



## OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

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## Protection of Civilians Weekly Report No. 280

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### Military activities affecting civilians

**West Bank:** During the reporting period, the IDF conducted 91 search operations and arrested 60 Palestinians. Overall, fourteen Palestinians were injured, some from IDF live ammunition and violence during search and arrest campaigns, and others during clashes with Israeli settlers (*see next section on settler-related violence*).

- On 2 October, two Palestinian men were injured in Kafr ad Dik village (Salfit) -one by live ammunition and the other by a rubber coated metal bullet during confrontations between Palestinians and IDF during an Israeli military operation in the village.
- On 3 October, the IDF conducted a five hour large scale (20 vehicles) search operation of 20 homes in east of Bethlehem Governorate (Beit Bassa and Obayat villages). Two persons were arrested, and the furniture and possessions in 12 houses were damaged.
- On 6 October, a 35-year-old Palestinian man from the H1 area of Hebron city was beaten by Israeli soldiers during an arrest from his home.
- On the same day, a 25-year-old Palestinian man from Dura village (Hebron) was assaulted by a group of Israeli soldiers conducting a military training in the town.
- In an undercover IDF operation in El Far'a refugee camp (Tubas) on 6 October, the IDF shot at close range with live ammunition, a 38-year-old Palestinian man. The undercover IDF unit had intended to arrest his neighbour, but had mistakenly entered his house instead. Subsequent confrontations broke out between Palestinians and Israeli military forces, which had entered the camp to evacuate the undercover unit.

**Gaza Strip:** On 5 and 6 October, IDF patrol boats opened fire on Palestinian fishing boats west of Nuseirat and Rafah—forcing the boats to return to shore. One fisherman was reported injured. During the reporting period, one Qassam rocket was fired from Beit Lahia junction targeting Sderot; the rocket landed in an open area inside Gaza near Beit Hanoun. No injuries were reported.

### Sharp increase Israeli settler-related violence

This week saw a sharp increase in Palestinian-Israeli violence related to Israeli settlers. Throughout the West Bank, at least five incidents were reported where clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians led to Palestinian injuries inflicted by IDF soldiers. In Ni'lin village for example, five Palestinians, including a 17 year old, were shot by the Israeli military with rubber coated metal bullets during clashes between Israeli

settlers from the Hashmon'im settlement and Ni'lin residents who were conducting their Friday prayer on Ni'lin land that will be isolated by the Barrier. Another 37-year-old Palestinian was injured by an IDF shock grenade. Tens of cases of asphyxia were reported.

**North:** Two Israeli settlers were injured and seven vehicles were damage near 'Azzun village in the Salfit governorate when Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles on road 55. The Israeli military imposed a curfew on 'Azzun after the incident. Later Israeli settlers attempted an attack on the village but were prevented by the IDF. On 2 October, Israeli military forces evacuated the Shavut 'Ami outpost near the Qedumim settlement; in retaliation, settlers attacked Palestinian farmers and set fire to 10 dunums of land, burning 100 olive trees belonging to farmers from Immatin village. The settlers also stoned Palestinian vehicles on road 55 and blocked the road for one hour until they were evacuated by the Israeli military. On 7 October, an Israeli settler's vehicle was burnt by Molotov cocktail while parked near road 5057 close to Deir Istiya village in the Salfit governorate.

**Hebron:** In the H2 area of the City of Hebron, unarmed skirmishes took place between Palestinian landowners, international and Israeli volunteers (including Rabbis for Human Rights) and Israeli settlers from the settlements of Kiryat Arba and Givat Havot. Also during the reporting period, Israeli settlers from the settlement of Tel Rumeida, located in the H2 area of the City of Hebron, attacked a 14-year-old Palestinian boy when he tried to stop them from collecting olives from his father's land. The boy's father and both of his sons were subsequently detained at the Kiryat Arba Police Station.

**East Jerusalem:** On 7 October, tens of Israeli settlers arrived at night at Ras Shehada, an area between Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Dahyet Al Salam and Al 'Isawiya and attempted to take over a piece of Palestinian owned land. The settlers ploughed the land and planted olive trees plants in an attempt to claim ownership and establish a new out-post. Palestinian residents subsequently uprooted the settlers' plants.

### **West Bank Access: Full closures due to Israeli Holidays**

Throughout the West Bank, Israeli Authorities imposed a three day general closure on the West Bank, ending midnight of 1 October, due to the Jewish New year. All Palestinians with valid permits were prevented from entering Israel except for medical cases and Palestinian employees of international agencies, and diplomatic missions. In the South, the IDF prevented Muslims from accessing the Ibrahim Mosque to allow Israeli settlers to celebrate the Jewish New year.

On 4 October, though special coordination between the Palestinian and Israeli DCL offices was agreed upon to facilitate the entrance and exit to the national football contests in Jericho, more than 360 Palestinians from 'Askar Camp in Nablus Governorate attending were forced to spend the night in six busses at Al Hamra Checkpoint in the Jordan Valley. The IDF prevented the group from crossing the checkpoint stating that it arrived fifteen minutes after the end of official working hours of the checkpoint.

On 7 October, for the second time, the IDF stopped the Palestine Chief Justice and Chairman of the Sharia'a Judiciary Supreme Council, Sheikh Tayseer Rajab Al Tamimi, and forced him to submit to a body and vehicle search near the junction between Ramallah and Jericho, close to the Ma'ale Adumim settlement. The Chief Justice informed OCHA that he was later taken to Ramallah hospital for treatment of heat stroke. The IDF did not allow the Judge to reach Al Aqsa mosque during the month of Ramadan. The Chief Justice also informed OCHA that on the second Friday of the month of Ramadan, he was detained for a two-hour period.

The perennial problem of long delays and queues continued at checkpoints on major roads leading to Nablus (Huwara and Beit Iba), the northern West Bank (Tappuah), Jerusalem (Qalandiya, and Ar Ram), and the central and southern West Bank (Jericho DCO). Other checkpoints were closed for the Jewish Holidays: Al Tur, Al Jalameh and 'Awarta checkpoints (Nablus), and Taybeh checkpoint (Green Line CP—Tulkarm).

### **Gaza Crossings activities from 28 September to 04 October**

The reporting period saw the lowest number of truckloads entering Gaza since the truce began on 19 June. Due to the closures of all Gaza goods crossings on the Palestinian side for the Muslim Eid, and afterwards on the Israeli side for the Jewish holidays, only 268 truckloads were allowed into Gaza, compared to the weekly average of 843 imported truckloads per week since the beginning of the truce on 19 June. Sufa Crossing remained closed during the entire week. The Karni grain conveyor belt was not operational, though the bulk cement lane operated on one day.

### **Gaza: Fuel reserves at zero level for 50% of drinking water wells**

Last week, Israel permitted the largest amount of fuel to enter Gaza since the truce. In contrast, this week witnessed the lowest amount of fuel entering Gaza since the truce: 619,600 litres of diesel, 295 tonnes of cooking gas and 1,626,820 litres of industrial gas for the Gaza electric power plant. According to several Gaza gas station-owners, the low amount imported was due to the closures during the religious holidays. Since the beginning of August 2008, due to the internal Palestinian political division between the PA in Ramallah and the authorities in Gaza, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) has not received its regular diesel shipment—needed to operate water wells, waste water pumping stations, and wastewater suction trucks. As a result, 50% of its wells have no backup fuel reserves, needed for pumping water during the daily rolling electricity blackouts. On 4 October, UNRWA donated 15,000 litres of fuel to the CMWU. However, the monthly average of the CMWU fuel needs is approximately 100 -150 thousand litres. With fifty percent of drinking water wells at zero level, power outages could result in water wells not operating.

More than 250,000 people are already experiencing water shortages, mostly in Rafah and Joher El Deak areas, with residential water flowing only four to six hours once every five days. Most of Rafah's water wells are dependent on backup electricity generators. The electricity that Rafah city receives from Egypt is inadequate—characterized by under-voltage and frequent power outages.

### **Gaza: PA teacher and health worker strikes continue**

During the week, Pro-Fatah teachers and members of the health workers union in Gaza continued their strike for the sixth consecutive week, with both strikes being extended for an additional week to 7 October. However, despite the strikes, 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.

Due to the teacher strike, teacher attendance (original teachers) in Gaza PA schools this week stood at approximately 53%, while pupil attendance this week was above 98%. On 5 October, Gaza authorities' Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) started a training programme for new teachers, recruited by the Hamas authorities in response to the strike, in 240 training centres in the Gaza strip. Approximately 6000 teachers will receive 40 hours of training in eight days. The training will be managed by the Gaza MoEHE; head masters and expert teachers will conduct the training.