

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS



WEEKLY REPORT 17-23 SEPTEMBER 2013

Key issues

- One Palestinian man and two Israeli soldiers (one off-duty) were killed in the West Bank. Also, over 50 Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli forces across the West Bank.
- Israeli forces prevented the provision of shelter-related humanitarian assistance to residents of Mak-hul community in the Jordan Valley, who were displaced last week. Other assistance, including food, was provided.
- Israel allowed increased amounts of construction materials into the Gaza Strip via the official crossing Kerem Shalom.
- The Rafah Crossing closed again on 20 September until further notice, after it was opened partially for two days during the reporting period.

WEST BANK

One Palestinian man and two Israeli soldiers killed

On 17 September, a 19-year-old Palestinian man died at a hospital in Israel of wounds he sustained after being shot with live ammunition by Israeli forces in the course of a search-and-arrest operation in Jenin refugee camp. According to media sources, the man was shot while Israeli forces were attempting to arrest him. The operation triggered clashes with residents, during which they threw stones at Israeli forces who responded with live fire and tear gas canisters; seven other Palestinians were injured. Overall, Israeli forces conducted around 50 search-and-arrest operations across the West Bank, slightly below the weekly average of such operations since the beginning of the year (79).

Two Israeli soldiers were killed this week: on 21 September, Israeli forces retrieved the body of an Israeli male from a well in Beit Amin village (Qalqiliya) during a search operation of the area. While the circumstances surrounding the incident remain unclear, according to the Israeli media, a Palestinian man confessed to the killing following his arrest by Israeli forces. The media reported that he explained that he killed the man, an off-duty Israeli soldier with whom he worked at a restaurant in Israel, in order to exchange the body for his brother who is currently serving a long-term sentence in an Israeli prison.

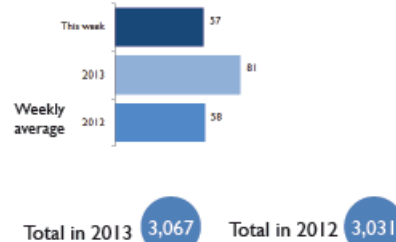
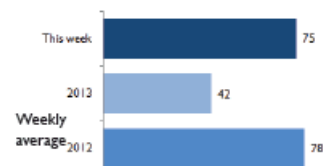
Another Israeli soldier was shot and killed, reportedly by a sniper, on 22 September in the Old City of Hebron, in the Israeli-controlled part of Hebron city (H2); the perpetrator remains unknown. Clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israeli forces in the Old City in the aftermath of the killing and continued for two days, during which Palestinians threw stones and Israeli forces fired rubber-coated metal bullets, live ammunition and tear gas canisters. As a result, 29 Palestinians were injured. In response to the incident, large numbers of Israeli forces were deployed and the area was sealed while intensive search operations were conducted. Additionally, the main access road into Hebron City from the south was closed again; this road had been re-opened in July after being closed for the past 12 years by the Israeli authorities, citing the security of the nearby Beit Haggai settlement. The road was re-opened on 24 September 2013.

In addition, nine Palestinians were injured in clashes during two weekly demonstrations against the prolonged closure of one of the main entrances of Kafr Qaddum village (Qalqiliya) and the construction of the Barrier in Bil'in village (Ramallah). Five other Palestinians were injured in clashes that erupted in Al Jalazun refugee camp and Ofer checkpoint (both in Ramallah) and Ar Ram and Al 'Eizariya towns (both in Jerusalem), after Palestinian youth threw stones at Israeli forces patrolling the areas.

Also, one Palestinian man was injured by Israeli forces located at the gate at the main entrance to 'Azzun 'Atma village (Qalqiliya). This week, the 'Azzun 'Atma Village Council was informed by the Israeli and Palestinian District Coordination Liaison Offices that the gate at the main entrance will be closed, as it was before 2010, until the re-routing of the Barrier in the southern part of the community is completed. In this context, only 'Azzun 'Atma residents and those whose names are registered on a list maintained by Israeli forces at the gate will be allowed to pass.

Palestinian Fatalities
by Isr. forces

This week: 1
In 2013 (to date): 15
Equivalent 2012 period: 4

Palestinian Injuries
by Isr. forcesSearch and arrest operations
by Isr. forces

Settler-related incidents: three injured and around 70 olive plants damaged

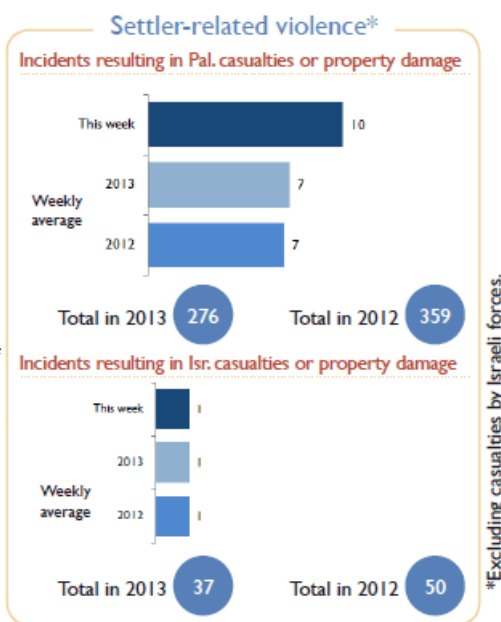
During the reporting period, OCHA recorded 10 settler-related incidents, resulting in injury to Palestinians or damage to their property, and another incident affecting settlers.

In two incidents, on 19 and 23 September, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured a Palestinian man in the Old City of Jerusalem, and a boy (aged 13) in the Old City of Hebron. On 23 September, a Palestinian man was injured when he was sprayed in the face with tear gas by settlers in a passing vehicle, while crossing a junction on the main road in Huwwara town (Nablus). The man received treatment in hospital.

Reports from Jit and Kafr Laqif villages (both in Qalqiliya) indicated that settlers damaged over 70 olive and fig trees (40) and seedlings (33) that were planted on Palestinian-owned land near Gil'ad Farm settlement outpost and within the fence of Qarne Shomron settlement, respectively. A group of Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian agricultural land between Sarra and Tell villages (Nablus) near Havat Gilad settlement outpost, burning approximately 50 olive trees.

Also this week, in two incidents over a period of days, Israeli settlers' leveled agricultural land belonging to two Palestinian families in the village of Sarta (Salfit) near Bruchin settlement, in order to build a road. The settlers uprooted and took away 20 olive trees, and laid a base course for a road. On both occasions, Palestinian residents intervened to try to prevent the settlers from continuing. According to the Sarta Village Council, the affected land covers approximately 120 dunums, part of which was previously issued with a requisition order by the Israeli authorities.

During the period, on 23 September, an Israeli settler was injured when Palestinians threw stones at his vehicle while travelling near Rehalim settlement (Nablus). In addition, on 22 September, a group of Israeli settlers slashed the tires of six Palestinian vehicles in the Sheikh Jarrah area of East Jerusalem and sprayed "price-tag" graffiti on them.



Mak-hul community remains displaced

During the reporting period, Israeli forces prevented the provision of shelter related humanitarian assistance to the residents of the herding community of Mak-hul in the Jordan Valley. The humanitarian assistance was being provided in response to demolitions of homes and other property belonging to the community that took place on 16 September, resulting in the displacement of the entire community (please see last week's Protection of Civilian report). A first attempt to provide assistance on 16 September had resulted in the seizure of the assistance, as reported last week.

In the first incident this week, on 17 September, a truck carrying 22 post-demolition assistance kits was seized by Israeli forces staffing the nearby Tayasir checkpoint and, in the second incident, on 18 September, five donor-funded tents, along with bedding and mattresses, were seized (three of which were demolished as they had already been erected). On the third occasion, on 20 September, Israeli soldiers prevented again the delivery of donor funded assistance to the community. In this incident, Palestinian residents tried to prevent Israeli soldiers from seizing the assistance (five tents and 20 fencing units for livestock) and clashes ensued. Three Palestinians (ages 36, 55 and 73 years old) sustained injuries in the altercation and three Palestinians, including one of those injured, were arrested. In response to the incident, UN Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. James W. Rawley called upon the Israeli authorities to "live up to their obligations as occupying power to protect those communities under their responsibility, including to halt demolitions of Palestinian homes and property." While shelter assistance was impeded during the reporting period, other ongoing aid, including food assistance, reached the community.

In addition, Israeli forces seized one private Palestinian-owned vehicle carrying a tent to one of the affected families and demolished three residential structures that had been re-built by Palestinian and international activists in the community, on 17 and 19 September, respectively.



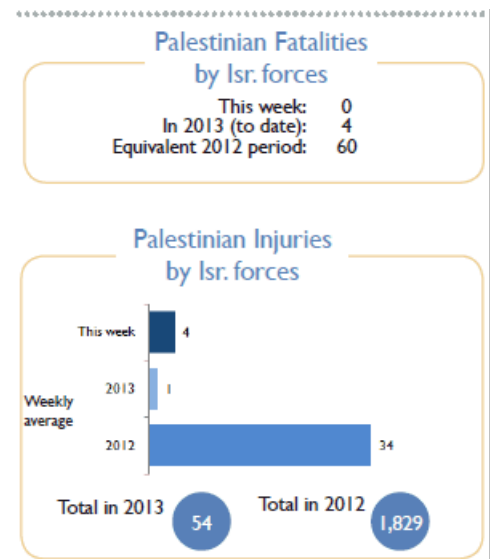
GAZA STRIP

Three Palestinian civilians injured in the ARA

Incidents in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to land and at sea continued, resulting this week in the injury of three civilians. Israeli forces stationed at the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip opened warning fire on a number of occasions to force people present in the Access Restricted Area (ARA) to leave. In one of the incidents on 20 September, two civilian men were injured while they were reportedly present, along with a group of men, within 300 meters of the fence. In addition, Israeli forces detained five Palestinians, of whom two were minors, while they were reportedly attempting to cross the fence illegally into Israel.

Earlier on 18 September, in the context of enforcing restrictions on access to fishing areas beyond 6 nautical miles from shore, Israeli naval forces opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats sailing in the vicinity of six nautical miles from shore, injuring one fisherman and damaging a boat. These are the first civilian injuries that occurred in two weeks.

Also this week, on 17 September, armed clashes took place between Israeli military forces, who entered the Gaza Strip near the fence, and members of a Palestinian armed group in Gaza, resulting in injury to one Palestinian militant. Also, armed Palestinian groups fired a number of projectiles at southern Israel, of which one landed in an open area inside Israel and the others fell short inside Gaza; no injuries or damage were reported.



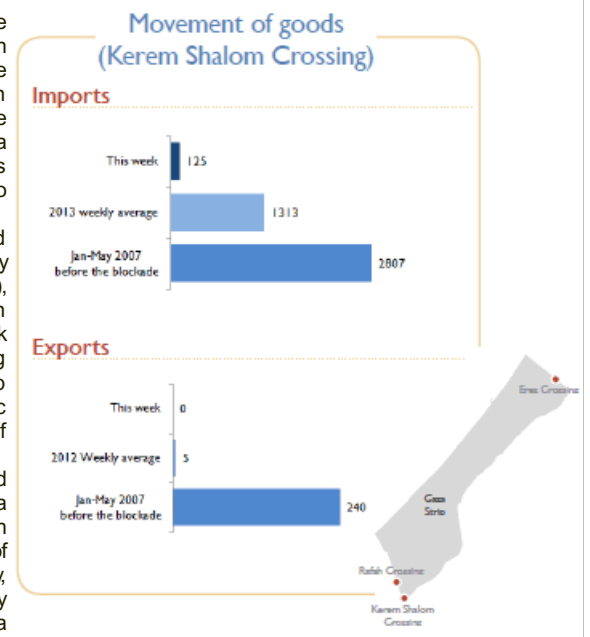
Shortages of fuel and construction materials as a result of reduced tunnel activity continue

Egyptian forces have reportedly continued to demolish illegal smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border as well as houses that are used as entrances to tunnels, on the Egyptian side, as part of ongoing measures aimed at countering illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai. According to Egyptian sources, at least 300 tunnels have been demolished by Egyptian security forces over the past three months; it is estimated that approximately ten tunnels are currently functioning. While local sources indicated that the volume of goods transported via tunnels per day remained roughly the same as last week (20 - 30 truckloads), these amounts constitute less than 15 per cent of the volume of goods that entered before June 2013 (up to 200 truckloads).

Due to the decline in tunnel activity, significant shortages of goods, including cheap fuel and construction materials, continued. This week, between 300,000-400,000 liters of fuel per day reportedly entered Gaza via the tunnels for all needs, including for the Gaza Power Plant (GPP), compared to approximately one million per day prior to June 2013. The Energy Authority in Gaza, indicated that while there was a slight increase in the plant's fuel reserve this week (from 0 to 500,000 liters), the GPP remains operating at half of its full capacity, triggering long electricity blackouts of up to 12 hours per day. In some areas, power cuts have continued at up to 16 hours per day. Fuel shortfalls have also continued to disrupt the provision of basic services, including water supply, sanitation, health and transportation services. Reports of long queues of vehicles and people at the operational fuel stations across Gaza continued. Construction materials have continued to enter via tunnels in limited amounts, with around 200 tonnes of building materials (mainly cement) entered per day this week compared to a daily average of more than 7,500 tonnes in June 2013, as reported by the Palestinian Federation of Industries. Shortages have resulted in significant increases in the prices of building materials, which has led to a reduction in construction activities and, subsequently, loss of livelihoods in this important sector. Initial information suggests that following the entry of limited amounts of construction materials from Kerem Shalom (see below) there may be a decrease in the price of some construction materials.

Limited amounts of construction materials enter via Kerem Shalom

According to the Palestinian Authority's Crossing Coordination Committee, on 22 September, the Government of Israel began allowing increased amounts of construction materials for commercial uses to enter Gaza via the Israeli-controlled Kerem Shalom Crossing. This followed the 17 September announcement that fifty truckloads of imported construction materials would be allowed entry per day, in addition to the 20 truckloads of aggregates per day allowed since December 2012. The quantities entered this week



included 40 truckloads of aggregates (1,600 tonnes), 20 of cement (800 tonnes) and ten of steel bars (200 tonnes). This is the first time that this volume and type (steel bars) of construction materials have entered Gaza through official crossings with Israel since July 2008, when Israel allowed entry of limited quantities of imported construction materials, mainly cement and aggregate, for a period of four months only. In general, Israel has prohibited import of construction materials by the private sector since the blockade was imposed on Gaza in 2007. The Ministry of National Economy in the Gaza Strip estimates daily needs at around 6,000 tonnes of gravel, 4,000 tonnes of cement and 1,500 tonnes of steel bars.

Rafah Crossing update

The Egyptian authorities re-opened the Rafah Crossing on 18 and 19 September, after closing it for seven days during the last reporting period. However, the crossing was again closed until further notice by the Egyptian authorities on 20 September; reasons for the closure remain unclear. Since early July, when open, the crossing has operated four hours per day (six days per week) compared to nine hours (seven days per week) prior to early July.

During the reporting period, a daily average of approximately 130 travelers were allowed to cross into Egypt and around 100 others entered Gaza, most of whom were medical cases, students, people holding visas and foreign nationals. These numbers remain well below the daily average of approximately 1,860 who crossed in June. While around 5,000 people are waiting to travel to Egypt and other destinations via Egypt, including medical cases and students, the Border and Crossing Authority is currently not accepting any further travel applications. The crossing remains the primary exit and entry point to the Gaza Strip for Palestinians,

due to the long-standing restrictions imposed by Israel on movement via the Erez Crossing.

Please note that the figures in this report are subject to changes upon the receipt of additional information.

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