



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

22 - 28 December 2010

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE 29 DECEMBER

29 December: The Israeli authorities demolished at least seven agricultural structures in At Tur neighborhood in East Jerusalem and uprooted hundreds of olive trees, affecting the livelihoods of at least eight families.

West Bank

38 Palestinians injured by Israeli forces in demonstrations and clashes

During the week, Israeli forces injured 38 Palestinians throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, over half of them in weekly demonstrations. Since the beginning of 2010, Israeli forces have injured 1,145 Palestinians in the West Bank, a 45 percent increase compared to the equivalent period in 2009 (791).

On 27 December, clashes broke out between Palestinians residents of Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem and Israeli forces, resulting in the injury of eight Palestinians. In addition, several cases of tear gas inhalation were reported and five Palestinians, including a 13 year-old boy, were arrested. The confrontations followed the heavy deployment of Israeli forces, prior to the visit of an Israeli delegation of Members of Parliament, in solidarity with the Beit Yonatan settlement-building established within the neighborhood, part of which is to be sealed following the issuance of an order by an Israeli court. Also this week, the Israeli authorities extended the deadline of a military order to forcibly transfer a member of the Al-Bustan Neighborhood Committee from Silwan, Adnan Gheith, from East Jerusalem. Tensions in Silwan have been increasing in recent months due to the Israeli plan to demolish a large number of houses in the neighborhood to build a commercial and touristic complex. There are also daily frictions between Palestinian residents and Israeli settlers and their armed guards and ongoing search and arrest operations inside the neighborhood.

Twenty Palestinians and one international activist were injured during weekly demonstrations that took place throughout the West Bank against the expansion of a settlement in the Ramallah area; the permanent closure of a main commercial street in Hebron City; and the construction of the Barrier and the resulting uprooting of olive trees in the Bethlehem area. Another five Palestinians and two international activists were injured in two additional protests against access restrictions into East Jerusalem and Ramallah City.

Israeli forces conducted over 100 search and arrest operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), up from a weekly average of 90 such operations in 2010. One of the operations in the Hebron area evolved into a clash between the residents and the Israeli forces, resulting in the injury of two women. Also, three separate search operations to houses in the Jericho area resulted in property damages.

Increase in settler violence

During the reporting period, OCHA documented seven settler-related incidents resulting in the injury of one Palestinian and damage to property, similar to the weekly average of incidents since the beginning of the year (six). In 2010 so far, one child has been killed and 108 Palestinians have been injured due to attacks by Israeli settlers.

In one incident, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured a 13 year-old boy inside the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2). Five of this week's incidents resulted in damage to land and olive trees. In two separate incidents, settlers uprooted over 150 olive trees and seedlings on land belonging to the villages of Beit Nuba (Ramallah governorate) and Madama (Nablus governorate) located near the Israeli settlements of Hallamish and Yitzhar, respectively. The settlers also levelled some 300 dunums of land in the Beit Nuba village. In another three incidents, Israeli settlers cultivated for their own purposes or levelled over 100 dunums of land belonging to the villages of Jalud and Qaryut in the Nablus governorate and the villages of Khirbet 'Abdallah al Yunis and Tura al Gharbyia in the Jenin governorate. Also, settlers from Susuya settlement set fire to two tents belonging to the community of Khirbet Susiya in the Hebron governorate, resulting in some damage.

In another two settler incidents not resulting in damages, settlers erected a fence around 1,500 dunums of land near Yatta town in the Hebron governorate and started building a stone wall on Palestinian land near the settlement of Eshkolot in the Hebron governorate in an attempt to take over the land. Part of the structures was removed by Palestinians in both areas.

Demolitions and demolition orders continue

This week, the owner of a building of three apartments was forced to demolish the structure in Sur Baher village in East Jerusalem, after receiving a demolition order issued for the lack of an Israeli-issued building permit. As a result, 24 people, including 17 children were displaced. Also in East Jerusalem, a family received a demolition order against tents erected following the demolition of its house in the Ras Al Amud neighborhood last week. In 2010, 63 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem, of which ten were demolished by their owners, displacing 116 people and otherwise affecting over 260. This is compared to 80 structures demolished in 2009.

In Area C of the West Bank, OCHA recorded the issuance of stop-work orders against four houses and an agricultural structure in the villages of Jit and Jinsafut in the Qalqiliya area.

Gaza Strip

Four killed and nine injured in air strikes and opening fire incidents

This week, Israeli forces killed four Palestinians, including two civilians, and injured nine others, including six civilians. In 2010, 71 Palestinians (including 24 civilians) were killed, and 283 (including 246 civilians) have been injured in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip. The majority of casualties occurred near the fence dividing Israel and the Gaza Strip (over 65 percent of total deaths and injuries).

Israeli restrictions on access to areas up to 1,500 metres (17 percent of Gaza Strip's territory) from the fence continue, resulting in two Palestinian death and five other injuries. In two separate incidents during the reporting period (23 and 28 December), Israeli forces shot and killed two Palestinian civilians, one of whom was a shepherd, while present near the fence. Also, four workers collecting scrap metal were injured in the same context. In 2010, 91 Palestinian workers have been injured in incidents related to restrictions on access to land near the fence. In a separate incident, Israeli forces opened fire at farmers working on their land, injuring one of them.

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

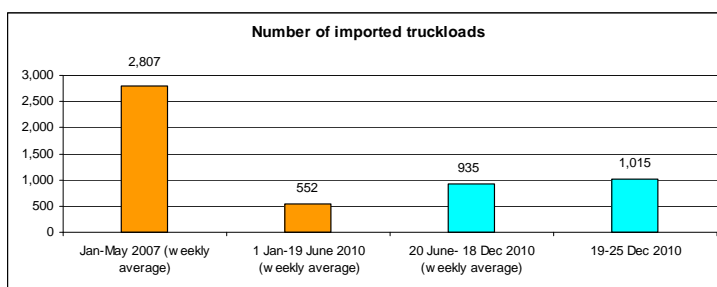
Also this week, two members of an armed group were killed in a clash with Israeli forces. Another three alleged militants were injured when Israeli air strikes targeted and hit a military base near Nuseirat Refugee Camp. Palestinian armed factions continued firing rockets and mortar shells at southern Israel, one of which landed short and damaged a Palestinian house in the Deir El Balah area within Gaza; no Israeli casualties or damage to property was reported as a result.

Limited exports continue; wheat reserves remain low

Between 19 and 25 December, a total of 1,015 truckloads entered the Gaza Strip, an increase of about 9 percent compared to a weekly average of 935 truckloads entering since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010. This week's figure, however, represents only 36 percent of the weekly average of imports recorded before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Food items made up 57 percent of the imports, compared to less than 20 percent of total imports prior to the blockade.

On 26 December, one truckload of sweet pepper was allowed out of Gaza for export to Europe. This is the first shipment of vegetables that exited Gaza since the Israeli announcement (on 8 December) to allow the export of agricultural products, furniture and textiles. The export of a few shipments of strawberries and cut flowers continued; since the beginning of the season on 28 November, a total of 70 truckloads of strawberries (119.9 tonnes) and cut flowers (757,000 stems) were allowed to leave Gaza. Since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, only 330 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.

A total of 117 truckloads of wheat (4,563 tonnes) entered Gaza this week (19 to 25 December), a significant increase compared to the amount imported the previous week - 59 truckloads carrying 2,301 tonnes. As a result, as of 29 December, wheat reserves throughout the Gaza Strip increased and would cover the population's needs for around 11 days, up from six days a week before. Wheat reserves began declining following the resumption of imports of gravel for international projects through the conveyor belt at the Karni Crossing in October 2010, thus reducing the time allocated for wheat transfer from two to one day a week.



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

The Gaza Power Plant (GPP) continued operating its second turbine, thus producing a total of 60 megawatts (MW) of electricity, up from 30 MW produced in recent months. This occurred despite a further decline in the amount of industrial fuel imported from Israel - less than 0.7 million litres, which is the lowest amount recorded since the third week of June 2010. 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)); i.e. 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 during the past months.

This week, approximately 700 tonnes of cooking gas were delivered to Gaza through the Kerem Shalom Crossing compared to 456 last week. Although cooking gas supplies increased this week, a rationing scheme, first introduced in November 2008, remains in place. This week's amount represents 60 percent of the estimated weekly needs of cooking gas (1,200 tonnes). The potential capacity of this crossing is significantly limited by the lack of storage facility on the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom; such a facility did exist at the Nahal Oz crossing, which was closed by the Israeli authorities at the beginning of 2010. The shortage of cooking gas continued in spite of the recent operation of a new underground pipeline transferring cooking gas from Egypt through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border; the total amount transferred via this pipeline, however, remains unclear.