



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

18-24 JULY 2012

Key issues

- Settler violence: seven Palestinians injured and around 170 trees damaged this week.
- The Israeli authorities intend to evict eight Palestinian communities in South Hebron from a “firing zone”, pending a court decision.
- Following the installation of new transformers, electricity production by the Gaza Power Plant increases, reducing power cuts from 12 to ten hours per day; fuel shortages continue.

WEST BANK

Clashes and injuries in demonstrations continue; around 170 trees damaged by settlers

This week recorded a significantly lower number of Palestinian injuries (24) in comparison to the weekly average of injuries recorded since the beginning of 2012 (60). The majority of this week’s injuries were sustained during a weekly demonstration in Kafr Qaddum village (Qalqiliya) against the prohibition on the use of the main road connecting the village to Nablus City, and to agricultural land in the vicinity of the nearby Qedumim settlement. Also, two Palestinians were injured during a demonstration in front of Ofer prison (Ramallah), held in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners. This week one of the striking prisoners, Akram Rikhawi, suspended his hunger strike, which he has been conducting over the past 100 days, in protest against the Israeli policy of administrative detention (imprisonment without charges or trial), after the Israeli authorities agreed to release him in January next year.

Three other Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli forces during two search and arrest operations in the communities of Burin (Nablus)

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces Injured this week: 24; 18 in demonstrations

Injured in 2012: 1,874
2012 weekly average of injured: 60
2011 weekly average of injured: 28

Search and arrest operations by Israeli forces this week: 56

and At Tabaqa (Hebron). Also this week, three members of Israeli forces were injured when stoned by Palestinians, two while driving on Road 60 in the Hebron governorate and another, a female police officer, inside the Old City of Jerusalem.

In three incidents this week, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured five Palestinians, including a 13 year-old boy, and stabbed and injured another while said Palestinians were working land or grazing sheep near the settlements of Betar Illit (Bethlehem), Kfar Adumim (Jerusalem) and Shilo (Ramallah). Also, Israeli settlers stoned a Palestinian while he was driving his car near Turmus’ayya village, injuring him. A settler was also injured when he fell while escaping stone-throwing Palestinians.



In a number of additional incidents, Israeli settlers cut down or uprooted around 170 trees, including over 40 olive trees next to Yatta village (Hebron) and over 80 grape vines in Beit Ummer (Hebron) and Al Khader (Bethlehem) villages.

Demolitions continue; eight communities at higher risk of forced displacement

On 22 July, the Israeli Minister of Defense submitted to the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) its position on a petition against the eviction of 12 herder communities in south Hebron, located in an area designated as a “firing zone”. According to the position, eight of the 12 communities (Majaz, Tabban, Isfey, Fakheit, Halaweh, Mirkez, Jinba, and Kharuba), with an estimated population of 1,500, should be evicted from the area; the Israeli military would allow the residents to cultivate their land in the area and graze their sheep only during Jewish weekends and holidays, when the military does not train. In the meantime, and until the HCJ rules on this case, a temporary injunction issued by the court in the past, which prevents the eviction of the residents, continues to hold.

Some 18 percent of the West Bank has been designated as closed areas for military training. There are over 40 communities with a population of some 5,200 located in these areas, which are amongst the most vulnerable across the West Bank; they suffer from high levels of food insecurity, water scarcity and poor access to basic services.

Also, during the reporting period, the Israeli authorities demolished eight Palestinian-owned livelihood structures in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits. Four water cisterns, including one under construction, and three agricultural rooms, were demolished in Farsh al Hawa (Hebron) and Al Khader (Bethlehem) communities. The three operating cisterns in the former community were providing water for

Settler-related incidents resulting in injuries or property damage:

This week: 10

2012 weekly average: 6

2011 weekly average: 8

Palestinians injuries by settler violence:

This week: 7

Injured in 2012: 77

2011 weekly average: 4

Israeli settlers injured by Palestinians:

This week: 1

Injured in 2012: 24

Injured in 2011: 37

agricultural purposes for 35 people, including 20 children, while the other one was funded by international bodies and was intended to supply 17 people with water for the same purpose. Since the beginning of 2012, 19 cisterns have been demolished by the Israeli authorities.

In East Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities demolished an animal shelter for the second time in less than a year and a 100-year-old room in an area between Ath Thuri and Silwan neighborhoods. The animal shelter provided a source of livelihood for a family of five. Also, an owner of a house in the Old City of Jerusalem was forced to demolish a room, which was an extension to his house, after receiving a demolition order. This brings the total number of structures demolished by their owners in East Jerusalem since the beginning of the year to six.

In addition, the Israeli authorities delivered stop-work orders against four houses in Silwan

Palestinian-owned structures demolished in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

This week:

Demolished: 9

Demolished in 2012: 392

Of which residences: 120

People displaced in 2012: 615

2012 vs. 2011 demolitions (weekly av.): 13 vs. 12

2012 vs. 2011 people displaced (weekly av.): 21 vs. 21

neighborhood of East Jerusalem, and against two other residences and two animal shelters in the Hebron governorate. Demolition orders were also issued against an agricultural road and a diesel tank, which is used for commercial purposes, in Haris village (Salfit).

Access restrictions to East Jerusalem eased for Ramadan Friday prayer; additional easings in Jericho and Nablus

On the first Friday of Ramadan (20 July), the Israeli authorities eased restrictions on access to Friday prayers in Al Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem for West Bank ID holders, according to age criteria. In this context, men and women over the age of 40 and children under 12 were allowed to enter East Jerusalem without permits, while the requirement for males and females between the ages of 13 and 40 to obtain permits remained in place. This represents an expansion of the categories of people exempted from the permit requirement compared to last year, which included men over 50 and women over 45. No change has taken place regarding the access of Gaza residents to East Jerusalem, which remains totally banned.

GAZA STRIP

Relative calm in Gaza

The Gaza Strip saw a period of relative calm during the week, with no reports of casualties, armed clashes or air strikes. However, shooting incidents in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas along the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip, as well as to fishing zones beyond three nautical miles from the shore, continued. In two incidents near the fence, Israeli forces opened warning fire towards Palestinian farmers, forcing them to leave the area; and carried out a land leveling incursion a few meters from the fence. On at least one occasion, the Israeli navy opened warning fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore.

According to the Israeli authorities, approximately 24,185 Palestinians entered East Jerusalem on 20 July through four authorized checkpoints (Qalandiya, Gilo, Shu'fat Camp and Az Zeitoun) along the Barrier. Access through the checkpoints was reportedly smooth, with no access-related incidents occurring.

Also on the occasion of Ramadan, the Israeli authorities removed a road block, which has been in place at the main entrance of 'Aqraba village (Nablus), shortening the residents' travel time to Nablus City, their main economic and services hub, for the first time in ten years.

Another positive step was implemented in the Jordan Valley area, in which Israeli forces opened the main, north-eastern historical entrance to Jericho City from Road 90, which had been closed since 2000. As a result, vehicles coming from the central and northern Jordan Valley can avoid a long detour of 4.5 kilometers via Yitav partial checkpoint and access the city directly.

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip:

Killed this week: 0

Killed in 2012: 46

Injured this week: 0

Injured in 2012: 241

2012 weekly average of injured: 8

2011 weekly average of injured: 9

Israeli casualties by Palestinian fire from Gaza

Injured this week: 0

Killed in 2012: 1

Injured in 2012: 18

Also this week, Palestinian armed groups fired a number of projectiles at an Israeli military base near the fence and southern Israel, resulting in no injuries or damage to property.

Slight improvement in electricity production power amid continued fuel shortages

Since the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan (on 20 July), the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) has been able to run its three turbines for the first time in five months, thus increasing its production to 50 megawatts (MW) during the day and 80 MW at night (compared to 30 MW during the day and 55 MW at night since the onset of the electricity crisis in February 2012). The improvement in electricity production reduced power cuts from a daily average of 12 to ten hours per day.

This increase in electricity production took place after four electrical transformers, delivered in April this year by the UN Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) to replace those destroyed by an Israeli air strike in 2006, were installed in the GPP. These transformers should also enable the GPP to raise its operating capacity to around 120 MW, up from the current capacity of 80 MW, should more fuel be delivered to the GPP. To operate in full capacity, the GPP needs over 3.5 million liters of fuel a week. However, in the last few weeks it received less than 2.2 million liters of fuel a week from three sources: purchase from Israel, a donation from Qatar, and transfer through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

Fuel supplied through the tunnels to the private sector, including petrol stations, has reportedly increased by up to 50 percent of the amount (800,000 – one million liters of diesel and benzene)

that entered regularly each day prior to the onset of fuel crisis in December 2011.

The fuel and electricity shortages continue to disrupt the daily life of around 1.6 million Gazans, as well as the delivery of public services, including hospitals and water and wastewater treatment plants, further exacerbating the already difficult conditions inside the Gaza Strip, principally caused by the Israeli blockade, which has been in place for over five years.

Referral Abroad Department remains closed, affecting treatment for hundreds of Gaza patients

The Referral Abroad Department in Gaza has remained closed throughout the week since 17 July, as a result of the continued disagreement between the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza and its counterpart in Ramallah, withholding and delaying the access of hundreds of Gaza patients to essential medical interventions that are unavailable inside Gaza. Due to the urgency of the situation, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) is temporarily processing applications for cases that urgently need treatment outside Gaza, with expenses covered by the MoH in Ramallah. On 26 July, the Referral Abroad Department in Gaza re-opened.

Movement of goods (Kerem Shalom Crossing)

Imports:

Weekly average of truckloads (TL) entered this week: 1,249

TL carrying food: 42%

Weekly average of TL since the beginning of 2012: 1,053

Weekly average of TL before the blockade: 2,807

Exports:

Truckloads this week: 0

Weekly average since the beginning of 2012: 6

Weekly average before the blockade: 240

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

For more information, please contact Mai Yassin at yassinm@un.org or +972 (0)2 5829962.