



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

11 - 17 August 2010

West Bank

Ten Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

During the reporting period, Israeli forces injured ten Palestinians, including two children. Half of the injuries took place during demonstrations. Three Israeli border policemen were also injured. Eight Palestinians and two members of Israeli forces have been killed and 787 Palestinians and 106 Israeli soldiers and policemen have been injured so far this year in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the West Bank.

Five Palestinians, including two children (14 and 17), sustained injuries in two separate weekly demonstrations against the construction of the Barrier in the villages of Ni'lin (Ramallah governorate) and Al Walaja (Bethlehem governorate). An Israeli activist was also wounded in another protest against Barrier construction in Bil'in village (Ramallah governorate). As in previous weeks, a demonstration was held against the permanent closure of the main commercial street in the Old City of Hebron for Palestinian vehicles. While the demonstration ended without injuries, Israeli forces sealed three commercial shops on the street.

Confrontations erupted between Palestinian residents of the town of Abu Dis (Jerusalem governorate) and Israeli forces, during an arrest of a number of Palestinians in the town. Three Palestinians and three Israeli policemen were injured. Two other Palestinians were wounded in the Qalqiliya area, with one shot and injured after allegedly refusing to stop at a flying checkpoint set up by the Israeli army, and the second physically assaulted near Kafr Laqif village.

Israeli forces conducted 50 search and arrest operations inside Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps - almost half the weekly average of such operations since the beginning of 2010 (98).

Israeli settler violence

OCHA documented five incidents involving Israeli settlers that resulted in either Palestinian injuries or damage to Palestinian property. A total of 172 such incidents have taken place in 2010, compared to 98 incidents reported in the same period last year. A number of incidents involving prevention of access, harassment and intimidation by Israeli settlers were also reported.

One of this week's incidents resulted in the injury of a ten year-old Palestinian girl after she was physically assaulted by Israeli settlers while standing in front of her house in the Tel Rumeida area of Hebron City. In a separate incident in the same area, Israeli settlers set fire to five dunums of land, burning around 340 grape vines and olive trees. Settlers were involved in two stone throwing incidents that damaged property; one featured settlers from Kiryat Arba' settlement (Hebron governorate) targeting nearby Palestinian houses, damaging a number of them; the second involved rocks thrown at Palestinian-plated vehicles in the

Qalqiliya area, damaging one vehicle. Residents of the community of Khirbet at Tawamin (Hebron) also reported observing Israeli settlers pouring a liquid in one of the community's water cisterns; the nature of the liquid is yet to be investigated.

Also this week, in two separate incidents in the northern West Bank, Israeli settlers entered the village of Kifl Haris (Salfit governorate) to visit a religious shrine, during which they threw human excrement at the entrance of the village mosque; 15 dunums of land near the village of Huwwara (Nablus governorate), were also taken over by settlers, despite its classification as "State Land" under Jordanian law.

No demolitions by Israeli authorities in Area C; issuance of eviction and demolition orders continues

This week, there were no records of demolitions by Israeli authorities in Area C of the West Bank. Israeli authorities have informed OCHA that no demolitions will be carried out during the month of Ramadan. Four Palestinian families (comprising 28 people) were however forced to dismantle or demolish eight structures in the Al Farisiye community in the Jordan Valley, after receiving Israeli-issued eviction orders stating they must leave the area within 24 hours. The structures included five tents, two kitchens and a restroom. Similar orders were issued against six tents in the same community, which affected another five families (27 people, including 12 children). By the end of the reporting period, no evictions had taken place. Eviction orders were issued on grounds that the structures are located in an area defined by Israeli authorities as closed for military purposes. In the three weeks prior to the reporting period, the community has witnessed extensive demolitions targeting 116 structures, resulting in the displacement of 129 people.

Also in Area C, 18 demolition orders were issued against Palestinian buildings in the village of Kufr 'Aqab, on the grounds that they lacked permits. Among the buildings were the premises of the local council and houses. Kufr 'Aqab is located partially in Area C and within the Israeli-declared municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. According to the village council, over 50 demolition orders have been issued in the village since late 2009. The last demolition to take place there was in 2005.

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.

Age restrictions limit Palestinian access to Ramadan Friday prayers in East Jerusalem

Access to East Jerusalem for Palestinians holding West Bank IDs on the first Friday of Ramadan (13 August) was reported as more orderly than in previous years. According to Israeli authorities, approximately 54,000 Palestinians entered Jerusalem through four authorized checkpoints (Qalandiya, Gilo, Shu'fat Camp and Az Zeitoun) along the Barrier. Similar to previous years, only men over 50 and women over 45 years of age were allowed to pass without permits to access the Al Aqsa Mosque for Friday prayers. Men between the ages of 45 and 50, and women between 30 and 45 were eligible for special permits. These age restrictions deny access to Friday prayers for the majority of the Palestinian population, including West Bankers not included in these age groups (or denied a permit), as well as the large majority of the population of the Gaza Strip. Israeli Security Forces and flying checkpoints were also deployed around the Old City for the duration of Friday prayers. The Directorate of Jerusalem Waqf indicated that around 100,000 people were able to access the Al Aqsa mosque compound in the Old City.

Limited access easings implemented

On the occasion of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Israeli authorities opened three routes in the Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron governorates. In the Nablus area, an earth mound was removed near Sarra village and replaced by a partial checkpoint (staffed sporadically). The earth mound obstructed the movement of people and goods, between Nablus and Qalqiliya governorates. A long detour of 17 km between the two governorates has now been reduced by more than half.

In the Ramallah area, the Israeli army removed four obstacles (a roadblock and three earth mounds) along roads leading to the old route of Road 60, next to Bet El settlement and military base. As a result, a 1.5 km-segment of road was opened to Palestinian vehicular access. The impact of this opening is limited, as access to the main segment of this road along the village of 'Ein Siniya remains blocked.

In the Hebron area, the Israeli army opened the southern entrance of the village of Sa'ir leading to Road 60, which has been closed since 2001. The significance of this opening is also limited as the adjacent route leading to Hebron City remains closed, obliging residents to make a six-kilometre detour.

The IDF spokesman has also announced that the operational hours of some checkpoints along the Barrier in the Jenin, Ramallah and Bethlehem governorates will be extended; An additional 200 'visitor permits' to the West Bank will also be issued to nationals of select Arab countries.

Gaza Strip

Incidents near Gaza's fence continue; one Palestinian killed and another injured

During the reporting period, Israeli forces killed one Palestinian and injured one other in two separate incidents near the perimeter fence around the Gaza Strip. Three Israeli soldiers were also injured. In 2010, 41 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 177 Palestinians (including 153 civilians) and eight Israeli soldiers have been injured.

During an armed clash between Israeli forces and armed Palestinians near the fence, east of Khan Yunis, an armed Palestinian was killed and an Israeli soldier was injured. In a separate incident, a Palestinian civilian was injured when Israeli forces opened fire on a group of Palestinian civilians collecting rubble and scrap metal near the fence. In another two fence-related incidents, Israeli forces opened warning fire towards farmers working land, forcing them to leave the area. On a number of different occasions, Israeli forces launched incursions a few hundred metres into the Gaza Strip and withdrew after leveling land. Such incidents occur in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas up to 1,000-1,500 meters from the fence.

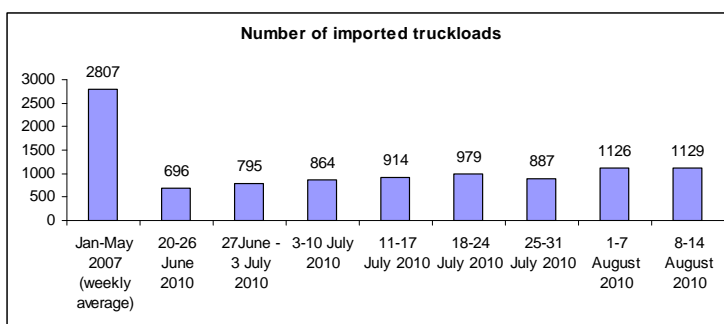
Palestinian armed factions launched a number of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells towards southern Israel, including at military bases located along the border. In one incident, two Israeli soldiers were injured when a mortar shell hit an area in southern Israel. In response, the Israeli Air Force launched air strikes inside the Gaza Strip targeting a military base in Khan Yunis, tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border, and an open area in Gaza's mid-section. No injuries or damage were reported.

Gaza crossings: the impact of easings remains limited

Despite the increase of imports into the Gaza Strip in recent weeks, ongoing restrictions on the entry of construction materials, as well as on exports, continued to impede major reconstruction and development in Gaza.

During the reporting period, 1,129 truckloads of goods entered the Gaza Strip, representing 40 percent of the weekly average of truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007, prior to the imposition of the blockade. The number of truckloads allowed into Gaza this week represents a 26 percent increase compared to the average number of truckloads that entered since Israel announced its ease on imports on 20 June (894). The majority of goods entering were food items (61 percent).

The increase in the volume of imports during the reporting period occurred after Israeli authorities expanded the Kerem Shalom crossing, allowing for the number of truckloads that enter the crossing daily to increase from 100 to 250. While some raw materials and machinery used for local production also entered, local production remains limited due the ban on exports and the low purchasing power of the population.



Fuel shortages; casualties in electricity-related incidents continue

This reporting period witnessed an increase in the amount of industrial fuel entering the Gaza Strip for the operation of the Gaza power plant when compared with last week (1.12 vs. 0.081 million litres). Despite this increase, this week's fuel quantities constituted only 36 percent of the quantity needed to operate the plant at full capacity. As a result, the majority of the population in the Gaza Strip continues to experience power cuts of between 8 and 12 hours per day.

Power cuts affect daily life throughout the Gaza Strip, including 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 summer, access to running water for Gaza Strip households' is severely limited due to power shortages. According to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 30 percent of households in the Gaza Strip now have access to running water for only four to eight hours per week; 40 percent receive water once every four days; and 30 percent obtain water once every two days. The quality of water is also poor, forcing the population to rely on expensive tankered water for drinking.

Due to the protracted electricity crisis, the population of the Gaza Strip is forced to rely on portable generators for household use, resulting in generator-related accidents. In one accident, one woman was killed and two members of her family were injured. Local sources indicate that more than 30 people have died and around 40 others have been injured in similar accidents in 2010.