



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

28 July - 10 August 2010

### West Bank

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#### Wave of Area C demolitions continues

During the two-week reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished or dismantled 43 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C on grounds of “lack of permit”, displacing 40 people and affecting at least 180 others.

More than half of these structures (22) were emergency tents recently distributed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Palestinian Authority in the community of Al Farisiye in the northern Jordan Valley, following the extensive demolitions carried out there two weeks ago (79 structures demolished). In addition to the ICRC tents, ten other structures consisting of residential tents, kitchens and toilets were also demolished in Al Farisiye. Overall, 22 people, including 11 children, have been displaced in this community during the reporting period, and 92 people have otherwise been affected. Israeli authorities have defined the area in which this community is located as closed for military training purposes (“firing zone”), and prevent Palestinian construction there. The same designation applies to some 18 percent of West Bank territory, most of it along the Jordan Valley.

The remaining 11 structures demolished during this reporting period were all located in different Area C sites and include two residential tents, an animal shelter, one blacksmith workshop, three water wells, two farm sheds, one fruit stall, and one supporting wall.

At least 41 structures in different Area C localities were also issued stop-work orders - the step taken by the Israeli military prior to the issuance of final demolition orders. Six structures in the areas of ‘Ein al Hilwa (Tubas governorate) and Hebron City, were served with evacuation orders on grounds that they were closed for military purposes. Fifteen farmers working on a plot of agricultural land near the village of Iskaka (Salfit governorate), were also served evacuation orders on grounds that it was “State Land”.

Since the beginning of 2010, Israeli authorities have demolished 242 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, (more than half of which were demolished in July) displacing 282 people. In comparison, 182 structures were demolished and 319 persons displaced in the equivalent period in 2009. According to official Israeli figures, there are more than 3,000 outstanding demolition orders throughout Area C. Currently, it is nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain building permits to maintain, repair or construct homes, animal shelters or infrastructure necessary for sustaining shelter and livelihood in Area C.

#### Six Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

During the two-week reporting period, Israeli forces injured six Palestinians, compared with 23 Palestinians wounded in the previous two weeks. Another three Israeli military force members were injured.

Four Palestinians sustained injuries in two separate weekly demonstrations against the construction of the Barrier in Bil'in village (Ramallah governorate); an Israeli activist and a foreign national were also wounded in these protests. Other demonstrations against Barrier construction took place in Ni'lin village (Ramallah governorate) and Beit Jala (Bethlehem governorate). Cases of tear gas inhalation were reported. Two Israeli soldiers and a foreign national were also injured in weekly protests against the expansion of Hallamish settlement in the Ramallah area.

The remaining two Palestinian injuries, including a boy (aged 17), occurred at checkpoints in two separate incidents in Ramallah and Qalqiliya governorates. In another incident at the main checkpoint controlling Palestinian access into East Jerusalem from the north (Qalandiya), an Israeli private security guard was shot and injured by an unknown assailant.

Israeli forces conducted an average of 94 search and arrest operations inside Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps, during the reporting period. The weekly average of such operations since the beginning of 2010 stands at 98.

### **East Jerusalem: settlers take over another Palestinian building in the Old City**

On 29 July, a group of Israeli settlers, accompanied by the Israeli police, took over a Palestinian residential building located in the Muslim quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The building consists of nine housing units, which are residences for nine Palestinian families comprising 36 people. The settlers managed to take over eight of the nine units, with one of the families present in its home during the incident. Eight families (29 people) have subsequently been displaced, and to date have not been able to access their residences and personal belongings. Preliminary information indicates that the settlers occupying the building claim that they bought it from the Palestinian owner, while the Palestinian residents claim that they are protected tenants. An Israeli court is currently looking into the case.

A year ago, two Palestinian families were similarly evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem. During the reporting period, dozens of Palestinians, together with Israeli and international activists, organized a demonstration, marking the first anniversary of this eviction.

### **Other Israeli settler violence**

In addition to the abovementioned eviction in East Jerusalem, OCHA documented six other incidents involving Israeli settlers that resulted in either Palestinian injuries or damage to Palestinian property. A total of 168 such incidents have taken place in 2010, compared to 92 incidents reported in the same period last year. A number of incidents involving prevention of access and trespassing by Israeli settlers were also reported during the reporting period.

Overall four Palestinians were injured by Israeli settlers during this period. Three of them, including a three year-old child, were physically assaulted and injured by Israeli settlers after their car crashed into another vehicle carrying settlers in Nablus governorate. The Palestinians and one settler had already sustained injuries in the accident. In another incident, Israeli settlers from Kharsina settlement physically assaulted and wounded an elderly Palestinian woman, along with two foreign nationals, while the woman attempted to access grazing land near the settlement.

The remaining four incidents resulted in property damage. The gravest of these incidents involved the setting fire to around 3,500 dunums of land planted with olive, almond and fig trees in the villages of Beit Furik and Burin (Nablus governorate) and the demolition of a house under construction.

In addition, settlers from Susiya settlement clashed with Palestinians from the nearby Khirbet Susiya village (Hebron) while attempting to access grazing areas near the settlement; no injuries were reported.

### **Water supply reduced in four Nablus villages**

Sources at four Palestinian villages in the Nablus governorate, (Rujeib, Deir al Hatab, Salem and 'Azmout), reported that the Israeli Water Company "Mekorot" recently reduced the supply of water to these villages by almost half. Mekorot is the only source providing water to these villages. Over 14,100 people reside in the four villages affected.

## **Gaza Strip**

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### **Incidents near the Gaza fence as well as air strikes continue**

During the reporting period, Israeli forces killed two Palestinians and injured 29 others in incidents involving air strikes and enforcement of access restrictions near the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In 2010, 40 Palestinians (including 14 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 176 Palestinians (including 152 civilians) and five Israeli soldiers have been injured.

In total, two Palestinians were killed and another 23 were injured as a result of Israeli air strikes launched in response to the firing of a rocket by a Palestinian faction that hit a residential neighborhood in the city of Ashkelon in southern Israel. The latter resulted in no casualties, but some damage was reported. The two Palestinian fatalities were members of armed groups killed in two separate air strikes next to An Nuseirat refugee camp and east of Khan Yunis. Another air strike that targeted the former Palestinian Authority presidential compound on the outskirts of Gaza City resulted in the injury of 16 Palestinian civilians and five local policemen, while damaging 30 buildings, including houses and institutions.

The remaining six Palestinians were injured in five different incidents near the perimeter fence, when Israeli forces opened fire towards Palestinians collecting rubble and scrap metal. On a number of different occasions, Israeli forces penetrated a few hundred meters within the Gaza Strip and withdrew shortly after conducting land-leveling operations. Such incidents occur in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas up to 1,000-1,500 meters from the fence. Similar restrictions apply on access to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from shore. In two separate incidents, Israeli naval forces opened fire targeting Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore.

In addition to the rocket strike in Ashkelon, Palestinian armed factions continued firing a number of rudimentary rockets towards southern Israel, including at military bases located on the border. No injuries or damage were reported. In two separate incidents, five members of armed factions were wounded while attempting to fire mortar shells towards Israel, which exploded prematurely.

## 58 Palestinians injured in an explosion

In one incident on 2 August, 58 Palestinians, including 13 children and nine women, sustained wounds as a result of an explosion that took place inside a house of an alleged Palestinian militant in Deir El Balah. The explosion caused severe damage to several houses in the vicinity. The circumstances of the incident remain unclear.

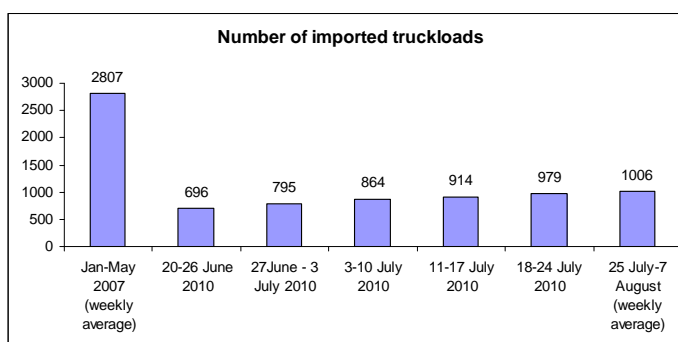
In another incident, four people, including a 14 year-old child, were injured when a hand grenade was mishandled by a child, detonating inside a house.

## Gaza crossings: the impact of easings remains limited

Despite the increase in imports into the Gaza Strip witnessed in recent weeks, ongoing restrictions on the entry of construction materials, as well as on exports, continued to impede the reconstruction of homes and the upgrade of infrastructures, while limiting the scope of economic reactivation.

In the two-week reporting period, a weekly average of 1,006 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, 18 percent higher than the average number of truckloads that entered since Israel announced its ease on imports on 20 June (850). The weekly number of truckloads allowed in, however, represented only 36 percent of the weekly average of truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007, prior to the imposition of the blockade.

The increase in the volume of imports during the reporting period, occurred after the Israeli authorities expanded the Kerem Shalom crossing, allowing for the number of truckloads that enter the crossing daily to increase from 100 to 250. As occurred since the imposition of the blockade, the majority of imported goods consisted of food items (54 percent). While some raw materials and machinery used for local production also entered, due the ban on exports and the low purchasing power of the Gazan population, local production remains limited.



## Industrial fuel shortages and electricity crisis continue

During the two-week period, a weekly average of 0.9 million litres of industrial fuel was supplied to Gaza to operate the Gaza power plant, constituting 28 percent of the quantity needed to operate at full capacity. The power deficit is now at around 40 percent as a result of increased demand for electricity (280-300 megawatts (MW)) due to high summer temperatures and low power supply. Total provision of electricity in Gaza now stands at 167 MW, including 30 MW provided by the power plant and another 120 MW and 17 MW purchased from Israel and Egypt, respectively. This situation continues to trigger power outages of between 8 and 12 hours per day throughout the Gaza Strip. The operation of the Gaza plant has significantly declined since December 2009 due to the shortage of imported industrial fuel, stemming from an ongoing funding crisis. On 7 August, the plant was forced to shut down completely for two days after exhausting its reserves of fuel, triggering power cuts of 16 hours per day.

Power cuts affect daily life in the Gaza Strip, as well as the provision of essential services, including

water supply, sewage treatment and removal, and the functioning of health services, thus affecting medical treatment. Public institutions providing these services continue to rely extensively on backup generators and other alternative devices, which are extremely vulnerable due to the inconsistent supply of spare parts.

In the peak of the hot summer season, Gaza households' access to running water is severely limited due to the power shortages. According to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 30 percent of households in Gaza now have access to running water for only four to eight hours per week, 40 percent receive water once every four days; and the other 30 percent obtain it once every two days. The quality of the running water is poor – inadequate both in quality and quantity - forcing the population to rely on expensive tankered water for drinking.