



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

22 - 28 September 2010

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

- 29 September: Israeli forces raided several houses in the Bedouin community of Al Hadidiya in the northern Jordan Valley (Area C) and detained four Palestinians. The arrests were carried out following allegations from the nearby Israeli settlement of Roi that Al Hadidiya residents were stealing water from the settlement. It should be noted that a project to construct a water filling point in Al Hadidiya was rejected by the Israeli authorities, leaving the community seriously affected by drought.

West Bank

Clashes broke out in East Jerusalem; two Palestinians killed and dozens injured

During the week, two Palestinians were killed, including a 14 month-old child from tear gas inhalation, and another 110 Palestinians were injured, including 22 children. The two deaths and the majority of the injuries took place in East Jerusalem. To date in 2010, 11 Palestinians and two members of Israeli forces have been killed in the context of violent incidents involving Israeli forces in the West Bank, compared to 17 and three fatalities, respectively, during the same period in 2009. In addition, 931 Palestinians and 114 Israeli soldiers and policemen have been injured since the beginning of the year, compared to 673 and 44 in the same period in 2009.

On 22 September, clashes erupted in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem between Palestinian residents and Israeli private security guards hired by the Israeli Ministry of Housing to protect Israeli settlers and settlements in the area. During the confrontations, an Israeli guard opened fire on the Palestinians, killing a 32 year-old man. Two days later (24 September), a 14 month-old Palestinian child died as a result of tear gas inhalation in Al 'Isawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem after clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces extended to other parts of Jerusalem (including Al 'Isawiya, Ras Al Amud, At Tur and inside Al Aqsa Mosque compound). In the confrontations, which took place over a four-day period (22-26 September), Palestinian medical sources reported that 99 Palestinians, including 17 children and a pregnant woman, sustained injuries inflicted by rubber-coated metal bullets, physical assault and tear gas inhalation. In addition, two Israelis, including a policeman and a settler, were wounded, eight Israeli vehicles were either burnt or damaged, and an Israeli tourist center in Silwan sustained minor damage by Palestinians. During these clashes, Israeli forces raided several areas inside East Jerusalem, arresting over 70 Palestinians, and erected flying checkpoints and roadblocks throughout the city.

Tension in Silwan is already high, stemming mainly from an existing Israeli plan to build a recreation park on the archeological site in the Al Bustan area, a plan that entails the demolition of dozens of Palestinian homes. There is almost daily friction between Palestinian residents and Israeli settlers in the area. The situation throughout the city of Jerusalem remains tense, as of the end of the reporting period.

Israeli forces injured 11 other Palestinians, including five children (aged between one a half and 17) throughout the West Bank. Eight Palestinians and two international activists were injured in weekly demonstrations against the construction of the Barrier in the villages of Ni'lin and Bil'in and the expansion of the Hallamish settlement in the Ramallah governorate, and against the denial of Palestinian access to agricultural land near Karmeit Zur settlement in the Hebron governorate. In another weekly protest against settler violence in the village of 'Iraq Burin (Nablus governorate), Israeli forces fired tear gas canisters at the protestors. Several cases of tear gas inhalation were reported. Other demonstrations that take place on a weekly basis, including those against the Barrier construction in Al Walaja and Al Ma'sara (Bethlehem governorate) and against the permanent closure of a commercial street in the Old City of Hebron, were peaceful.

Around 200 Palestinians and international and Israeli activists organized a social event in An Nabi Saleh village (Ramallah governorate) on International Peace Day on 25 September. Israeli forces erected flying checkpoints, closing all entrances to the village, thus preventing vehicular access to people wishing to participate in the event. Confrontations erupted between the participants and Israeli forces after the latter attempted to deny access to 30 university students. Five Israeli and international activists were detained during the clashes and were later released.

Overall this week, Israeli forces conducted 62 search and arrest operations throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In one incident, Israeli forces raided a school in the Old City of Jerusalem after alleged stone-throwing, but were prevented from entering classrooms by the school principal. Israeli forces arrested one of the students leaving the school and released him on the condition that he remains under house arrest for ten days. In a similar event, Israeli forces raided another school in the Old City of Hebron, and arrested two students and a teacher. The three individuals were later released.

Incidents in context of settler violence

In addition to the settler injury reported above, two Israeli settlers, one of whom was a pregnant woman, sustained injuries in a shooting incident while driving near Adh Dhahiriya village (Hebron governorate) this week. The assailants remain unknown.

OCHA documented five incidents involving Israeli settlers that resulted in damage to Palestinian property. Overall, a total of 204 incidents resulting in Palestinian injuries or property damage have taken place in 2010, compared to 111 incidents reported in the same period last year. A number of other incidents carried out by the settlers were reported, mainly affecting Palestinian access.

Separate reports from the villages of 'Awarta (Nablus governorate) and Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya governorate) indicate that settlers from the nearby settlements of Itamar and Qadumim stole from the villagers' olive trees. In the Kafr Qaddum incident, clashes erupted between the settlers and the Palestinian villagers, after which Israeli forces intervened and removed the settlers. In two other incidents, settlers from Maskiyot settlement stole three cows belonging to Palestinians from the nearby Al Malih area (Jordan Valley) and the settlers killed one of the cows. Another incident resulted in minor damage to a Palestinian-plated vehicle when settlers threw stones at Palestinian cars driving near Efrata settlement (Bethlehem governorate). Palestinians threw stones and a Molotov cocktail at settler vehicles driving on West Bank roads in the Hebron area in two separate incidents, resulting in minor damage to one car.

Also this week, settlers from Shvut Rachel settlement raided several Palestinian houses in the nearby village of Qaryut (Nablus governorate), intimidating the residents. No injuries or damage to property were reported.

Of concern this week, the Israeli Supreme Court rejected an appeal by two Palestinians, who had contested a previous decision by a Magistrate Court establishing the ownership of Israeli settler organizations over a section of the Palestinian neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah East Jerusalem (area known as Kubaniyat Im Haroun). Four families (estimated population 30) are believed to be at risk of eviction given that their lease agreements expire in the coming days. About 200 Palestinians live in the Im Haroun area. Three Palestinian families (over 60 people) were evicted from their homes by settlers in recent years in a different part of the neighbourhood.

Also during the week, the ten-month moratorium on settlement construction activities in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) came to an end. The Israeli media reported that construction works on hundreds of settlement housing units and public structures have already begun.

General closure imposed for nine days

The Israeli authorities imposed a nine-day closure on the West Bank on 22 September until 30 September on the occasion of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. All Palestinians holding West Bank IDs, including those with valid permits except staff of international organizations, medical staff and teachers, were prevented from entering Israel and East Jerusalem during these days.

Gaza Strip

Five fatalities and three injuries; restrictions on access to land and sea continue

During the reporting period, Israeli forces killed four Palestinians, including three members of armed groups and one fisherman, and injured three others. Another armed Palestinian died of wounds he sustained in Jorh al Dik area, east Gaza City, in mid-September. In 2010, 52 Palestinians (including 21 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 194 Palestinians (including 169 civilians) and eight Israeli soldiers have been injured.

In one incident (27 September), Israeli Air Forces killed three armed Palestinians near the fence dividing the Gaza Strip and Israel east of Al Bureij Refugee Camp. The incident occurred after Israeli forces positioned at the fence reportedly spotted the Palestinians firing mortar shells. In a separate air strike inside An Nuseirat Refugee Camp (central Gaza), several houses sustained minor damage. No injuries were reported.

In an earlier incident (24 September), Israeli naval forces opened fire at Palestinian boats fishing off the Beit Lahiya coast, killing one fisherman. According to Al Mezan Human Rights Centre, the boats were fishing within two nautical miles of the shore. Israeli forces have continued to enforce restrictions on fishing areas beyond three nautical miles of the shore by firing 'warning' shots at boats approaching or present in these areas. To date in 2010, three fishermen have been killed and five others have been injured in similar incidents.

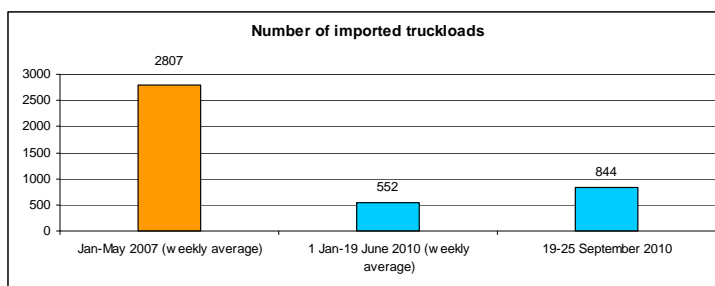
Similar access restrictions continue to be applied to areas located up to 1,500 meters from the fence, which constitute 17 percent of Gaza's territory. In two separate incidents, Israeli forces opened 'warning' fire at people collecting scrap metal near the fence in the Beit Lahiya area, injuring two individuals. In a separate incident, Israeli forces critically injured one Palestinian protestor when they opened fire at a weekly demonstration organized by the Popular Committee Against Restricted Areas on 26 September near the fence.

Palestinian armed factions launched a number of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells at southern Israel, including at military bases located along the border. No Israeli injuries or damage were reported.

Gaza crossings: the impact of recently-applied easings remains limited

The recent increase in the volume of imports (since 20 June 2010) continues to have limited impact on the functioning of the economy in Gaza. The economy has retracted hugely since the beginning of the blockade in 2007. Despite small signs of recovery in the private sector, sustainable growth is not expected due to the ongoing ban on exports and the difficulty in importing machinery, raw materials, and equipment.

During the reporting period (19-25 September), Gaza imports increased slightly compared to the previous week (844 vs. 775 truckloads). This week's total number of truckloads represented only 30 percent of the weekly average of truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007 (2,807), before the imposition of the blockade, but was 53 percent higher than the weekly number of truckloads that entered in 2010 prior to the easings. UNRWA has succeeded in importing a limited quantity of construction materials for their building project, but the pace remains slow. This week, 26 truckloads of cement were allowed into Gaza for a number of UN projects approved by the Israeli authorities. However, implementation of these projects cannot commence until other building materials, including steel and gravel, are allowed in.



Electricity generation back to its previous levels; power cuts up to 12 hours per day

During the reporting period (19-25 September), there was a slight increase in the amount of fuel needed to operate the Gaza Power Plant compared to the previous week (2.03 vs. 1.98 million litres), reducing daily power cuts to 4-6 hours throughout the Gaza Strip. However, since 25 September, the plant has been forced to operate only one turbine due to fuel shortages, thus reducing electricity production by half (from 60 to 30 MW). Fuel shortfalls mainly took place as a result of financial constraints and the limited capacity of the fuel pipelines at the Kerem Shalom Crossing. This development has doubled power outages throughout Gaza to 8-12 hours per day, at levels that were common prior to late August 2010. The total provision of electricity throughout the Gaza Strip now stands at about 40 percent below the estimated demand.

Power cuts continue to 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, thereby affecting medical treatment.