



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

21 –27 APRIL 2010

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 27 April 2010

On 28 April, one Palestinian civilian was killed in a demonstration near the Gaza-Israel border. Four other Palestinians were killed and nine injured while working inside a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border.

West Bank

One Palestinian killed in Israeli raid in Hebron; significant increase in Palestinian injuries due to clashes in East Jerusalem

Israeli forces killed one Palestinian and injured at least 49 others during the reporting period. This is a significant increase compared to last week, during which six Palestinians were wounded. Two members of the Israeli security forces were also wounded this week. Since the beginning of the year, six Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed and 587 Palestinians and 72 Israelis injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

On 26 April, an Israeli Border Police unit, accompanied by bulldozers, raided the village of Beit Awwa (Hebron) and surrounded a house, in which a Palestinian man allegedly affiliated with Hamas and suspected of killing an Israeli police officer four years ago, was hiding. An exchange of fire reportedly occurred between the policemen and the Palestinian, who was killed when Israeli force demolished the house. During the operation, Israeli force imposed a curfew on the village and closed all entrances. The killing triggered clashes between residents and the policemen, leading to the injury of six Palestinians, including two boys and a woman.

Also this week, tensions ran high in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, after a group of Israeli settlers conducted a march in the neighbourhood on 25 April to protest what they consider to be the “illegal” construction of Palestinian homes. The event, which was authorized by the Israeli authorities, sparked clashes between Palestinian residents and Israeli forces, who were deployed ahead of the settlers’ march. During the confrontations, the police fired rubber-coated metal bullets and tear gas grenades at Palestinian stone throwers. Palestinian and Israeli sources indicate that at least 29 Palestinians, the majority of whom were children, along with two Israeli policemen, were injured. During the day, the Israeli police closed the two main entrances leading to Silwan, leaving many students unable to attend schools. Tension remains high in the area, due to continued Israeli settlement activity and the threat of demolition to some 90 Palestinian houses in the Bustan area of Silwan.

Eleven of this week’s injuries occurred in demonstrations protesting the expansion of Hallamish settlement (Ramallah), against access restrictions to farming land in Beit Ummar (Hebron) and during anti-Barrier demonstrations in Al Walajah (Bethlehem), Ni’lin and Bil’in villages (Ramallah). Two international and one Israeli activist were injured in the latter demonstration. Another three Palestinians, including reportedly a

15-year-old mentally challenged boy, were injured in incidents at a checkpoint and during a search operation.

Israeli forces conducted 94 search operations inside Palestinian towns and villages during the week, the majority of which took place in the northern West Bank (51). One of the operations took place in the Silwan neighborhood of East Jerusalem, prior to the settler march, resulting in the arrest of six Palestinians, according to the Palestinian Prisoners Club; eight other Palestinians were arrested during and after the clashes, the majority of them children. Half of those arrested were later released.

Israeli settler-related incidents continue; four Palestinians injured

During the week, OCHA recorded nine Israeli settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians that resulted in injuries or property damage, slightly above the number of incidents that were recorded last week (six). There were an additional four incidents resulting in damage to vehicles that affected Israeli settlers. Thus far in 2010, OCHA has recorded 83 settler-related incidents, resulting in injury to 30 Palestinian civilians or in damage to Palestinian-owned property.

A total of four Palestinians, including an 11-year-old child, were injured in three separate incidents when physically assaulted by Israeli settlers in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) and during clashes that took place on 27 April between Palestinian residents and settlers in Al Bustan area of Silwan.

In one of the most serious incidents involving property damage during the week, sewage from the settlement of Kfar Etzion (Bethlehem) flooded into agricultural land belonging to Palestinian farmers from Beit Ummar village (Hebron), damaging 70 dunums of land. In the northern West Bank, Israeli settlers uprooted 15 olive seedlings located on Palestinian land in Wadi Qana (Salfit).

Also, not reported in the previous week, an armed Israeli settler obstructed the access of a Palestinian ambulance near Ras Karkar village (Ramallah), while the ambulance was en route to a car accident near Ni'li settlement. The ambulance managed to overtake the settler vehicle and reported the incident to the Israeli police who were at the location of the accident.

First demolition in East Jerusalem after a four-month lull

This week, the Jerusalem Municipality demolished a guard's room belonging to the Al Quds University campus in the Beit Hanina neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. The demolition was carried out as part of the municipality's construction of a segment of a planned road around Jerusalem, the eastern "ring road." When complete, this road will enable Israeli settlers travelling from northern West Bank settlements to connect directly to West Jerusalem. This is the first demolition carried out by the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem since December 2009; three Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem were self-demolished, following the issuance of demolition orders, at the beginning of 2010, displacing seven Palestinians.

While no demolitions occurred in Area C, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) delivered stop work orders against seven Palestinian-owned structures in the communities of Umm al Kheir (Hebron), Khirbet Tana (Nablus) and Al Jiftlik (Jericho). The latter orders include two residences, which place nine Palestinians, including seven children, at risk of displacement. Stop work orders are administrative measures preceding the issuance of a demolition order. Since the beginning of 2010, the Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 65 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, displacing 125 people, including 47 children.

Also this week, Israeli settlers from the Maskiyot settlement erected a tent in the Bedouin community of Ein Al Hilwa, in the northern Jordan Valley (Tubas), immediately adjacent to a tent set up by the community ten days earlier. The settlers were reportedly protesting what they consider to be Palestinian "illegal" construction in that area. On 29 April 2010, the Israeli military commander declared the area a closed military area and ordered both parties to demolish their tents immediately. There are four households who continue to live in this community, including 25 children. This development has increased the risk of displacement to this community and other communities in the Jordan Valley who move their tents around seasonally.

Gaza Strip

Restrictions on access to land and sea continue to affect civilians

While the week was characterized by relative calm, with no Israeli air strikes recorded, Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to land and sea resulted in the injury of four Palestinian civilians. Since the beginning of 2010, 16 Palestinians (including five civilians), three Israeli soldiers and one foreign national have been killed and another 71 Palestinians (including 59 civilians), and four Israeli soldiers have been injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel.

The Israeli authorities continue to enforce restrictions on Palestinian access to the so-called "buffer" zone along the Gaza-Israel border, mainly affecting access to agricultural land. These ongoing restrictions triggered a demonstration on 24 April, during which, Israeli forces opened fire towards Palestinian protesters after they attempted to approach the border fence, wounding three of them; an international activist was also injured. These demonstrations are organized on a daily basis by a group representing farmers and other people living near the border in different locations throughout the Gaza Strip. Also this week, Israeli tanks and bulldozers launched two incursions a few hundred metres inside Gaza and withdrew after conducting land leveling operations. One of these incursions evolved into an armed clash between Israeli forces and armed Palestinians; no injuries were reported.

During the week, the IDF declared the areas adjacent to the border inside the Gaza Strip a "combat zone". While the implications of this declaration remain uncertain, there is a concern that this development will increase the level of risk to the lives of Palestinians living or working in these areas. The declaration came after the Israeli military reportedly located and detonated three explosive devices near the border.

Access restrictions also continue to be enforced on fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore. In two separate incidents this week, Israeli naval vessels opened "warning" fire towards Palestinian fishing boats. In one of the incidents, a Palestinian fisherman, aged 15, was critically injured when his boat sank while escaping the Israeli navy fire.

During the week, one Palestinian member of an armed group was killed by an explosive device that detonated inside a house in the Al Zaitoun area of Gaza City and a Palestinian was injured when a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed. Reportedly, one Palestinian rocket, targeting southern Israel, was fired this week; it reportedly fell inside Gaza, with no injuries or damage to property reported.

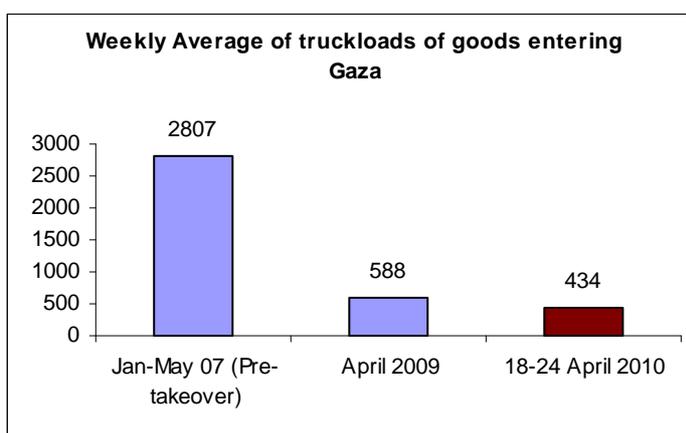
Released Palestinian prisoner deported from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip

The Israeli authorities deported to the Gaza Strip this week a Palestinian man that had finished serving a nine year prison sentence. Prior to his imprisonment, the man, who holds an ID card issued in Gaza, 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. Also this week, the Israeli authorities deported to the Gaza Strip another Palestinian man, who is originally from Gaza and is married to a Palestinian woman from Beer Sheva in southern Israel. According to Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, he was given a residency permit to stay in Israel, but it has not been renewed for three years. While relying on older legislation, these deportations occurred a week after a new military order entered into force, which defines any person present in the West Bank without a permit as “an infiltrator”, who can be deported within 72 hours without judicial review.

Limited entry of construction materials continues (18-24 April)

A total of 434 truckloads entered Gaza this week, a 38 percent decline compared to the number of truckloads that entered last week (697). This decline may have resulted from the closure of Kerem Shalom crossing on two days during the period due to Israeli holidays. This week’s figure constitutes only 15 percent of the weekly average of truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007 (2,807), before the Hamas takeover. Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods (350 truckloads or 81 percent of total imports).

During the week, a total of 26 truckloads of construction materials entered, including 11 truckloads of wood, ten of aluminium and five of glass. This is the highest number of truckloads carrying



construction materials allowed into Gaza for commercial purposes recorded since November 2008. In addition, 19 truckloads of clothing and 12 of footwear entered Gaza. Gaza also received five truckloads of plastic pipes (PVC pipes) for the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) for the first time since May 2009. The CMWU is expecting to receive 30 truckloads of PVC pipes in the coming weeks.

Only one truckload of cut flowers left Gaza via Kerem Shalom Crossing. Since 10 December 2009, 118 truckloads have exited Gaza, including 85 truckloads of cut flowers (approximately 13.5 million stems) and 33 truckloads of strawberries (52 tonnes).

Fuel and cooking gas imports remain below needs

Imports of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) have declined again; approximately one million litres of industrial fuel entered Gaza this week, compared to 1.8 million litres during the previous week. This week's quantity represents 33 percent of the actual estimated weekly amount of fuel to operate the power plant at full capacity (80 megawatts (MW)). As a result, the majority of the population in Gaza continues to experience power cuts of 8-12 hours per day.

Similarly, imports of cooking gas declined this week, compared to last week (503 vs. 957 tonnes), representing only 36 percent of the actual weekly needs of gas (1,400 tonnes), as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association.