



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

29 December 2010 – 4 January 2011

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE 5 JANUARY

6 January - Israeli forces killed two Palestinians near the fence.

West Bank

Two Palestinian fatalities and five injuries

During the week, two Palestinian civilians died and five others were injured during, or following clashes with Israeli forces. In 2010, Israeli forces killed 15 Palestinians and injured 1,148 others. The majority of injuries in 2010 (over 80 percent) took place during clashes in East Jerusalem or in weekly demonstrations in other West Bank areas. This represents an increase of 20 percent, compared to 2009. Also, in the course of 2010, two members of the Israeli forces were killed and 124 injured in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict-related violence.

This week, on 1 January 2011, a 35-year-old woman from Bil'in village (Ramallah) died in a medical center where she had received treatment following tear gas inhalation during the weekly anti-Barrier protest in the village the previous day. Eyewitnesses indicated that the woman had not taken part in clashes that had erupted between some demonstrators and Israeli forces, but was watching the events from a distance. According to the medical report issued by the center, which treated the woman, "the main cause of death apparently was cardio pulmonary arrest triggered by respiratory failure, caused by gas inhalation." The Israeli military has opened an investigation into the case. One of the woman's brothers was killed after he was hit by a tear gas canister in a similar protest in April 2009; another brother was shot in the feet and injured by an Israeli soldier while he was in custody, handcuffed and blindfolded, following a demonstration in Ni'lin village in July 2008.

Weekly demonstrations in Bil'in have been ongoing since 2005, protesting the isolation of over half of the village's historical lands by the Barrier; in addition to the two fatalities mentioned above, a total of 795 Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces during these protests. In September 2007, the Israeli High Court of Justice partially accepted a petition submitted by the Bil'in village council and ordered the state to re-route the Barrier in order to reduce its harm to the residents. More than three years after this ruling, re-routing works are still ongoing.

In another grave incident on 2 January, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man at Al Hamra checkpoint, controlling access to the northern Jordan Valley. According to the Israeli media, citing military sources, while the man was unarmed, he approached the checkpoint holding a broken bottle; Palestinian eyewitnesses indicated that the man was carrying a bottle of soft drink. The Israeli military has opened an investigation into the case.

Also this week, two women were injured during search and arrest operations, in the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates, that evolved into clashes with Israeli forces. Overall, Israeli forces conducted over 70 search and arrest operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), down from a weekly average of 90 such operations since the beginning of 2010.

Settler violence

During the reporting period, OCHA documented four settler-related incidents resulting in the injury of three Palestinians and damage to property. A number of additional incidents involving intimidation and access prevention were also reported during the week. In 2010, OCHA recorded 322 incidents involving Israeli settlers that resulted in either Palestinian casualties or damage to Palestinian property, compared to 177 incidents recorded in 2009 (an 82 percent increase). Overall, in 2010, one Palestinian and four Israeli settlers were killed in settler related incidents, compared to none and two respectively in 2009, and 108 Palestinians and 40 Israeli settlers were injured, compared to 145 and 34 respectively the previous year.

This week, three Palestinian were physically assaulted and injured by Israeli settlers in the southern West Bank during a protest in the Hebron governorate and in an attack against farmers working on their land. In two separate incidents that led to property damage in the Nablus area, settlers from Yitzhar settlement torched nine fig trees belonging to 'Asira al Qibliya village; and stoned a Palestinian house in Burin village, resulting in some damage to the house. Settlers pelted another house with stones in the former village; no damage was reported.

Demolitions and evacuation orders in East Jerusalem and Area C

This week, the Israeli authorities demolished at least 12 Palestinian-owned structures, including two houses, in East Jerusalem due to the lack of Israeli-issued construction permits. Two of the structures, located in the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Beit Hanina, were residential, displacing 15 people, including seven children. In the At Tur neighborhood, the Jerusalem municipality, together with the Israeli National Parks Authority, demolished at least ten structures serving as animal shacks and agricultural containers; around 100 olive trees were also uprooted and building materials were confiscated in the course of the demolitions. The livelihoods of at least eight families were affected.

In Area C of the West Bank, the Israeli authorities issued eviction orders against 80 residential shacks and animal shelters belonging to 21 families (including 53 children) in the Bedouin community of Ibziq (Tubas governorate), due to their location in a closed military area. The orders gave the families 72 hours to evacuate the area; as of the end of the reporting period, no eviction had taken place. Additional stop-work and demolition orders were issued against 28 Palestinian-owned structures, including 20 houses, five residential tents and a mosque, in the communities of An Nuwei'ma in the Jericho governorate and Halhul and Khirbet Susiya in the Hebron governorate.

Barrier enclave further isolated

This week, the Israeli army sealed with earthmounds three dirt roads that connected an extended family of 25 people, who reside in the closed area between the Green Line and the Barrier in southern Hebron, with the rest of the West Bank. As a result of the closures, the community members are forced to enter and exit the area through the Beit Yatir checkpoint.

Procedures at the Beit Yatir checkpoint have turned movement in and out of the enclave into a tiring and humiliating experience for its residents. Since March 2010, residents of this community have been forced to obtain permits to continue living in their homes. Entry of goods to the enclave, including foodstuffs, has been denied a number of times, after checkpoint personnel considered the quantities to be "commercial", instead of for personal use. In addition, children crossing the checkpoint are frequently delayed due to their failure to produce a copy of their birth certificates, resulting in late arrival to schools on the other side of the Barrier.

Also this week, in the nearby community of Khirbet Zanuta (110 people), the Israeli army blocked the main access road with an earthmound, forcing its residents to make a long detour to move in and out of the community.

Gaza Strip

Israeli forces injured three Palestinians; one farmer injured by an UXO

This week, Israeli forces injured three Palestinian civilians, a decline compared to four Palestinians killed and nine others injured last week. In 2010, 71 Palestinians (including 23 civilians) and three Israeli soldiers were killed in the context of Israeli- Palestinian conflict-related violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel; 283 Palestinians (including 246 civilians) and 11 Israelis were injured.

Two of this week's injuries occurred in the course of a series of air strikes by the Israeli Air Force targeting a military base in the Jabalyia area and an empty storage room, near An Nuseirat Refugee Camp; six houses sustained damage. The third injury occurred when an Israeli air strike hit a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border. In a separate incident, two Palestinian workers were injured when one tunnel collapsed while they were inside it. In 2010, 46 Palestinians were killed and 89 others were injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses and other incidents of electrocution and explosion of gas cylinders.

On several occasions during the week, Israeli forces opened fire at farmers working in their fields and workers collecting scrap metal near the fence dividing Israel and the Gaza Strip, resulting in no injuries. Such incidents occur in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas up to 1,500 metres from the fence (17 percent of Gaza Strip's territory). Also, on three separate occasions, Israeli forces launched incursions with bulldozers and tanks a few hundred meters into the Gaza Strip and withdrew after conducting land leveling. This week, one farmer was severely injured when an UXO (unexploded ordnance) exploded while he was working on his land near the fence.

Access restrictions are also enforced on fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore. In five separate incidents, the Israeli naval forces opened fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, injuring one fisherman. In one incident, Israeli forces detained four fishermen for half a day and confiscated their boat.

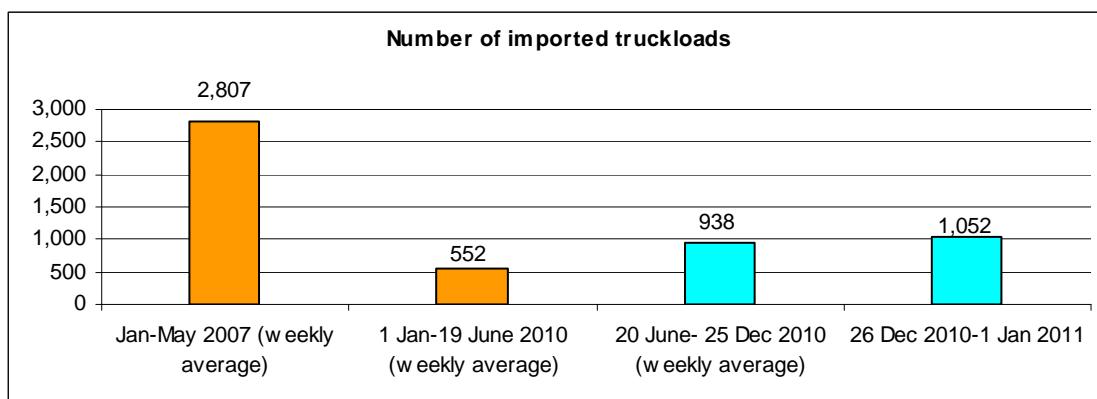
Palestinian armed factions continued firing rockets and mortar shells towards southern Israel, none of which resulted in injuries or property damages.

Gaza Crossings

Between 26 December and 1 January, a total of 1,052 truckloads entered the Gaza Strip, 12 percent above the weekly average of 938 truckloads since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010. This week's figure, however, represents only 37 percent of the weekly average of imports recorded before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Food items made up around 60 percent of the imports, compared to less than 20 percent of total imports prior to the blockade.

Exports remained limited to a few shipments of strawberries and cut flowers. Since the beginning of the season on 28 November, a total of 103 truckloads of strawberries (177 tonnes), cut flowers (154,000 stems), and sweet peppers (one truckload carrying one tonne) were allowed to leave Gaza. The 8 December 2010 announcement by the Israeli authorities to allow more exports from Gaza

remains unimplemented. Since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, only 363 truckloads of exports (strawberries and cut flowers) have left Gaza, compared to a monthly average of 1,086 in the first five months of 2007.



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

Fuel imports to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) increased slightly this week compared to the amount of fuel that entered last week (0.81 vs. 0.69 million litres). This week’s figure constitutes around one-third of the needed amount to fully operate the plant at full capacity, 3.15 million litres. Despite such shortages, the GPP managed to continue operating two turbines, producing a total of 60 megawatts (MW) of electricity, up from 30 MW produced in recent months. The amount of fuel needed to operate the second turbine was met by substituting industrial fuel with car diesel. 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)), or 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 in past months.

This week, approximately 620 tonnes of cooking gas entered Gaza this week, representing only around half the estimated weekly needs of cooking gas (1,200 tonnes). Accordingly, a rationing scheme, first introduced in November 2008, is in place. The primary reason for cooking gas shortages remains the lack of a storage facility on the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom crossing; such a facility existed at the Nahal Oz crossing, which was closed by the Israeli authorities at the beginning of 2010.