



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

16 - 22 June 2010

### Latest Developments since Tuesday, 22 June

- 23 June: Following the approval of a plan that entails the demolition of more than 20 residential structures in Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, the UN Secretary-General expressed deep concern: "The planned moves are contrary to international law, and to the wishes of Palestinian residents".

## West Bank

### Six Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

Israeli forces injured six Palestinians in various incidents throughout the West Bank. An Israeli soldier was also wounded. Since the beginning of 2010, seven Palestinians and two members of the Israeli security forces have been killed in the West Bank, and another 694 Palestinians and 91 Israeli soldiers and policemen were injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In the course of the weekly demonstrations against construction of the Barrier, five Palestinians, including three boys (aged 14, 16 and 17), were wounded in the villages of Bil'in (Ramallah) and Beit Jala (Bethlehem), and around 30 olive trees were partially burnt in the village of Ni'lin (Ramallah), as a result of tear gas canisters fired by Israeli forces. An Israeli soldier was also wounded this week in clashes that erupted during a protest against the expansion of the Hallamish settlement in Ramallah area. The remaining Palestinian was injured when physically assaulted at a checkpoint in the Hebron area.

Israeli forces conducted 106 search operations inside Palestinian towns and villages this week, an increase of approximately 45 percent compared to last week (73), and slightly above the weekly average of operations since the beginning of the 2010 (99).

### Significant decrease in Israeli settler violence

A week of relative calm prevailed in the context of Israeli settler violence, which ended with no casualties and only three incidents affecting Palestinian property. This follows an escalation observed since the beginning of the year, during which a weekly average of six settler-related incidents leading to either Palestinian injuries or property damage was recorded. In 2010, one Palestinian child has been killed and 56 Palestinians and 29 settlers injured in settler-related incidents.

In one incident, around 150 dunums of land planted with approximately 1000 olive trees next to Beit Nuba village (Ramallah) were set on fire and burnt, allegedly by Israeli settlers. Since the beginning of the year, hundreds of dunums of agricultural land and thousands of olive and other plantings have been damaged in settler-related incidents. In a separate incident, an Israeli settler shot and killed two cows belonging to a

Palestinian shepherd from Fasayil al Fauqa (Jericho), allegedly for grazing his livestock in an Israeli-declared "natural reserve". Also, settlers from the settlement of Tel Rumeida (Hebron, H2) threw stones at Palestinian vehicles driving near the settlement, resulting in damage to two cars.

Also this week, Israeli sources report that on four separate occasions, Palestinians threw stones at Israeli-plated vehicles travelling on West Bank roads in the Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron areas and caused damage to some of the cars.

### **East Jerusalem: new demolition and eviction plans announced, one institution closed down, and four Palestinians to be deported**

Developments during the week have highlighted some of the vulnerabilities of Palestinians living in occupied East Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Local Planning Committee approved a development plan, submitted by the mayor, for the Al Bustan area of Silwan neighbourhood (East Jerusalem). According to the plan, which divides Al Bustan area into two sections, at least 22 Palestinian buildings in the western section will be demolished to make way for recreational areas and various commercial and residential structures. These planned demolitions would put 500 people at risk of displacement. According to the plan, the displaced families will be given permits to build extensions or second floors to other Palestinian houses located in the eastern section of Al Bustan area; pending demolition orders issued in the past against house in that section will be revoked, according to the plan. Residents of Silwan opposed this plan and submitted earlier this year an alternative plan that allows the development of new infrastructure while avoiding the vast demolitions of the existing buildings.

Also in Silwan, an Israeli settler group announced its intention to hire private security firms to implement already issued eviction orders against four Palestinian families, consisting of 40 persons allegedly living on "Jewish property", unless the families evacuate their homes by 4 July.

The Israeli Police issued an order shutting down the "Elaf Alquds" society for education in East Jerusalem, due to its alleged links with Hamas. While the order is valid for one month, it states that the police is considering its extension for one year. This institution provides financial support to East Jerusalem university students.

Finally, the 30-day notification period given to the Jerusalem Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member affiliated with Hamas, Muhammad Abu Tir, to leave the city has expired. Earlier in June, the Israeli police served him, along with three other PLC members (all affiliated with Hamas), a notice that their permanent residency status was revoked on the basis of "disloyalty" to the State of Israel and therefore they must leave Jerusalem. The other affected members were ordered to leave Jerusalem by 3 July. The deportations are not expected to occur before the next hearing on these cases at the Israeli High Court of Justice scheduled for 6 September.

### **Issuance of eviction and stop-work orders in Area C continue**

The Israeli authorities delivered four eviction orders against tents belonging to the Bedouin communities of Humsa and Al Hadidiya in the northern Jordan Valley on 21 June, claiming that they were located in a closed military zone. The orders affect ten families, including 22 children and state that they should leave the area within 24-48 hours; to date, no eviction has taken place. The Israeli authorities also issued stop-work orders against 14 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, in the communities of Jinsafut (Qalqiliya), Kharbatha Bani Harith (Ramallah), Bani Na'im and Susiya (Hebron) and Al Hadidiya (Tubas) due to the lack of building permits. In 2010, the Israeli authorities

have demolished 70 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C of the West Bank, displacing 129 people, compared to 163 structures demolished, displacing 319 people, in the equivalent period in 2009.

Also in Area C, the Israeli army stopped construction on an agricultural road, which is being built in Area C in Kafr Qaddum village (Qalqiliya) due to the lack of permit. This construction project, financed by an international organization, aims to assist approximately 100 Palestinian farmers to access their land.

## Movement and access update

This week, Israeli forces erected a flying checkpoint at the main entrance to 'Iraq Burin village (Nablus), after issuing an order declaring the village a closed military area for several hours. The order, which prohibits non-residents from accessing the village, was aimed to prevent the holding of a scheduled demonstration against settler violence. Despite this measure, the protest was carried out and led to clashes which ended with no casualties; however, about 30 dunums of land planted with wheat were burnt when set on fire by gas canisters.

Three additional demonstrations were carried out this week, protesting various access restrictions imposed by the Israeli military: access to farming land near the settlement of Karmi Zur (Hebron), use of the main commercial road in Hebron's Old City (Ash Shuhada) by Palestinian vehicles, and crossing the checkpoint controlling the main entrance to Ramallah from the east (Beit El checkpoint).

Also this week, the Israeli army blocked a road leading to a dump site used by the residents of Barta'a ash Sharqiya village (Jenin) in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green line and confiscated a septic truck.

## Gaza Strip

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### Five Palestinians injured near the border

Israeli forces injured five Palestinians, including four civilians during the reporting period. 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 124 Palestinians (including 107 civilians) and five Israeli soldiers have been injured.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas in the vicinity of the Gaza-Israel border continued to result in casualties. Four Palestinians, including two boys aged 15 and 17, were wounded in three separate incidents, when Israeli forces opened fire towards a group of Palestinians collecting scrap metal in this area. On at least one occasion, Israeli forces opened warning fire towards Palestinian farmers working in this area, forcing them off their land. Israeli tanks and bulldozers launched a number of incursions a few hundred metres inside Gaza and withdrew after conducting land leveling. Also this week, Israeli airstrikes targeted a group of armed Palestinians while they were reportedly planting an explosive device near the border fence, injuring one of them.

Similar access restrictions apply to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore; this week Israeli naval vessels opened "warning" fire towards Palestinian fishing boats on five separate occasions; no casualties 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.

### Tunnels continue to claim lives

One Palestinian was killed on 22 June as a result of an electric shock while working inside a tunnel under the Gaza-Israel border. Two other Palestinians were injured in another incident when a tunnel collapsed. In 2010, 30 Palestinians have been killed and 50 others injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapse, electrocution and the explosion of gas cylinders – 21 Palestinians killed and 28 others injured in the same period in 2009. In spite of the risks, tunnels constitute a lifeline for the Gaza population, providing goods, which are unavailable through the official crossings with Israel, due to the Israeli imposed blockade in place since June 2007.

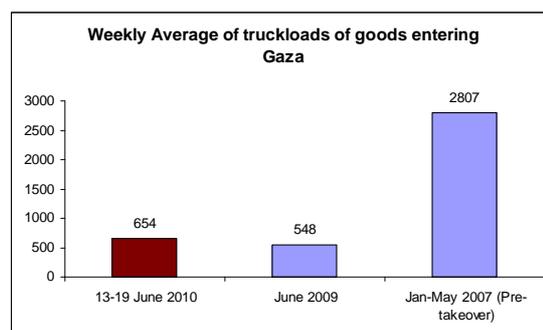
### Israel announces an easing of the blockade

On 20 June, the Israeli government announced a decision to ease the Gaza blockade. Measures to be implemented in this context include, among others, allowing the import of any good that is not considered a military or a dual-use item; allowing the entry of construction materials for projects under the supervision of the PA and international organizations; and expanding the functioning of the land crossings. The implementation of the announced measures will be monitored over the coming weeks, along with the assessment of their humanitarian impact. The announcement does not include reference to the easing of restrictions on exports and movement of people. UNRWA's Commissioner General reiterated the call for a full lifting of the blockade and for unhindered access for all goods and for all people.

Prior to this announcement, new food items were allowed entry into Gaza, but only of quantities for household consumption rather than for the food production sector. In addition, new non-food items have been allowed into Gaza this week, including fishing tools (not including boats and boat motors), children's furniture and car spare parts. Overall, between 13 and 19 June, Gaza imports increased by 14 percent compared to the previous week (654 vs. 573 truckloads). However, this week's figure constitutes only 23 percent of the weekly average that entered during the first five months of 2007 (2,807 truckloads), before the imposition of the blockade. Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods (456 truckloads or 70 percent of total imports).

Limited entry of construction materials for the commercial market, including glass, aluminum and wood, continued this week, along with other materials for three specific projects. One of the projects is carried out by UNRWA and entails the construction of 151 housing units in Khan Younis; a total of ten truckloads of gravel and one of wooden poles were allowed into Gaza for this project. The materials received so far accounts for around 22 percent of the project's needed quantities.

Also, the Egyptian authorities continue to open the Rafah border crossing in both directions. The movement of Palestinians through the crossing, however, remains limited to medical and other humanitarian cases, as well as university students studying abroad and foreign passport holders. This week, 2,045 people crossed from Egypt to Gaza while 2,094 people crossed from Gaza to Egypt.



## **UNRWA summer games launched**

UNRWA launched its 2010 summer games programme on 13 June, benefitting up to 250,000 children in Gaza. This is the fourth consecutive year in which UNRWA has organized such games. The programme offers a wide variety of activities including sports, arts and crafts, theatre and swimming, which provides the children of Gaza much needed psychological relief. Around 1200 summer camps are organized in different locations throughout Gaza including schools, the beach, hospitals, and orphanages over a period of eight weeks

## **Power crisis continues; industrial fuel and cooking gas shortfalls continue**

Due to high summer temperatures the demand for electricity has increased, thus widening the power deficit. Only 56 percent of Gaza's electricity demand (currently 280-300 megawatts (MW)) is being supplied to the Gaza Strip; 120 MW of electricity is purchased from Israel, approximately 30 MW produced by the Gaza power plant and 17 MW delivered from Egypt. The power plant continues to operate at 38 percent of its full capacity due to shortages of industrial fuel and spare parts. Imports of fuel required to operate the power plant declined significantly this week by around 40 percent compared to last week (0.74 vs. 1.23 million litres).

As a result, the majority of the population continues to experience power cuts of 8-12 hours per day, severely affecting all spheres of daily life. These cuts also affect the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage removal and treatment and medical treatment; public institutions providing these services are forced to rely extensively on backup generators and other alternative devices, which are extremely vulnerable due to the inconsistent supply of spare parts. Electricity cuts are severely disrupting the functioning of households as they prevent adequate refrigeration of food, water pumping and air conditioning.

Imports of cooking gas continue to be below needs. The quantities of cooking gas that entered this week declined slightly compared to the previous one (949 vs. 979 tonnes), representing 68 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.