



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

5-11 OCTOBER 2011

Key issues

- At the onset of this year's olive harvest in the West Bank, settler violence against Palestinians and their property increased. Settlers injured four Palestinians, stole or damaged olive crops and vandalized around 250 trees this week.

WEST BANK

Increase in settler violence

Settler violence increased again this week with the onset of the annual olive harvest.

In three separate incidents, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured four Palestinians, including an elderly man, while they were harvesting their olives near the villages of Jit and Jinsafut in the Qalqiliya governorate and Awarta in the Nablus governorate. In another five incidents, resulting in no injuries, settlers attacked Palestinian farmers during the olive harvest and damaged or stole their crops. All of these incidents occurred on Palestinian-owned land located in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, during times which had been allocated by the Israeli authorities to allow farmers to access their land and harvest their olive crop. In some of the incidents, Israeli forces intervened and removed the settlers, allowing farmers to resume their work. Also, settlers set fire, cut down and uprooted around 250 olive, fig and almond trees belonging to Palestinians in the Bethlehem and Nablus governorates. There have been no reports of compensation for these acts of violence.

Also this week, seven other Palestinians, including three children (aged between 12 and 14 years), an elderly man and two women, were injured after being stoned or physically assaulted by settlers in the Ramallah and Nablus governorates. In

Settler-related incidents:

Incidents resulting in Palestinian injuries or property damage:

in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 347 vs. 239

Injured this week: 11

Palestinians injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 155 vs. 83

Settlers injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 28 vs. 40

a separate incident, Palestinian eyewitnesses reported that settlers from Tuqu' settlement sprayed grazing land near the settlement with chemicals that subsequently caused the death of six sheep and injured ten others belonging to Palestinian herders (Bethlehem governorate). During the week, there were also a number of stone-throwing incidents by settlers that led to the damage of three Palestinian vehicles in the Jerusalem and Qalqiliya governorates.

Clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians continue to result in injuries

Weekly demonstrations and associated clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian protesters continue to result in injuries. This week, Israeli forces injured eight Palestinians during protests held against the expansion of Hallamish settlement (Ramallah governorate), the construction of the

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Killed in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 9 vs. 13

Injured this week: 20; 9 in demonstrations

Of whom were children: 6

Injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 1,197 vs. 949

Barrier in Al Ma'sara village (Bethlehem governorate) and access restrictions to land near Karmei Tzur settlement (Hebron governorate). Another Palestinian was injured during a demonstration near Ofer prison (Ramallah governorate) that was organized in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike against detention conditions in Israeli prisons. Similar protests were organized throughout the oPt and ended peacefully.

In Hebron, Israeli forces physically assaulted and injured six students (aged between 11 and 12) while they were en route to their schools. The incident occurred at a checkpoint at the entrance of Al Shuhada Street, after the students refused to pass through a metal detector. While students, teachers and pregnant women were allowed to pass the checkpoint without being checked in previous years, Israeli forces imposed this measure again during the week on every Palestinian crossing the checkpoint.

The remaining Palestinians (6) were injured during clashes with Israeli forces in the Hebron governorate in the course of the demolition of a cistern in Beit Kahil village (also see demolitions section) and during a search-and-arrest operation in Beit Ummar village. Overall this week, Israeli forces conducted over 60 search-and-arrest operations in West Bank cities and villages, less than the weekly average for such operations since the beginning of the year (90).

Also this week, Israeli forces fired sound bombs and other devices at Palestinian land near the Barrier in Qatanna village (Jerusalem governorate), damaging dozens of olive and almond trees and grape vines. According to Palestinian sources, there were no clashes near the Barrier.

Demolitions and demolition orders continue

Demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, due to a lack of Israeli-issued building permits, continued this week, with the Israeli authorities' demolition of 13 structures, including residences, a mosque, a water cistern and animal structures.

Four residential structures and five animal shelters were demolished in the Qalqiliya governorate (Arab ar Ramadin community) and in three different locations in the Tubas governorate (Al Farisiya, Tel al Himmeh and Hammamat al Maleh). As a result, over 16 people were displaced and the livelihoods of at least 25 others were affected. The Tubas structures were located in an area declared closed by the Israeli military for training ("firing zone"). Also in a closed military area in Tubas, the Israeli authorities demolished a mosque in Khirbet Yarza village for the third time in less than a year due to the lack of a building permit. The Israeli authorities have declared around 18 per cent of the West Bank as closed military areas for training. In these, Palestinian construction is prohibited, including for communities like Khirbet Yarza that resided in the area before it was declared closed. Some of these communities claim to have existed in these areas prior to 1948. Another cistern, a house under construction and an agricultural structure were demolished in the Hebron and Bethlehem governorates.

The Israeli authorities also delivered stop-work and demolition orders against a school, a residential structure, commercial stands and solar panels in the Jericho, Jenin and Hebron governorates. The solar panels provide electricity for 390 Palestinians in Imneizil village (Hebron governorate).

Palestinian-owned structures demolished

Demolished this week: 13

Of which residences: 5

Structures demolished in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 448 vs. 293.

People displaced in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 834 vs. 374.

GAZA STRIP

Violence remains low

Violence inside the Gaza Strip and southern Israel remained at a low level during the week, with no reports of injuries or damage to property. Israeli forces opened fire towards farmers present near the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip, while Palestinian armed factions fired a number of rockets towards southern Israel. On 10 October, however, an alleged member of an armed Palestinian faction was killed in northern Gaza while he was handling an explosive device, which exploded prematurely.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas up to 1,500 meters from the fence (which is 1,200 meters beyond the 300 meters that Israel has officially announced) continue to hinder the livelihoods of thousands of people. In at least four separate incidents, Israeli forces opened warning fire towards farmers working their land near the fence, forcing them to leave their fields. Restrictions on access to sea beyond three nautical miles from the shore also continue to affect the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Palestinian fishermen. During the week, the Israeli Navy opened fire towards Palestinian fishing boats on at least three occasions, forcing them ashore.

Tunnels continue to claim lives

On 5 October, a Palestinian worker died of wounds he sustained on 24 September, while working inside a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border. Also, Egyptian Security Forces discovered and detonated four tunnels during the reporting period, resulting in no injuries. Since the beginning of 2011, 28 Palestinians have been killed and 50 others injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses and electrocution. While tunnel activity has declined since the Israeli decision to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010, it remains a main

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Of whom children: 0

Killed in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 85 vs. 54

Injured this week: 0

Of whom children: 0

Injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 425 vs. 209

source for the transfer of construction materials that are still restricted through the official crossings with Israel, as well as fuel, which is significantly cheaper to buy from Egypt than from Israel.

Movement through Rafah Crossing

During the reporting period, around 3,957 people left Gaza through the Rafah Crossing controlled by Egypt, and 3,266 entered Gaza. While constituting an increase compared to recent weeks, the number of people who crossed this week remains slightly below the average number of people who crossed per week in the first five months of 2006, before the partial closure of the crossing, when an average of 650 people crossed daily each way. Also this week, a total of 147 people were denied entry to Egypt for unspecified reasons. There are still thousands of travelers registered with the Border and Crossing authorities in Gaza waiting to exit in the coming months due to the backlog generated as a result of restricted access.

Movement of goods (Kerem Shalom Crossing):

Imports:

Truckloads (TL) that entered this week: 1,097

TL carrying food: 53%

Weekly average of TL since the beginning of 2011: 944

Weekly average of TL before the blockade: 2,807

Exports:

Truckloads that left this week: 0 (zero)

Weekly average since the beginning of 2011: 5

Weekly average before the blockade: 240

OPT-WIDE ISSUES

Agreement reached to release Israeli soldier in exchange for the release of over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners

This week, the Israeli government and Hamas leaders reached an agreement, mediated by Egypt, that will see the release of Israeli Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit, in exchange for the release of over 1,000 Palestinians being held in Israeli prisons.

According to media reports, Shalit, who has been held by Hamas since June 2006, will be released in the coming days, along with over 400 Palestinian prisoners, over 250 of whom are serving life sentences. Around 200 of the prisoners will either be deported, or expelled from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip. The remaining prisoners will be released in the coming months.

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