 2007 and October 2008, respectively. According to the Ministry of National Economy, six truckloads of both items are scheduled to enter per day in the coming weeks. Also, a total of 50 truckloads of clothing (28) and footwear (22) entered Gaza and ten truckloads of electricity generators and cables entered for the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company and the Palestinian Telecommunications company. Glass imports continue; since 29 December 2009, 172 truckloads carrying approximately 112,000 sheets of glass have entered Gaza.



Only two truckloads of cut flowers (174,000 stems) left Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing. Since 10 December 2009, 117 truckloads have exited Gaza: 84 truckloads of cut flowers (approximately 13.5 million stems) and 33 truckloads of strawberries (52 tonnes).