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Military activities affecting civilians

During the reporting period, the IDF killed a 17-year-old Palestinian male from Al Jalazun refugee camp in the Ramallah governorate in the vicinity of Bet El settlement, allegedly for carrying a Molotov cocktail. During the week, forty-eight Palestinians, including four children, were injured in the course of military operations. There were 89 Palestinians arrested during 84 search operations in the West Bank.

Access to olive groves denied: In Ni'lin village during the olive harvest on 10 October, clashes broke out when Israeli soldiers prevented Palestinian, international and Israeli peace activists from reaching village land isolated by the Barrier. During the fray, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy from Ni'lin village fell from a tree when IDF soldiers shot him with a gas canister, and had to be rushed to the hospital; four others were shot with gas canisters, including three Palestinian men and a 50-year-old Israeli peace activist. One Palestinian sustained injury by rubber coated metal bullet. Palestinian families who did manage to reach their land for the harvest were physically assaulted by Israeli soldiers and forced to leave. *(See also settler-related incidents)*

Anti-Barrier Demonstrations: During the weekly anti-Barrier demonstration in Ni'lin, two children, their 37-year-old mother, and a 65-year-old Palestinian man required medical attention for tear-gas inhalation. Three Israeli peace activists were arrested. In a separate demonstration in Bil'in village, five Palestinian men were injured with rubber-coated metal bullets and nine others were treated for tear-gas inhalation during the weekly anti-Barrier demonstration. The weekly anti-Barrier demonstration was also held in Al Ma'asara village in south east Bethlehem. No injuries were reported.

Palestinian man shot at Huwwara checkpoint: On 13 October, a 25-year-old Palestinian man from Balata refugee camp in the Nablus governorate was shot with live ammunition at Huwwara checkpoint by IDF, under suspicion of carrying improvised explosive devices. The injured man fled the scene, and was later treated at a local hospital.

House occupation: On 10-11 October, IDF soldiers occupied two Palestinian houses in the Assida neighbourhood of the town of Beit Ummar in the Hebron governorate. The residents of one of the houses were ordered to vacate the premises, while the residents of the second were forced to stay on a single floor of the house. Two days of protests in front of the two houses and the subsequent IDF attempt to break up a sit-in led to the injury of six Palestinians and one international, and the detention of 16 Palestinians. During the reporting period, there were two IDF military operations in Bethlehem Governorate; on 8 October the IDF conducted an overnight search-and-arrest operation in Al Duheisha Camp that resulted in the injury of three Palestinians and the arrest of four others. On 12 October the IDF surrounded a building in Al Saff Street in Bethlehem, preventing access to a school, while the wall surrounding the building was being bulldozed.

PA teachers and health workers strike continue in the Gaza Strip

During the week, teachers and health workers in the Gaza Strip continued their strike for the seventh consecutive week, with both strikes being extended for an additional week to 21 October. Twenty-five percent of MoH hospital personnel continue to adhere to the strike, however, all Gaza hospitals and all but two primary health care clinics continued to provide health services, though, according to the WHO, the quality and timely provision of services remains a concern.

On 1 September, the Central Drug Stores (CDS) in Ramallah took over the coordination of pharmaceutical deliveries to the Gaza Strip from the WHO. Since then, no drug deliveries have been received in Gaza, apart from two small shipments of urgently needed supplies—coordinated by the WHO. On 5 October, the CDS in Gaza reported that 22.6% of drug items on the essential drug list (EDL), and almost 22% of medical supplies, were at zero levels. The CDS reported that it has received less than one quarter of the requested quantities since the beginning of 2008.

Due to the teachers' strike, teacher attendance (excluding new teachers recruited during the strike) in Gaza PA schools this week stood at approximately 52%. Gaza MoEHE schools still lack sufficient Maths, Arabic and Science teachers for all grade-levels. As a result, students are now receiving fewer hours in these subjects as teachers are shared between classes. In response to concern over the quality of education currently being given, UNICEF has increased its remedial education programmes, administered through NGO partners. It is running after-school classes in all subjects, especially Mathematics and Arabic.

Inter-factional tension in the West Bank

Tensions ran high during the week between Palestinian security forces and Hamas in the city of Hebron in light of the following events: on 8 October Palestinian security forces announced the confiscation of explosives from a house and two days later, claimed that they had discovered an explosives laboratory, both in the H1 area of the City of Hebron. The PA forces claimed the weapons and explosives were to be used by Hamas against PA forces. Eleven Hamas members were subsequently arrested. Finally, on October 13, Palestinian security forces claimed to have found a tunnel beneath a house in the neighbourhood of Farsh Al Hawa in the City of Hebron. Two Palestinians reportedly affiliated to Hamas were arrested. On 14 October, Israeli forces raided the house in which the tunnel was located, and destroyed it.

Settler-related incidents

During the reporting period Israeli settlers from the settlement of Kharsina (Hebron) placed nine caravans, and built corresponding infrastructure, south of the settlement. On 11 October, two Palestinian men and their mother from the hamlet of Susiya, located south of the town of Yatta, were physically beaten in their home by a group of settlers from the settlement of Suseya. Three days later, two Israeli settlers from the settlement of Ma'on, located south of the town of Yatta in Hebron threw stones at Palestinian students from the hamlet of Tuba when their IDF escort left them before reaching the end of the settlement.

In the north, on 10 and 11 October, seven Palestinians, including a seven-year-old boy and two women, from Kafr Qalil and Burin in the Nablus governorate were attacked by stone-throwing settlers from the Bracha and Yitzar settlements while picking olives from their lands. Additionally, in the Burin incident, the settlers cut down eighteen olive trees. On both days, clashes broke out between the settlers and Palestinians, necessitating the intervention of the IDF for the evacuation of the settlers. During the night of 12 October, a group of Israeli settlers from the Adei Ad outpost arrived at Palestinian agricultural land of Al Mughayyir village (Ramallah) during the night, stole olives and destroyed tens of olive trees. In the morning, skirmishes broke out between the residents of al Mughayyir village and the settlers when the former arrived at their land for olive picking. No injuries or arrests were reported. The next day a group of settlers from the Gilad outpost near Jit junction cut down four olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Jit village in Qalqiliya governorate.

In Jerusalem on 9 October, approximately one hundred Israelis, under the protection of Israeli security forces, entered Al Aqsa mosque courtyard in Jerusalem to pray. Three days later, Israeli settlers opened a synagogue on Al Wad Street in the Old City of Jerusalem close to Al Aqsa mosque on a land seized from the Islamic Waqf. Clashes broke out between Palestinians and the Israeli forces at checkpoints erected around the Old City to prevent Palestinians from reaching the site. No injuries or arrests were reported.

West Bank closures

During the reporting period, on 8 and 9 October, Israeli Authorities imposed a general closure in the West Bank for the Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur. All Palestinians with valid permits were prevented from entering Israel and East Jerusalem, including non-emergency medical cases and Palestinian employees of international NGOs and UN agencies. For Sukkot, on 13 and 14 October, all Palestinians were prevented from entering Israel—with the exception of medical cases and Palestinian employees of international NGOs and UN agencies. On 8, 9 and 13 October, IDF soldiers prevented Palestinian and Muslim worshippers from entering the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, restricting access to the mosque during the Jewish holidays to Jewish visitors.

The IDF closed all entrances of Jericho city on 10 October for 6.5 hours when a Palestinian ambulance allegedly entered Jericho through the DCO checkpoint without stopping for inspection. A PA official reported, however, that this ambulance had in fact been inspected at the checkpoint, and the alleged incident was merely an excuse to close Jericho after gun shots had been heard in Peza'el settlement in the Jordan Valley. This shooting incident was later discovered to have involved only Israeli settlers.

Within the West Bank, long delays and queues continued at checkpoints on major roads leading to Nablus, Jerusalem and the central and southern areas of West Bank; other checkpoints were closed for the Jewish Holidays.

Gaza Crossings activities:

Goods: From 05 -11 October, there was an increase in the number of imported truckloads (666 compared to 268 the previous week). However this is considerably less than the average since the 19 June ceasefire (847 truckloads). Food supplies accounted for 388 truckloads (or 58%), while 178 truckloads of gravel (27%) and 56 truckloads of cement (8%) entered the Gaza Strip.

Fuel: Though there was an increase in the fuel supplies allowed into Gaza compared to the previous week, it remained less than actual needs. Only 18% of petrol, 74% of diesel, 45% of cooking gas and 76% of the Gaza power plant industrial gas daily needs were met. Sufa Crossing remained closed during the week.

As previously reported, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) has not received its regular back-up diesel needed to operate water wells, waste water pumping stations, and waste water suction trucks during electricity cuts. As a result, fuel at 50% of drinking water wells remains at zero levels. According to the CMWU, the monthly average fuel requirement for Gaza drinking water and waste water facilities is approximately 100-150 thousand litres. Since August 2008, UNRWA has donated 45,000 litres of diesel to the CMWU for emergency use.

Gaza: 3,500 Palestinians including 600 students waiting for Rafah crossing to re-open

Between 05 and 13 October 2008, the Gaza Interior Ministry opened a registration page on their website for those wishing to cross Rafah when it re-opens. In total, 3,500 Palestinians, including 450 patients, 600 students and 1,200 people holding residency permits in foreign countries, registered their names at the site. During the reporting period, Rafah crossing was partially open on 08, 11 and 13 October during which 521 Palestinians crossed into Gaza, of whom 481 were pilgrims and 40 were returning medical patients.

Gaza- Egypt border incidents

On 9 October, a 23-year-old Palestinian was killed when Egyptian security forces stationed on the Gaza-Egypt border opened fire on three Palestinians who were reportedly approaching the fence.

On 13 and 14 October, Egyptian Security Forces discovered and destroyed eleven active tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. No injuries were reported.