



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

12 - 18 May 2010

### West Bank

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#### Palestinian injuries by Israeli forces decline

This week saw a significant decline in the number of Palestinians injured by Israeli forces; three Palestinians were wounded, compared to 24 last week. Since the beginning of the year, six Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed and 628 Palestinians and 74 Israeli soldiers injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Three Palestinians sustained injuries in two separate incidents when physically assaulted at a checkpoint in the Jerusalem governorate (one) and during a demonstration against the construction of the Barrier in Bil'in village (two) in the Ramallah governorate. Israeli forces also injured five Israeli activists in two demonstrations, one against the eviction of Palestinian families by settlers in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem and the other against the expansion of Hallamish settlement and ongoing restrictions on Palestinian access to land belonging to the nearby villages of Deir Nidham and An Nabi Saleh (Ramallah). In An Nabi Saleh and Bil'in villages, 350 dunums of grazing land and five dunums of olive trees were respectively set on fire this week by tear gas canisters fired by Israeli forces during the protests.

Israeli forces conducted 106 search operations inside Palestinian towns and villages during the week, slightly above the average number of weekly operations since the beginning of 2010 (102). As in previous weeks, the majority of these operations took place in the northern West Bank (63). During one of the operations, Israeli forces raided and closed down a Hebron municipality office in the Israeli-controlled area of the Old City of Hebron (H2).

#### Israeli-settler related incidents continue; one Palestinian killed and six others injured

A 15-year-old Palestinian boy from Al Mazra'a Ash Sharqiya was shot and killed while he was wandering in the hills with two of his friends. Local reports indicate that people traveling in an Israeli-plated car opened fire after stones were thrown at their vehicle while they were driving on Road 60 near the village. Investigations into the incident are being held by both the Palestinian and Israeli authorities (Ramallah).

There were another eight Israeli settler-related incidents during the week that led to the injury of Palestinians or to the damage of Palestinian property, slightly above the average weekly number of such incidents recorded since the beginning of the year (six). Several other incidents of trespass, access prevention and intimidation were also reported. Since the beginning of 2010, 42 Palestinians and 26 settlers were injured in settler-related incidents.

This week, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured six Palestinians, including three children, aged five, 12 and 16, in four separate incidents in the Ramallah area and the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. In the latter area, a woman was injured by an Israeli settler during the "Jerusalem Day" event.

Also, following one of the incidents in Sheikh Jarrah, clashes between Palestinian residents and settlers erupted, resulting in the injury of two Israeli settlers. Two other Israeli settlers sustained glass shrapnel wounds when Palestinians opened fire on their vehicle while they were driving on Road 462 in the Ramallah area. Following the incident, The Israeli army erected several flying checkpoints in the area and conducted search operations as well as manning 'Atara checkpoint for several hours, during which long delays and queues were reported. No arrests were reported.

Among those incidents that led to property damage this week, Israeli settlers leveled approximately 30 dunums of land belonging to Jalud village (Nablus) and removed fences surrounding Palestinian agricultural land belonging to Tuwani village (Hebron). Also, settlers from the settlement of Yitzhar entered the village of 'Urif (Nablus) and threw stones at the village school; no injuries or damage was reported. In addition, masked Israeli settlers entered a Palestinian community located behind the Barrier, south of Hebron, in the early morning and damaged three vehicles.

According to the Israeli media, 23 smashed headstones were discovered this week in a Jewish cemetery located on the Mount of Olives area of East Jerusalem; a police investigation has been opened.

### **A new wave of stop-work orders in Area C**

While no demolitions have been carried out in Area C of the West Bank for over one month, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) continues to deliver stop-work orders, the administrative measure preceding the issuance of a demolition order. During the week, the ICA delivered stop-work orders against 41 Palestinian-owned structures in the communities of Bani Na'im (Hebron), as well as Al Bireh, Al Mughayyir and the Bedouin community of Al Maskara (Ramallah), due to the lack of building permits. In the latter community, the Israeli authorities gave the community ten hours to self-demolish their structures or risk the demolition and confiscation of their property. As of 20 May, no demolitions were carried out. The total number of structures that received stop-work orders includes 25 houses, of which 18 are inhabited and the remaining are under construction, eight residential tents, seven animal pens and a stone factory. 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, and one structure in East Jerusalem; three houses were also self-demolished in East Jerusalem, displacing seven people.

### **Movement and access updates; three villages 'released' from a Barrier enclave**

On 12 May, the Israeli army ended its presence at Ras 'Atiya Barrier checkpoint (Qalqilyia). This move follows recent completion of the rerouting of the Barrier around the Alfe Menashe settlement by the Israeli authorities. The new route, which follows an Israeli High Court Ruling from 2005, leaves the three villages of Ad Dab'a, Wadi Ar Rasha and Ras at Tira (total population of 884) outside the closed area, restoring their direct access to other parts of the West Bank after almost seven years. The re-routing, however, leaves two other villages ('Arab ar Ramadin al Janubi and 'Arab Abu Farda, combined population of 338), along with valuable agricultural land, isolated in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line. As part of the new route, the Israeli army has erected a metal gate, with no operating hours, preventing about 60 school students from the two communities from accessing their schools in Qalqilyia city and the nearby villages via the former checkpoint of Ras 'Atiya to the south. The Israeli DCL informed the 'Arab ar Ramadin al Janubi village council head that the students must now use Jaljouliya checkpoint, to the north instead, forcing students of

the two villages to make a 16 kilometres detour from home to school and vice versa. The Israeli Civil Administration provides the children of the two communities with transportation to and from school.

Also in the northern West Bank, following the outbreak of a fire near the village of Kafr Ad Dik (Salfit), the Palestinian Fire Brigade had to coordinate its entry to the area with the Israeli army, as the main entrance to the village is closed by a road block. The Israeli army allowed the unit to enter. However, approximately 200 dunums of land belonging to the village were damaged before the Fire Brigade was able to access the area and put out the fire.

In East Jerusalem, on 12 May, the roads leading to the Old City, as well as to Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, were blocked during marches, conducted by tens of thousands of Israelis marking the 43rd anniversary of “Jerusalem Day”, the annexation of East Jerusalem to Israel. Israeli security forces were heavily deployed throughout the day. In the Jerusalem governorate, three Barrier gates that control access to agricultural land isolated by the Barrier have remained closed for over a month. During a protest held this week in front of one of these gates by Palestinian farmers, together with International and Israeli activists, the demonstrators broke through the gate and were met with tear gas by Israeli forces; several cases of tear gas inhalation were reported among protestors.

## Gaza Strip

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### **Incidents along the border continue, resulting in three Palestinian civilian casualties; one fisherman killed and three injured by Egyptian naval forces**

Israeli forces shot and killed one elderly Palestinian civilian and injured another one in two separate incidents near the Gaza-Israel border. In addition, a 16 year-old boy was seriously injured when an UXO detonated while he was working with his family on their land near the border fence. Since the beginning of 2010, 18 Palestinians (including six civilians), three Israeli soldiers and one foreign national working in Israel have been killed and another 72 Palestinians (including 60 civilians) and four Israeli soldiers have been injured in the context of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel.

On 14 May, Israeli forces positioned on the border, east of Jabaliya, shot and killed an elderly Palestinian man, while he was visiting the grave of his wife in a cemetery located in the area. According to medical sources, the cause of death was multiple bullet wounds and shrapnel injuries. In a separate incident, Israeli forces opened fire towards a group of Palestinians while they were collecting rubble near the border, injuring one of them. Israeli forces continue to enforce access restrictions in the “buffer zone” by opening “warning” fire towards people entering the area, affecting farmers and workers, and by leveling land in border areas. This week, Israeli tanks and bulldozers, under the cover of heavy fire, launched a number of incursions a few hundred metres inside Gaza and withdrew after conducting land leveling.

Also during the week, on 12 May, Egyptian naval forces opened fire towards a Palestinian fishing boat entering Egyptian waters, killing a Palestinian fisherman and wounding three others, in addition to confiscating the boat. A number of similar attacks were carried out against Palestinian fishermen in the past four months. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore also continued to be enforced; in at least two incidents this week, Israeli naval vessels opened “warning” fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore.

These restrictions have resulted in the injury of three Palestinians fishermen since the beginning of the year. This week, a number of demonstrations were carried out, including several marking the 62nd anniversary of what the Palestinians refer to as “An Nakba” Day (“Catastrophe”) and against restrictions on Palestinian access to the “buffer zone”; no injuries were reported.

During the period, Palestinian armed factions fired a number of rudimentary rockets towards southern Israel, including military bases located on the border, resulting in no injuries or damage to property. Also, local security forces located and dismantled an improvised explosive device in Gaza City this week.

### **Death sentences carried out in Gaza for the second time this year**

On 18 May, the Hamas authorities in Gaza executed three Palestinians convicted of murder. This is the second time in 2010 that the Hamas authorities have carried out executions; in mid-April, two prisoners convicted of collaborating with Israel were executed. According to Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, those executed are among a group of 16 who have been sentenced to death by the courts in Gaza. The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has condemned the executions.

### **Hamas authorities demolish 12 houses; hand over first rebuilt house in East Jabalia**

Hamas authorities in Gaza demolished 12 houses in the Rafah area, allegedly because they were constructed illegally on government land. The demolitions led to the displacement of thirty-one families, consisting of approximately 190 individuals. The majority of the displaced families, who were not given any prior warning of the demolition, have set up tents on the debris of the demolished houses. Some 200 houses are scheduled to be demolished in the area in similar context.

Also this week, the Hamas authorities handed over the first rebuilt house in East Jabalia to its owner. The house was destroyed during Israel’s “Cast Lead” offensive in Gaza. During the week, Hamas announced the planned reconstruction of over 1,000 housing units. Approximately 6,000 housing units throughout the Gaza Strip were destroyed or incurred major damage during “Cast Lead.” Since then, major reconstruction efforts have been halted, largely due to Israeli import restrictions prohibiting the entry of the necessary construction materials. However, cement and other construction materials are entering in increasing quantities through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

### **Ad-hoc opening of Rafah Crossing; over 3,500 exit Gaza**

The Rafah border crossing with Egypt was exceptionally opened on 15 May for a period of six days. This is only the third scheduled opening of the crossing since the beginning of 2010. Initial data indicates that between 15 and 18 May, 3,681 Palestinians exited Gaza and 529 others entered. Some 650 people, who had registered their names with the Hamas authorities to exit, were denied passage by the Egyptian authorities.

### **Recreational event held in Gaza**

Given continued restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement, a symbolic “World Cup” was held over the past two weeks between Palestinian teams representing national football teams from around the world. The matches, supported by the UNDP and the Palestine Football Association, were watched by thousands of Gazan, and played by 16 teams from the Gaza Strip, which included a number of foreign nationals, already present in Gaza.

## A further decline in imports of industrial fuel and cooking gas; rolling blackouts continue

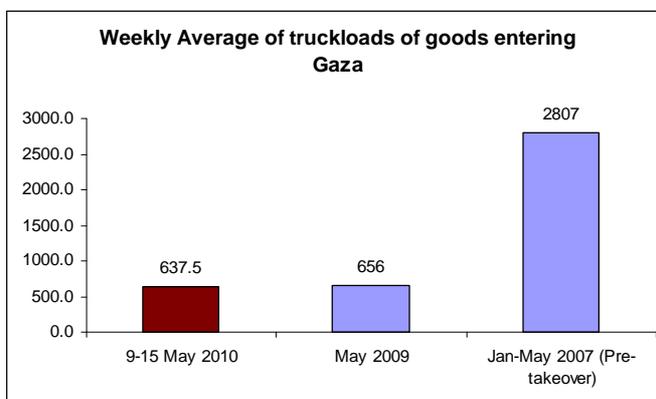
Imports of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) further declined this week; approximately 0.85 million litres of fuel entered Gaza this week, compared to 1.35 million litres last week. This week's figure represents 27 percent of the actual estimated weekly amount of fuel required for the power plant to operate at full capacity. As a result, the majority of the population continues to experience power cuts of 8 to 12 hours per day, forcing them to rely on generators run by fuel during prolonged hours without electricity. These generators, which are imported largely through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, can be unsafe, posing risk to the population. In this context, a generator-related fire broke out inside a house this week, killing two members of one family and injuring five others. Since the beginning of the year, 31 Palestinians have been killed and 41 others injured in generator-related incidents.

Quantities of imported cooking gas also further declined this week (899 vs. 920 tonnes), representing only 64 percent of the average weekly needs, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association. As shortfalls continue, the rationing scheme for cooking gas, introduced in November 2009, remains in place.

## Imports remain below needs; limited entry of construction materials continues (9-15 May)

Gaza imports through the crossings declined by approximately 11 percent this week, compared to last week (637.5 vs. 713 truckloads). This week's figure constitutes around 23 percent of the weekly average (2,807 truckloads) that entered during the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas takeover. Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods (424.5 truckloads or 67 percent of total imports).

Limited quantities of construction materials continue to enter Gaza. This week, one shipment of 20 tonnes of cement (0.5 truckload) and eight tonnes of steel bars (0.5 truckload) entered Gaza. These supplies are earmarked for the rehabilitation of Al Quds hospital in Gaza City, which sustained severe damage during the "Cast Lead" offensive. The shipments, which are funded and coordinated by the French government, are part of an additional 50 truckloads that



are expected to enter Gaza in the coming two months. Also, for the first time since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, one truckload of spare parts for poultry farms was allowed into Gaza. By the end of the reporting period, a number of truckloads carrying construction materials for an UNRWA housing project in Khan Younis entered Gaza. Imports of clothing, shoes, wood and aluminium continue; a total number of 125 truckloads of clothing, 89 of footwear, 58 of wood and 39 of aluminium have entered Gaza since the beginning of April. For the third consecutive week, no exports left Gaza.