



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

15 - 21 December 2010

West Bank

Ten Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

During the week, Israeli forces injured ten Palestinians, while two Israeli soldiers were injured by Palestinians. Since the beginning of 2010, Israeli forces have injured 1,107 Palestinians in the West Bank, compared to 786 during the equivalent period in 2009. During the same time, 124 members of Israeli forces were injured by Palestinians in the West Bank, compared to 69 in the same period of 2009.

Five of the Palestinian injuries occurred during a weekly demonstration against the expansion of the Hallamish settlement on the land of An Nabi Salih village in the Ramallah area. Other weekly protests, involving no injuries, took place against the construction of the Barrier in the villages of Bil'in and Ni'lin (Ramallah governorate) and Al Ma'sara in the Bethlehem area and against restrictions on access to land in Beit Ummar village (Hebron Governorate). Around 30 percent of 2010's injuries (333) occurred during weekly protests, compared to 40 percent in 2009.

Another two Palestinians were injured in clashes that took place between Israeli forces and Palestinians near the Barrier in Biddu village (Jerusalem governorate) and during the demolition of a house in An Nu'man village (Bethlehem governorate). One boy, aged 14, was injured by Israeli soldiers who reportedly sprayed pepper gas in his face when he refused to show his birth certificate and disembark a bus at a checkpoint into Al 'Isawiyya village in East Jerusalem.

This week, Israeli forces conducted around 90 search and arrest operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), which is close to the weekly average in 2010. On one occasion, in Wadi Fukin village (Bethlehem governorate), Israeli forces physically assaulted and injured two Palestinians. Two Israeli soldiers were injured as a result of stone-throwing by Palestinians in the Hebron and the Jenin areas.

Demolitions continue: 16 structures demolished in Area C and East Jerusalem

During the week, Israeli authorities demolished 16 Palestinian-owned structures in East Jerusalem and Area C, leading the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, Maxwell Gaylard, to issue a statement calling on the Government of Israel to immediately cease demolitions. The statement also highlights the severe social and economic impact that demolitions have on the lives and welfare of Palestinians, increasing their dependence on humanitarian assistance.

In East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities demolished four homes in the communities of An Nu'man, Ath Thuri, Sur Baher and Ras Al Amud, owing to lack of Israeli-issued building permits. 30 people, including 13 children, were displaced as a result. In 2010, 62 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem (compared to 80 in the same period in 2009) displacing 92 people and otherwise affecting over 260.

In Area C of the West Bank, Israeli authorities demolished 12 structures due to the lack of an Israeli-issued permit. This included eight residential tents and animal shelters close to Za'tara (Bethlehem governorate),

forcibly displacing 24 people; and four storage rooms in the community of Al Baq'a in the Hebron area. In 2010, 353 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C, up from 186 in the equivalent period in 2009. As a result, 478 people have been displaced and over 2,254 have been otherwise affected.

Also in Area C, the Israeli authorities issued eviction orders against 12 residential tents and 15 animal shelters, in the village of Khirbet Tana (Nablus governorate), claiming that the community is located in a closed military area. The orders affect some 100 people. This village suffered an extensive demolition last week, during which 29 structures were demolished. Stop-work and demolition orders were also issued against four houses, two animal barracks and an electric pylon in the villages of Dura al Qara', 'Ein 'Arik (Ramallah governorate), Al Farisiya Bedouin community (Tubas governorate) and Khirbet Tell Al Khashabeh village (Nablus governorate) respectively.

Also, Israeli forces seized a tractor and a digger and detained three Palestinians for a couple of hours near the village of Khirbet Ar Ras Al Ahmar (Tubas governorate), in the vicinity of Ro'i settlement, in an area declared by the Israeli army as closed military zone.

Settler violence

During the reporting period, OCHA documented five settler-related incidents resulting in injury to Palestinians or damage to their property. This compares to the average of six incidents per week for 2010. In 2010 so far, one child has been killed and 107 Palestinians have been injured owing to attacks by Israeli settlers.

In one incident, two Palestinians from Kafr Ra'i village (Jenin governorate) were physically assaulted, injured and held captive for 3 hours by Israeli settlers from the settlement of Mevo Dotan. In another incident, a Palestinian man was injured by a dog belonging to Israeli settlers that have taken over one of the Palestinian houses in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem.

In an incident resulting in property damage, Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian shepherd and killed two of his sheep near Qusra village. Another shepherd was forced to abandon a field near Khirbet Tel Al Khashabeh (Nablus governorate) by settlers, who then set fire to the field, killing 12 sheep and injuring four others. This incident is being investigated by the Israeli police.

Also this week, a Jewish religious shrine located next to the Kafal Haris village (Salfit governorate) was vandalized, reportedly by Palestinians. The following day, according to the Kafal Haris' council, Israeli settlers entered the village and vandalized five Palestinian tombs and damaged five vehicles. In the same area, settlers from the settlement of Barqan reported, according to the Israeli media, that Palestinians from the nearby village of Brukin had uprooted some 150 trees used by the settlement.

The village council of Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya governorate) reported that Israeli forces erected a fence cutting off access to around 1,200 dunums of agricultural land belonging to the village, located adjacent to the Israeli settlement of Qedumim. As a result, farmers may be required to perform "prior coordination" in order to access their land. This procedure has already been imposed on Palestinian access to agricultural land located in the vicinity of some 60 settlements, due to either physical barriers installed around the land or settler intimidation.

In two separate incidents, Palestinians threw stones at and caused damage to two Israeli-plated vehicles driving on West Bank roads in the Bethlehem and Hebron areas.

Gaza Strip

Five Palestinians killed in an air strike; one Israeli injured by a rocket fire

This week, five armed Palestinians were killed as result of an Israeli air strike and another ten Palestinians, including four civilians, were injured. One Israeli girl was injured following rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups. In 2010, 67 Palestinians (including at least 22 civilians), three Israeli soldiers and one foreign national have been killed and 274 Palestinians (including 240 civilians) and 11 Israelis (including ten soldiers and one civilian) have been injured in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip. The majority of Palestinian deaths and injuries (over 65 percent) took place near the fence.

On 18 December, the Israeli Air Force targeted and killed five members of a Palestinian armed group near the fence in the Deir El Balah area. According to Israeli sources, the men were attempting to fire a rocket at southern Israel. Another six armed men were injured the same day in the course of two airstrikes targeting military bases in the Rafah and Khan Younis areas. Sites targeted during the wave of air strikes included a dairy factory in the Khan Younis area, which was totally destroyed, other military bases, open fields and tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

During the week, Palestinian armed factions increased the frequency of mortar and rocket firing at Israeli forces patrolling along the fence, as well as at Israeli communities and towns. One of the rockets hit Ashkelon City injuring a 14 year-old Israeli girl and damaging a number of buildings.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas up to 1,500 metres (17 percent of Gaza Strip's territory) from the fence continue. In three separate incidents, three Palestinian workers collecting scrap metal and a shepherd were injured by Israeli fire. Also, in one incident, Israeli forces bulldozers and tanks entered a few hundred meters into the Gaza Strip and withdrew after conducting land leveling operations.

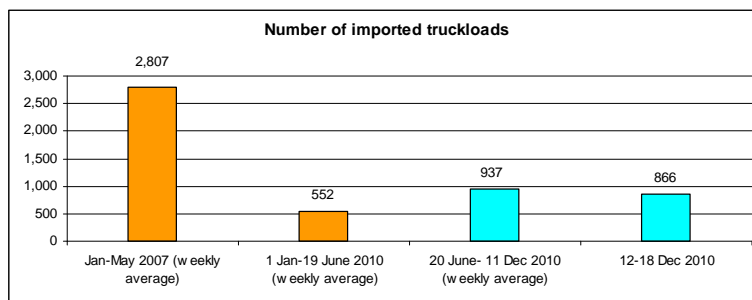
Limited exports continue; wheat reserves remain low

During the reporting period (12-18 December), a total of 866 truckloads entered the Gaza Strip, a decline compared to a weekly average of 937 truckloads entering since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010. This week's figure represents less than one-third of the weekly average of imports recorded before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Food items made up half of the imports, compared to less than 20 percent of total imports prior to the blockade.

A few truckloads of strawberries and cut flowers were allowed to leave the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of the season on 28 November, a total of 44 truckloads of strawberries (74.6 tonnes) and cut flowers (471,000 stems) were allowed to leave Gaza. Despite the announcement by the Government of Israel (on 8 December) that more exports of agricultural products, furniture and textiles would be allowed, as of the end of the reporting period, no increase in exports has been reported. Since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, only 304 truckloads of exports (strawberries and cut flowers) have left Gaza. This compares to a monthly average of 1,086 exported truckloads from Gaza in the first five months of 2007.

Wheat reserves inside Gaza remain low owing to limited operation of the conveyor belt at Karni Crossing. Wheat reserves began declining following the resumption of imports of gravel for international projects through the same conveyor belt in October 2010, thus reducing the time

allocated for wheat transfer. As of 21 December, there were some 3,560 tonnes of grain available at seven mills in the Gaza Strip and 417 tonnes of wheat flour available on the local market. These quantities should cover the population's needs for around six days.



Daily power cuts up to 6 hours; cooking gas shortages continue

This week, only 0.91 million litres of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) entered Gaza, the lowest amount recorded since the first week of August. Despite insufficient fuel supplies, the GPP was able to run the two turbines, of which one operates on car diesel (available through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border), producing 60 megawatts (MW) of electricity, up from 30 MW produced in recent months. The total provision of electricity throughout the Gaza Strip is less than 200 MW (including electricity purchased from Israel (120 MW) and Egypt (17 MW)); i.e. about 30 percent below the estimated daily needs. The majority of the population continues to experience power cuts of 4 to 6 hours a day, down from power cuts of 8 to 12 hours per day during the past months.

The supply of cooking gas to the Gaza Strip remains below needs, triggering the re-imposition of a rationing scheme, first introduced in November 2008. This week, approximately 456 tonnes of cooking gas were delivered to Gaza through the Kerem Shalom Crossing. The potential capacity of this crossing is significantly limited by the lack a storage facility on the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom; such a facility did exist at the Nahal Oz crossing, which was closed by the Israeli authorities at the beginning of 2010. The shortage of cooking gas continued in spite of the recent beginning of operation of a new underground pipeline transferring cooking gas from Egypt; the total amount transferred via this pipeline, however, remains unclear.