



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

27 MAY-2 JUNE 2009

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 2 June 2009

- On 4 June, armed clashes PA security forces and members of Hamas took place in Qalqiliya City. Two armed Hamas members and a member of the PA security forces were killed.
- On 4 June, Israeli authorities demolished 13 residential structures, 19 animal pens, and 18 traditional “*taboun*” ovens in the Bedouin community of Khirbet ar Ras al Ahmar in the Jordan Valley. A water tank, tractor, and trolley were also confiscated. Eighteen households were displaced, including at least 67 children.
- According to Israeli media, on 4 June a 13-year-old Palestinian boy sustained a head injury from a rubber-bullet shot by Israeli forces during an anti-Barrier demonstration in Bil’in village. (Ramallah)

West Bank

Military activities affecting civilians

Following the killing of Hamas leader in the Hebron governorate by Israeli forces, and armed intra-Palestinian clashes that left six dead in Qalqiliya City, tensions ran high throughout the West Bank during the reporting period. Israeli forces killed a senior member of Hamas in a cave in the village of Al Burj (Hebron). The man was described by the Israeli authorities as the head of the Hamas’ Al Qassam Brigades in Hebron, and reportedly had been on Israel’s wanted list for at least fourteen years. In the northern West Bank, in the aftermath of the Israeli killing of the Hamas leader in Hebron, an armed clash took place between Palestinian Authority (PA) forces and Hamas operatives, resulting in the deaths of six people: three members of PA security forces, two armed Hamas militants, and the owner of the building from which they were operating. This incident resulted in the highest recorded single-day death toll from intra-Palestinian fighting in the West Bank since OCHA began collecting oPt casualty data in January 2005.

The building owner's wife was injured, resulting in the amputation of her hand. Four members of the PA security forces were also reported injured. Following the clash, PA forces imposed two separate curfews on Qalqiliya City totaling approximately thirteen hours. In this and other incidents during the week throughout the West Bank, PA security forces arrested at least 122 Palestinians, constituting at least 60% of all arrests of Palestinians (by both the IDF and the PA), with most arrests taking place (120) in the northern West Bank governorates.

Also this week, there were eight other Palestinians (including two children) injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank, six of which occurred in anti-Barrier demonstrations in the villages of Bil’in and Ni’lin (Ramallah). One Israeli soldier was stabbed in the arm at Huwwara checkpoint by a 13-year-old Palestinian boy from Beita village (Qalqiliya). The number of IDF search operations rose during the week to 137 (up

from 107 previously), roughly 26% higher than the weekly average in the first quarter of the year (109). The number of people arrested by Israeli forces also rose from the previous week (85 compared to 56 previously).

Ongoing settler activities

Settler violence and attacks increased this week in the northern West Bank, notably in the Nablus and Qalqiliya districts in response to a recent Israeli government announcement of its intention to dismantle 26 settlement outposts. These events come in the context of an explicit strategy among some Israeli settlers to exact a “price” for every attempt to dismantle a settlement outpost. The implementation of this technique was seen several times in 2008 with settlers mobilizing large groups of other settlers to attack Palestinians following attempts to dismantle settlement outposts. There are approximately 100 settlement outposts considered by Israeli authorities to be “unauthorized”.

On 1 June, near the entrance of Qedumim settlement, Israeli settlers blocked the main Qalqiliya-Nablus road (road 55) with debris, stoning and physically assaulting Palestinians as they stepped out of their vehicles to remove the obstacles; six Palestinians were injured. On the same day, Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian olive groves belonging to residents of Sarra, Tell, Jit, Madama, Burin and Huwwara villages along road 60. According to the Nablus Governor’s Office, more than 1300 olive trees and 280 dunums of wheat and barley crops were burnt.

Israeli-settler violence also continued in the southern West Bank during the week. On 30 May, two Palestinian children and two Israeli-activists were injured when Israeli settlers from the settlement of Bat Ayin (Bethlehem) attacked them near the community of Safa, and caused their vehicle to overturn. Other settler-incidents targeting Palestinians include stone throwing and property vandalism in areas adjacent to Israeli settlements in the H2 area of Hebron City.

In East Jerusalem, an Israeli was physically assaulted in confrontations on 30 May between Israelis attempting to enter Al Aqsa Mosque compound and Palestinians leaving the compound following prayers in the Old City of Jerusalem. The following day, Israeli police conducted a search in the Old City, arresting three Palestinian children for allegedly attacking and injuring an Israeli during the previous day’s altercation at Al Aqsa Mosque.

Demolitions and eviction orders in the Jordan Valley

Israeli forces distributed five evacuation orders and seven stop construction orders affecting a total of 151 persons, including 80 children, in the Bedouin community in Al Hadidiya (pop. 162). Upon receipt of the stop construction orders, two households self-demolished or disassembled their tent and two animal barracks; as a result, fourteen people, including eight children, were displaced. The people of Al Hadidiya, who have lived in the area since before 1967, have been displaced multiple times in the past, the last of which took place in February and March 2008 when about 30 people were displaced in each incident. In December 2006, the Israeli High Court of Justice rejected a petition against earlier demolition orders for Al Hadidiya, on the grounds that the affected buildings were located in an area defined as agricultural in master plans from the British Mandatory period, and because the buildings posed a security threat to the nearby Ro’i settlement. (Jordan Valley/Tubas)

In another Jordan Valley Bedouin community, Ar Ras Al Ahmar, Israeli authorities handed out immediate notices for the demolition of structures including tents, shacks and barracks. Eighteen families, about one third of the village, are at risk of being displaced. (See also *Latest Developments* box)

In addition, during the previous reporting period, Israeli forces distributed seven stop-work orders in Khirbet Samra, north of Al Hadidiya, affecting a total of 35 persons, including 22 children. The next day, Israeli forces issued demolition orders for six Palestinian Bedouin families in Qalqiliya governorate for structures in 'Arab Ramadin Janubi and 'Arab Abu Farda. A total of four families are affected. The order gave them 24-48 hours to evacuate the area. These demolition orders affected at least 25 Palestinians, including fifteen children.

Israeli Border Police shut down cultural event in East Jerusalem

Israeli security forces shut down a cultural event at the Palestinian National Theatre in East Jerusalem scheduled for 28 May, allegedly for being held under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority. The event, which was partly sponsored by UNESCO and the British Council, was to host international poets as part of the Palestine Festival of Literature and was to be held in honor of Jerusalem as the "Capital of Arab Culture" for 2009. No arrests were reported.

West Bank access: 'Atara and Tayba checkpoints no longer staffed

According to the Israeli DCL, as of 2 June, 'Atara and At Tayba checkpoints will no longer be staffed. Checkpoint infrastructure remains in place in both locations. Prior to this, At Tayba was only staffed part of the time.. These changes are expected to ease the flow of Palestinian traffic between the northern West Bank and Ramallah City and between Ramallah governorate and Jericho City.

An armed Israeli kills a Palestinian and injures an Israeli in Jerusalem

On 2 June, an armed Israeli settler shot dead a 32-year-old Palestinian in East Jerusalem and wounded one Israeli in a separate incident in West Jerusalem. Israeli Police arrested the assailant. According to the police, the assailant appeared to be mentally unbalanced and is being kept in custody.

Gaza Strip

Sporadic violence continued; no casualties reported

For the first time in almost a month, there were no casualties in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reported in Gaza this week. However, military activities in the Gaza Strip have not ceased, as Israeli forces continue to enforce access restrictions on Palestinian fishermen to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the coast. Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire on ten separate occasions targeting Palestinian fishing boats west of Rafah, Gaza City and Beit Lahia, forcing the boats to return to shore. On one occasion, Israeli naval forces arrested four Palestinian fishermen and confiscated two of their fishing boats.

Israeli forces opened warning fire in the direction of Palestinian farmers working in the vicinity of the border fence with Israel, forcing them to leave their agricultural lands. In one incident, five IDF tanks entered nearly 600 meters into Gaza, east of Jabalia. Last week, Israeli military forces announced the expansion of the so-called "buffer zone" along the Gaza-Israeli border by 150 meters (now 300 metres from the border), further restricting access of Palestinian farmers to their lands.

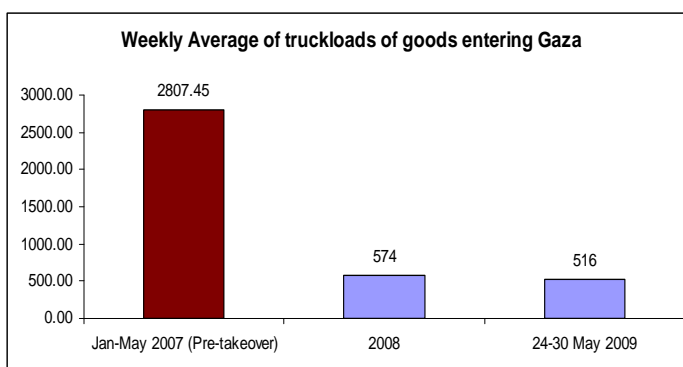
Palestinian armed factions fired several rounds of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells towards southern Israel and IDF troops stationed at the border. In addition, Palestinian factions set off explosives on four separate occasions near Israeli troops patrolling in border areas and Israeli patrol boats in the sea.

Other casualties

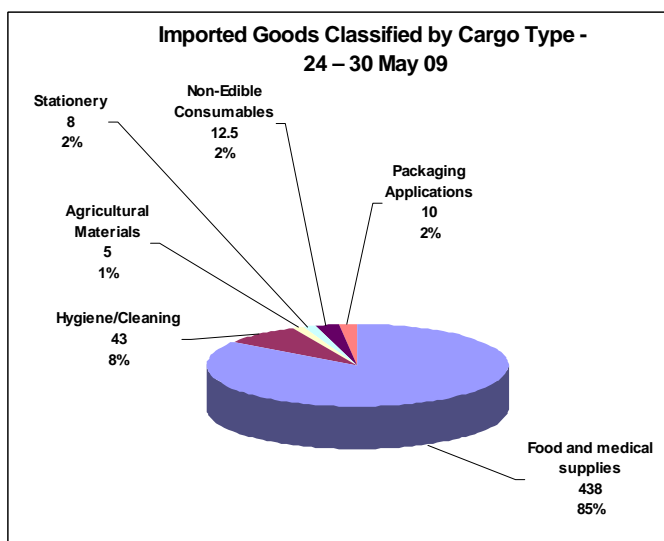
An alleged armed Palestinian militant was killed during a military training exercise in Jabalia, and a five-year-old boy was injured by a bullet accidentally discharged from a neighbour's pistol. In addition, a 16-year-old boy was killed when hit by a rock in a family feud in Beit Lahia.

Average of weekly imported truckloads remains below needs (24 – 30 May 09)

Restrictions imposed by Israel on imports and exports to and from the Gaza Strip continue to affect all aspects of life in Gaza. Only limited amounts of select items are allowed entry. This week, a total of 516 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, less than 19% of the weekly average of truckloads that entered Gaza during the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas take-over. Of these, 39 truckloads of medical supplies entered through the Rafah border crossing.



The entry of other major essential goods including construction materials for reconstruction, spare-parts for water and sanitation projects, and industrial and agricultural materials, remain either barred from entry or restricted to limited quantities.



Limitation on fuel imports continues (24 - 30 May 2009)

This week, 1,351 tonnes of cooking gas entered, approximately 77% of Gaza's weekly needs, and similar to amounts entered in previous weeks. The Gas Stations Owners Association reported that the ration on cooking gas was lifted in the last week of May 2009.

Only 70% (approx. 2.2 million litres of industrial gas) of the Gaza Power Plant's fuel requirement was allowed entry this week. With the Power Plant currently producing only 50-60MWs, there are daily power cuts of up to five hours per day.

According to the Israeli Coordination and Liaison Administration, Gaza's main fuel delivery route will be relocated from Nahal Oz to the Kerem Shalom Crossing in the coming weeks, and existing

fuel pipelines at Nahal Oz will eventually cease operation. The capacity and operating procedures of the Kerem Shalom system are still unclear.

A ban on the import of petrol and diesel from Israel for commercial use has been in effect since the 2 November 2008. Since that date, Israel has allowed only a limited amount of petrol and diesel for humanitarian use; most petrol and diesel in Gaza available on the open market for public use is transferred through the tunnels under the Rafah-Egyptian border.