



## OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

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# Protection of Civilians Weekly Report No. 283

**22-28 October 2008****Military activities affecting civilians**

This week there were no fatalities as a result of IDF military operations, however, five Palestinians, including two children, were injured. The latter include a 15-year-old girl from Khuza'a town, east of Khan Younis (Gaza), who was injured by live ammunition fired into her school. According to Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, the live ammunition was fired by IDF troops stationed east of the town at Palestinian farmers working in that area. IDF troops opened fire at farmers near the border east of Al Maghazi, though no one was harmed. The other four injuries occurred in the West Bank in two incidents of confrontations between Palestinians and the IDF, which erupted during search and arrest campaigns; one in El Far'a Camp (Tubas governorate) and another in the village of Tuqu (Bethlehem governorate).

The IDF operation in Tuqu village was triggered by an incident in the settlement of Gilo, on 23 October, where an 86-year-old Israeli man was stabbed and killed by a Palestinian attempting to flee from Israeli police. The Palestinian man had been shot and injured during the course of arrest; one of the apprehending police officers was also stabbed. During the IDF operation in Tuqu, clashes erupted between Israeli troops and stone-throwing Palestinians, resulting in the injury of two Palestinian men by rubber-coated metal bullets. An IDF soldier was also injured with stones during the clashes. The attacker's family reportedly removed all contents of their home for fear of reprisal and demolition by the IDF.

Anti-Barrier demonstrations in Bil'in and Ni'in villages continued; cases of tear-gas related asphyxia were reported.

This week the number of IDF search operations in the West Bank increased compared to the previous week (105 vs. 86), but remained close to the 2008 weekly average (104). There was also a sharp increase in the number of IDF arrests of Palestinians compared to last week (62 vs. 37), though this number is 39% lower than the weekly average since the beginning of the year (102). In the West Bank, there were 20 PA search operations, and 24 arrests. Hamas authorities in Gaza conducted two search operations and arrested two individuals.

**Further casualties due to the collapse of tunnel in Gaza**

On 25 October, three Palestinian men were killed when a tunnel collapsed. Their bodies were retrieved by an Egyptian rescue team and returned to Gaza via the official Rafah crossing. Another tunnel collapsed near the border but no injuries were reported. On the same day, the

Egyptian Security Forces discovered and destroyed three active tunnels on the Egyptian side of the Gaza-Egypt border. A warning was given prior to their destruction for people to leave the tunnel; no one was reported harmed. Tunnels along Gaza's border with Egypt have proliferated since the Hamas take over due to the closure of the commercial crossings with Israel and Egypt.

**Israeli settler incidents**

**Palestinian property vandalized following an outpost's removal:** On 26 October, the IDF and Border Police removed an outpost (the "Federman Farm") south of the settlement of Kharsina, next to Hebron City. Following the removal, Israeli settlers living in the Al Rajabi building, slashed the tires of 22 Palestinian cars parked in the vicinity of the settlement, and removed twenty gravestones from the nearby Al Ras Cemetery. In addition, Israeli settlers from the Kharsina settlement, tore down approximately one kilometre stretch of the security fence surrounding the settlement, while trying to reach a nearby Palestinian house; failing to reach the house, they attacked it with rocks for a two-hour period. In two other separate incidents, a group of Israeli settlers vandalized several Palestinian cars in Hizma village (Jerusalem governorate) and ten masked settlers attacked IDF soldiers guarding Palestinians collecting olives near the settlement of Otniel and injured one of them.

**Children harassed on their way to school:** On two occasions during the reporting period, school children walking to the elementary school in At Tuwani village (south Hebron governorate), were threatened and harassed by Israeli settlers after the IDF escorting left them unattended in part of the designated route.

**Curfews imposed following stone throwing at settlers' vehicles:** This week, the IDF imposed a 28-hour curfew on 'Azzun village (Qalqiliya governorate) and a five-hour curfew on Deir Istiya village (Salfit governorate), following incidents where Palestinian threw stones at Israeli vehicles travelling on road 55. Since the beginning of the

year the IDF has imposed curfew on Azzun village 25 times for an accumulated time of 618 hours. In a separate incident this week, Israeli settlers threw stones at Palestinian vehicles passing on the same road, near Kafr Laqif village, though no IDF intervention was reported following that.

### Access restrictions in Hebron during olive harvest

For most of the reporting period, no Palestinian vehicles were allowed through the Barrier gates in the Governorate of Hebron, where many olive groves are located. Initially, the IDF and Israeli DCL opened all five Barrier gates, but only allowed vehicular access through a single one (Khirbet Al Dir). However, following an incident on 22 October where five Palestinian children breached the Barrier, Palestinian vehicles were prevented from accessing agricultural land beyond the Barrier for the remainder of the reporting period.

### Israeli religious activists try to enter the Al Aqsa mosque compound

For the third week in a row, a group of Jewish religious activists tried to enter Al Aqsa mosque compound in East Jerusalem, but were prevented from doing so by Palestinians, two of whom were arrested by the Israeli police. In the previous week, three Palestinian Islamic Waqf guards were physically assaulted by Jewish religious activists in similar circumstances. Earlier this month, on 9 October, approximately one hundred religious radicals succeeded in entering the compound for prayer, under the protection of the Israeli police forces.

### The Gaza-Ramallah Rift: Services to Gaza's population further affected

**Gaza pharmaceutical shortage:** Due to lack of coordination between the PA authorities in Ramallah, and the Hamas authorities in Gaza, since 1 September, no pharmaceutical supplies have been delivered by the Ministry of Health in Ramallah to the Central Drug Stores (CDS) in Gaza, resulting in the complete depletion of 94 essential drugs (compared with 63 in mid-September and 48 in mid-August). The CDS confirmed that one oncology patient has been referred to a hospital in Israel due to the lack of carboplatine drug, and 70 patients with cystic fibrosis are at risk of complications due to the lack of a cryone drug. On 24 October, the WHO facilitated the entry of four truckloads of medical items into the Gaza Strip.

**Floods and power outages:** On 27 and 28 October, due to heavy rains, a few residents in northern Gaza and Khan Younis areas were temporarily evacuated from their homes. According to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), flooding problems were partially due to the fuel shortages affecting it during the

last months, caused by the ongoing conflict between the Palestinian Water Authority in Ramallah and Hamas authorities in Gaza, as well as from the delay in the entry of much needed spare parts for the repair and/or upgrade of water pumping stations. The spare parts have not been able to enter Gaza due to the closure of crossings since the Hamas takeover of June 07. On 28 October, UNRWA responded in full to an emergency appeal by the CMWU for 30,000 litres of fuel urgently required for sewage and pumping stations in the Gaza Strip.

### Gaza Strip crossings activity

The total number of imported truckloads during the reporting period was the same as in the previous week (557). The rate of entry this week represents a slight decrease compared to the weekly average since the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June 2007 (574). However, the ratio of food items to non-food items changed significantly, with a sharp decrease in food items. Of the truckloads of non-food items, 38% contained gravel.

This week saw a slight decrease in the import of cooking gas and industrial fuel, a sharp increase in diesel, and no import of petrol. Diesel rationing, which was initially implemented by the Hamas authorities in Gaza, has been suspended since 25 Sept, partially due to the increased availability of diesel coming from Egypt through tunnels. Petrol rationing continues.

#### *This week at a glance:*

##### **Palestinian – Israeli conflict related casualties**

- Palestinians killed: 0
- Israelis killed: 1
- Palestinians injured: 6
  - Of whom 2 are children
- Israelis injured: 7
  - Of whom 5 are IDF

##### **IDF search operations: 105**

##### **Palestinians arrested by IDF: 62**

##### **IDF flying checkpoints: 55**

##### **Gaza Imports from Israel:**

- Total number truckloads imported: 557, of which:
  - Food items: 241.5 (previous week 429 trucks)
  - Non-food items: 317 trucks (previous week 128 trucks)
- Total fuel imports:
  - Diesel: 690,240 litres (33% of weekly needs)
  - Industrial fuel: 1,325,640 (42% of weekly needs)
  - Cooking gas: 677,000 tonnes (39% of weekly needs)
  - Petrol: 0 litres (0% of weekly needs)