



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

2 - 8 June 2010

West Bank

18 Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

This week, Israeli forces injured 18 Palestinians in clashes and demonstrations that took place in the West Bank, most of them in East Jerusalem. In 2010, six Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and 675 Palestinians and 84 members of Israeli forces have been injured. This compares to 14 Palestinians and two members of Israeli forces killed in the equivalent period in 2009, along with 529 and ten, respectively, injured.

A demonstration in Al Isawiya neighborhood of East Jerusalem evolved into clashes between village residents and Israeli forces, resulting in eight Palestinians injured. Hundreds of Palestinians participated in the demonstration, protesting the killing and injury of international activists during the Israeli naval interception of the "Gaza Flotilla" on 31 May. During the clashes, Palestinians threw stones and Israeli forces fired rubber-coated metal bullets and tear gas canisters. Israeli forces also erected flying checkpoints at the village entrances for a few hours, blocking vehicular access. Seven other Palestinians and a foreign journalist were wounded during the weekly protest against the construction of the Barrier in Bil'in village (Ramallah). Palestinians held another anti-Barrier protest in Al Walaja village (Bethlehem), which resulted in no injuries.

Clashes also erupted between Palestinian residents and Israeli forces in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, after settlers in the area had physically assaulted a 14 year-old boy, resulting in two Palestinian injuries (See also settler section). Additional clashes in the same neighborhood erupted during an operation aimed at arresting tax evaders, but resulting in no injuries; four people were arrested and at least three Palestinian-owned vehicles and one tractor were seized. Tension in Silwan remains high amidst threats of extensive demolitions planned by the Jerusalem Municipality in the area.

Also in East Jerusalem, Israeli police detained for questioning four elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council affiliated with Hamas, one of whom was recently released after serving a four year prison sentence. According to media reports, the police seized their Jerusalem identity cards and ordered them to leave the city by the beginning of July 2010, on the grounds that the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has revoked their status as residents of Israel. Displacement of East Jerusalem Palestinians following revocation of their resident status is a widespread phenomenon. According to data provided by the MoI, in 2008 alone the MoI revoked the Israeli residency status of 4,577 residents of East Jerusalem.

This week a Palestinian man was killed when an Israeli military jeep driving along Road 60 ran over him in the Hebron area.

Israeli forces conducted 63 search operations inside Palestinian towns and villages this week, well below the average number of similar weekly operations so far in 2010 (100).

Israeli settler-related incidents; seven Palestinians injured

OCHA recorded 12 attacks perpetrated by Israeli settlers resulting in either Palestinian injuries or affecting Palestinian property this week. So far this year, 132 such incidents have been recorded, more than two-fold the number of incidents (62) in the equivalent period in 2009. In addition, there were a number of reports about incidents of intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers. In 2010, one child has been killed and 55 Palestinians and 28 settlers injured in the context of settler-related incidents.

Four of this week's incidents led to the injury of seven Palestinians. In one incident, an Israeli settler opened fire on two Palestinians, including a 17 year-old boy, near Al 'Arrub refugee camp, injuring them. The incident occurred during stone-throwing by Palestinians towards Israeli-plated vehicles driving in the area, during which two settlers were also wounded. Four other Palestinians, including a 14 year-old boy, were injured in Silwan neighbourhood (East Jerusalem), including, three during clashes with Israeli settlers and one as a result of a physical assault. The remaining incident affected a 15 year-old boy who fell and was injured while escaping from Israeli settlers in 'Iraq Burin village (Nablus).

The remaining eight incidents resulted in property damage. Separate reports from five villages in the northern West Bank (Urif, 'Einabus, Huwwara and Asira al Qibliya villages in Nablus and Far'ata in Qalqiliya area) indicated that Israeli settlers set fire to village agricultural land. The incidents were allegedly perpetrated by Israeli settlers from the Yitzhar settlement (Nablus) and the Gil'ad Farm outpost (Qaqiliya). An estimated 480 dunums of land, planted mainly with olive and almond trees, belonging to 85 families from the five villages were damaged, and several hundred trees and other field crops were burnt. The fires were extinguished by Palestinian fire brigades in all cases. In a separate incident in the Ramallah area, Israeli settlers set fire to about 30 dunums of land belonging to the village of Al Mazra'a al Qibliya, damaging 40 olive trees. A Palestinian car sustained damage when stoned by settlers on Road 60 in the area of Nablus. In a separate incident, an armed settler from Ma'on settlement (Hebron) chased a Palestinian shepherd (aged 14) and stole three of his goats.

In addition to the above incident, which resulted in injury to two Israeli settlers, on two other occasions, according to the Israeli military, Palestinians threw stones at Israeli-plated vehicles travelling on West Bank roads in the Hebron and Bethlehem areas and caused damage to the cars.

Israeli authorities continue to issue evacuation and demolition orders in Area C

On 6 June, the Israeli army handed out three separate "evacuation orders" to three families in Khirbet Ar Ras Ahmar herder community in the Jordan Valley (Tubas), and verbally instructed an additional six families to demolish their homes and animal shelters within the next 24 hours; as of the end of the reporting period, no evacuation has taken place. These orders place 70 people, including 19 children, at immediate risk of displacement. In June 2009, the Israeli military demolished 15 residential tents, 30 animal pens and 18 traditional 'taboun' ovens in this village, forcibly displacing more than 120 people, including 66 children. Evacuation and demolition orders targeting this community are issued on the grounds that the community is located in area designated by the Israeli army as closed for military training; this status applies to approximately 18 percent of the West Bank,

Although no demolitions have been carried out in Area C for almost two months, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) continues to deliver demolition and stop-work orders due to the lack of building permits. This week OCHA recorded the delivery of 18 such orders to Palestinian-owned structures, including eight houses (two are under construction) and ten animal shelters, in the communities of Haris (Salfit) and 'Ein Fares (Bethlehem) and the villages of Fasayil at Tahta, Fasayil al Fauqa and Az Zubeidat (Jericho). Additional demolition orders against septic pits were delivered in Az Zubeidat. In 2010, Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 65 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, displacing 129 people, including 47 children. In the equivalent period in 2009, Israeli authorities demolished in Area C 57 structures displacing 171 people.

Package of access easings partially implemented

This week, OCHA recorded the removal of two earthmounds in the northern West Bank, which blocked vehicular traffic through the main entrances to Kafr ad Dik village in the Salfit governorate (4,800 people) and to Jamma'in village in the Nablus governorate (6,600 people). These openings have improved access to services, markets and livelihoods.

In the course of the past two weeks, the Israeli authorities expanded the freedom of movement of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship traveling through West Bank checkpoints. As a result, the number of such people accessing Palestinian cities in the West Bank, mostly for shopping purposes, is expected to increase and raise the level of commercial activity in these cities.

These measures came in the context of a package of access easings announced by the Israeli authorities on 24 May. While the package included the removal of 60 closure obstacles, so far, OCHA has only been able to confirm the removal of ten, of which, the most significant was one earthmound blocking access to Road 60 by a large cluster of towns and villages in the Hebron area. The promised opening of a prohibited road for Palestinian traffic east of Jerusalem (Qedar settlement road) has yet to take place.

Gaza Strip

Six Palestinians killed in one sea incident

In a single incident this week, Israeli forces killed six Palestinians; another three Palestinians were injured in other incidents and another 16 year-old boy was wounded handling an unexploded ordnance. Since the beginning of 2010, 31 Palestinians (including nine civilians), three Israeli soldiers and one foreign national have been killed in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. Another 116 Palestinians (including 100 civilians) and five Israeli soldiers have been injured.

On 7 June, in an incident off the shore of Gaza, Israeli naval forces opened fire at a Palestinian boat, killing six Palestinians, including two civilians and four members of an armed group. One of the civilians was the owner of the boat while the other was a fisherman in another boat nearby the one targeted. According to the Israeli media, citing IDF sources, the armed men were en route to perpetrate an attack in Israel; according to Palestinian sources the armed men were conducting a military training. The same day, an Israeli airstrike targeted and injured another Palestinian, allegedly a member of an armed group, whilst he was en route to his house in the area of Jabaliya.

Israel continued to restrict Palestinian access to areas in the Israeli-declared "no-go area", which stretches over 18 percent of largely agricultural territory along the Gaza-Israel border. Two

Palestinian civilians were wounded in two separate incidents near the border, when Israeli forces opened fire at people collecting scrap metal. On at least one other occasion, Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinian farmers, forcing them off their land. Palestinians conducted a number of demonstrations this week protesting access restrictions to land along the border, during which, Israeli forces fired in the air when Palestinian youths reportedly threw stones and approached the border fence; no injuries were reported.

Palestinian armed factions fired a number of rudimentary rockets towards southern Israel, including at military bases located on the border, resulting in no injuries or damage to property.

Tomato crops at risk of damage by a new pest

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports an outbreak of a major new agricultural pest, the "Tuta Absoluta", in the Gaza Strip. The pest is resistant to almost all insecticides available in Gaza, and is difficult to control due to the scarcity of necessary equipment, including insect-proof netting as a result of the Israeli blockade on Gaza. This pest could damage an estimated 90 percent of the tomato crop. Approximately 60 percent of this season's tomato crop has already been damaged, FAO reports, putting an estimated 21,000 farmers and their dependents at imminent risk of losing their livelihoods. Initial reports indicate that some areas in the northern West Bank are also affected. FAO is working with other humanitarian agencies to respond to this crisis.

Rafah crossing opens until further notice

The Egyptian authorities opened the Rafah border crossing in both directions on 2 June, until further notice. This is the first time Egypt has opened its border to the Gaza Strip for an unspecified duration since it was officially closed in June 2007. The crossing has since been opened on scheduled, but irregular occasions for two or three days each month to allow for the limited passage of certain people. Movement of people through Rafah terminal nonetheless continues to be limited to medical and other humanitarian cases, as well as students and foreign passport holders.

New items allowed into Gaza; overall imports declined (30 May – 5 June)

During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities have approved the entry of 11 new food and hygiene items into Gaza including jam, halva, soda juice, canned fruits, razor blades and paste. Yet, overall, Gaza imports declined by almost 26 percent compared to last week (488 vs. 662 truckloads). This week's figure constitutes 17 percent of the weekly average that entered during the first five months of 2007 (2,807 truckloads), before the Hamas takeover. Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods (347 truckloads or 71 percent of total imports). The prohibition on exports continues; no exports left Gaza this week.

The entry of construction materials for two main projects in Gaza continues via the crossings with Israel. A total of 18 truckloads of gravel (722 tonnes) and another of cement (29 tonnes) was allowed into Gaza for use in an UNRWA project to complete 151 housing units in Khan Younis. The material received so far accounts for 17 percent of the project's needed quantities. Another 20 tonnes of cement (0.5 truckload) and four tonnes of steel bars (0.5 truckload) were allowed to enter for the rehabilitation of Al Quds hospital in Gaza City (which sustained severe damage during the "Cast Lead" offensive). The limited entry of other previously-restricted materials continues: a total of 98 truckloads of wood, 47 of aluminum, 240 of clothing and 134 of footwear have entered since the beginning of April 2010.

Of the estimated total of 70 truckloads of various goods intercepted last week with the “Gaza flotilla”, only 5 truckloads have so far entered Gaza. While the UN urges all parties to do their utmost to ensure the delivery of all humanitarian assistance from the flotilla, the main priority of the humanitarian community in the oPt remains to have the blockade lifted in order to ensure sustained and regular flow of goods and people into Gaza, as well as the unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance, including reconstruction for vital infrastructure.

Shortages of industrial fuel and cooking gas continue

Imports of industrial fuel used to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) declined slightly compared to last week (1.05 vs. 1.09 million litres). Due to the fuel shortfall stemming from funding shortage, the GPP continues to operate at only 38 percent of its full capacity. As a result, the majority of the population continues to experience power cuts of 8-12 hours per day. Operation of the GPP is also impeded by the shortage of materials needed to maintain and repair vital equipment, due to restrictions

imposed on the import of these materials by the Israeli authorities. Some 97 materials essential for maintaining the GPP have continued to be denied entry since June 2007.

Similarly, imports of cooking gas declined by 14 percent this week (750 vs. 873 tonnes), representing 54 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.

