



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

17 –23 JUNE 2009

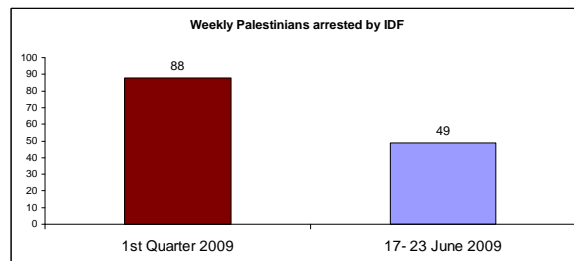
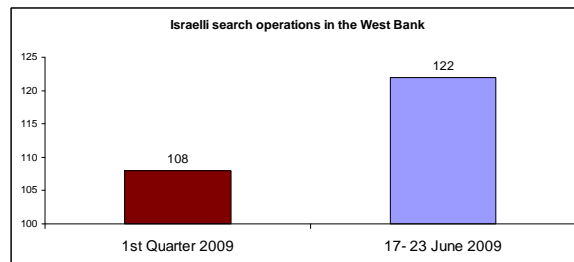
West Bank

Military activities affecting civilians

This week, Israeli military activities resulted in relatively few casualties in the West Bank: two Palestinians were injured—one was physically assaulted at a checkpoint in Azzun Atma (Qalqiliya) and another was injured when hit with a tear-gas canister fired by Israeli forces in the community of Ar Ramadin in the Hebron governorate. In addition, two Israeli soldiers and one border policeman were injured by stone-throwing in anti-Barrier demonstrations held in Ni'lin and Bil'in (Ramallah).

The number of Israeli search operations in the West Bank during the reporting period was approximately 11% higher than the average number of weekly searches in the first quarter of 2009. However, the number of Palestinians arrested by the IDF was 44% lower than the first quarter of 2009.

In addition, 56 Palestinians were arrested by Palestinian security forces, mainly in the northern West Bank, for alleged affiliation with Hamas.



Easing of West Bank access restrictions

At the beginning of the previous reporting period, on 10 June, most infrastructure was removed at Asira ash Shamaliya checkpoint, one of the seven checkpoints controlling access into Nablus city. However, two road gates (currently open) adjacent to the checkpoint remain in place and soldiers perform ad-hoc checks at them. The checkpoint is open 24 hours per day. Also, on 16 June, the main checkpoint controlling the southern access route into Jericho (DCO checkpoint) ceased to be permanently staffed and most of its infrastructure was removed. No change has been observed at the two checkpoints controlling access from the north and the east. (For an update on West Bank Movement and Access, see below).

Continuing Israeli settler violence

During the reporting period, Israeli settlers continued to vandalize private Palestinian property. Israeli settlers cut down approximately 120 trees and set fire to a number of other trees in Abu Rish Valley in the village of Safa, located north of the town of Beit Ummar (Hebron). Israeli security forces declared the valley

a “Closed Military Zone.” On 20 June, an Israeli settler set fire to a tent where three Palestinians were sleeping; no casualties were reported. In the north, a group of approximately 30 Israeli settlers, entered Burin Village (Nablus) and damaged construction materials. Israeli forces intervened and dispersed the settlers. No injuries were reported.

Displacement in the West Bank

Demolitions and Demolition Orders in East Jerusalem

During the reporting period, four families were forced to demolish extensions to their homes, three in Jabal Al Mukabbir and one in the Old City of Jerusalem. A family of eight, including six children, was displaced. In addition, Israeli authorities distributed demolition orders affecting 16 structures, two buildings with a combined total of 24 apartments in Beit Hanina, two uninhabited structures in Al ‘Isawiya, and ten residential structures in Al Bustan and two houses in Wadi Qaddum, both in Silwan. With an average household size of six persons per household, these orders threaten to displace 216 persons. Also during the week, stop construction orders were distributed in the Khan Al Ahmar area against the construction of a new school funded by the Italian organisation, *Vento Terra*, to serve 400 students of the Bedouin community of Arab Al Jahalin.

Hundreds of Palestinians performed Friday prayers near at sit-in tent in Silwan, in protest of the Jerusalem municipality’s demolition orders against Palestinian houses in the area. The Jerusalem municipality has designated all of the Al Bustan area of Silwan as a “green” area, where all construction is prohibited. Of the 90 houses located in the “green” area, the large majority have received demolition orders. More than 1,000 Palestinian residents are at risk of losing their homes if the Jerusalem municipality implements these orders and clears the area of residential construction.

Also during the week, the Jerusalem municipality, accompanied by the Israeli Border Police, leveled several dunums of land in Al ‘Isawiya that, according to an Israeli NGO specialized in planning issues, is slated for inclusion in a planned National Park.

Demolitions and demolition orders in Area C

Israeli military forces demolished 30 structures in two Jordan Valley locales during the week: 15 structures were demolished in Ein al Hilwa in Al Malih area of the Tubas governorate and another 15 were demolished in an area near the town of Al Jiftik in Jericho governorate. Both locales are located in closed military areas. Twenty people, including nine children, were displaced and 79 were otherwise affected. Also during the week, the Israeli authorities distributed demolition orders to two Palestinian families in Fasayil Al Fauqa in the Jericho governorate against structures built without building permits. If carried out, these demolition orders would displace nine people, including six children. Since January 2009, there have been 103 structures demolished in Area C of the West Bank, displacing 285 Palestinians, including 140 children.

From 10-17 June, stop-construction orders were issued in the northern West Bank villages of Azzun ‘Atma (Qalqiliya) and Deir Ballut (Salfit), including five issued against residential structures, and nine issued against residences currently under construction.

Gaza Strip

Military activities affecting civilians

Military activities in the Gaza Strip continued during the week, but without casualties. Israeli forces continue to enforce access restrictions to a “buffer” zone of 300 meters west of the border fence with frequent warning fire. In one incident, IDF tanks and bulldozers entered a few hundred meters into border areas near Al Bureij camp and Al Maghazi camp and conducted land levelling, forcing Palestinian farmers to leave. In another incident, IDF troops opened fire into the border area east of Maghazi Camp, forcing Palestinian farmers to leave and partially damaging a house.

In addition, Palestinian fishermen continue to be restricted to fishing areas within three nautical miles along Gaza’s 38-kilometre coast. During the week, Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire on three separate occasions, forcing fishing boats to return to shore. On one occasion, Israeli naval forces arrested four Palestinian fishermen and seized two of their fishing boats.

During the reporting period, sporadic Palestinian rocket and mortar shells continued to be fired from Gaza towards Israel and IDF troops operating at the border line; no Israelis casualties were reported.

Improvement in access to piped water-9,900 people reconnected to water network

A water network rehabilitation project was completed by Care International in northern Gaza, reconnecting nearly 9,900 people residing in Al Siafa area to the Gaza water network. However, there are still 18,000 residents of Ezbet Abed Rabbo in Northern Gaza and Al Zaitoun area southeast of Gaza city without access to piped water. The rest of the Gaza Strip’s population receives running water at an average of 4 - 6 hours three times per week. Access to water in Gaza will continue to be a problem unless necessary supplies, including spare parts and concrete for repairing of damages sustained during Israel’s “Cast Lead” offensive, are allowed to enter Gaza.

Weekly average of imported truckloads remains below needs - (14-20 June 2009)

This week, 15 truckloads of livestock (367 heads of cattle) and 13 truckloads of agricultural fertilizers were allowed entry to Gaza for the first time since late October and August 2008, respectively. However, restrictions imposed by Israel on imports and exports to and from the Gaza Strip continue to affect living conditions of Gaza’s population.

In total, 771 truckloads of goods entered Gaza during the week, a marked improvement over the average number of truckloads entered in recent weeks--44% higher than the weekly average for the previous four weeks (533), but 28% less than the weekly average of truckloads entered into Gaza in the first five months of 2007—before the Hamas takeover.

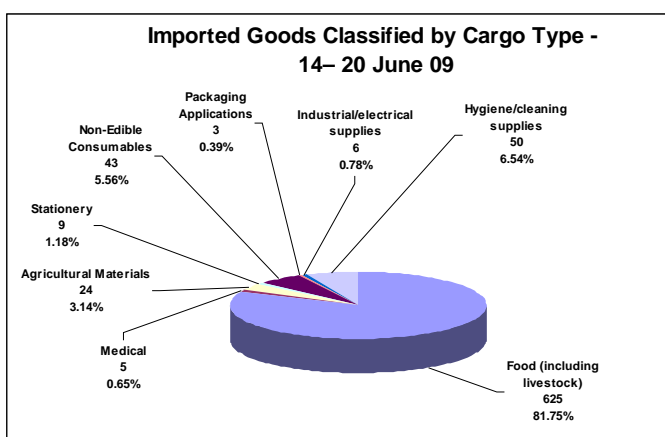
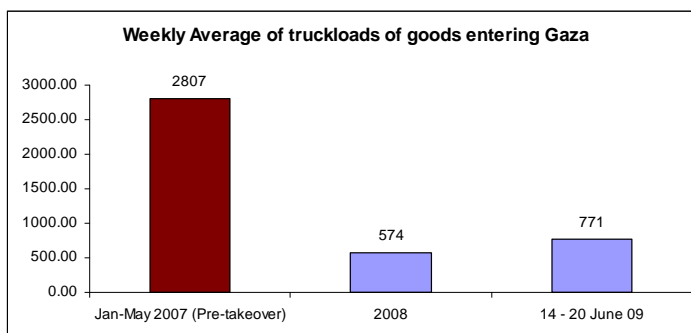
Also, 80 tonnes of cement and 250 tonnes of gravel entered Gaza for private sector use in construction projects located on the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom. This was the first time since early November 2008 that Israel allowed cement into Gaza for public use.

Fuel imports, continuing shortages in cooking gas, and other fuel items (14-20 June 2009)

For the second consecutive week, regional shortages resulted in limited imports of cooking gas to Gaza, according to the Israeli authorities. A total of 463 tonnes of cooking gas entered Gaza this week, roughly equivalent to the amount entered during the previous reporting period. The Gas Stations Owners Association indicated that gas stations have been forced to shut down a minimum of three days per week as a result of the shortage.

Approximately two million litres of industrial gas for the power plant entered this week, approximately 70% of weekly fuel needed for the power plant's operation, as estimated by the Gaza Power Plant officials.

The ban on petrol and diesel imports imposed since 2 November 2008 continues. Since then, Israel has allowed entry to a limited amount of petrol and diesel for humanitarian use. Most petrol and diesel available on the open market for public use is transferred through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. Local sources indicated that amounts of fuel transferred through the tunnels almost doubled this week, with nearly 100,000 litres of diesel and 50,000 litres of petrol transferred into Gaza per day. Egyptian diesel and petrol are still available on the open market, with the price of petrol 3.5 NIS/litre and diesel 2 NIS/litre.



Materials for rehabilitating electrical networks remain restricted

The electricity infrastructure damaged during Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive has not been fully rehabilitated due to the lack of necessary items. The Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) reports that at least 400 electrical spare parts are in short supply, and more than 150 items are completely out of stock. As a result, areas in northern Gaza and Gaza city remain unconnected to the electricity grid.

According to GEDCO, power cuts have increased due to the rise in electricity consumption in summer months, as well as fuel shortages. There is currently a 24% deficit in the available electricity supply, triggering a rolling blackout of 6-8 hours per day throughout the Gaza Strip, with the exception of Rafah. The Gaza Power Plant is currently able to produce only 55MWs of the 80MWs it is capable of when operating at full capacity.

In Focus: West Bank Movement and Access Update 24 June 2009

In the course of the past month the Israeli authorities have implemented several steps that have further eased the flow of Palestinian traffic to and from four West Bank cities: Nablus, Qalqiliya, Ramallah and Jericho. In addition, a number of earthmounds located on secondary routes were removed. None of these steps, except one, included the complete dismantlement of checkpoints' infrastructure.

- **Nablus City** One of the seven checkpoints controlling access into the city ('Asira Ash Shamaliya) is no longer staffed on a permanent basis and part of its infrastructure was removed; yet, two road gates (currently open) adjacent to the checkpoint remained in place and soldiers perform ad-hoc checks at them. While the other six checkpoints around the city remain intact, the permit requirements for vehicles leaving the city, previously implemented on some of these checkpoints, were lifted. In addition, checks are performed only on a random basis and the opening hours were extended.
- **Qalqiliya** Of the two checkpoints controlling access into the city from the south and from the east, one was completely dismantled ('Izbat Jal'ud checkpoint) and the other (DCO checkpoint) ceased to be permanently staffed, while keeping the infrastructure in place. Since the implementation of the latter, IDF soldiers have occasionally staffed the checkpoint without interrupting the flow of traffic.
- **Ramallah** The main checkpoint controlling the northern access route into the city ('Atara checkpoint) ceased to be permanently staffed but most of the checkpoint's infrastructure remained in place. Since then, random vehicle checks by IDF soldiers were reported at the checkpoint for several hours every week. No change has been implemented on the checkpoints controlling access into Ramallah from the south (Qalandiya and Jab'a), the east (Beit El), and the west (Beituniya for goods only).
- **Jericho** The main checkpoint controlling the southern access route into the city (DCO checkpoint) ceased to be permanently staffed and most of its infrastructure was removed. No change has been observed at the two checkpoints controlling access from the north and the east.

To date, following the latest changes, there are a total of 613 closure obstacles within the West Bank territory (excluding checkpoints located on the Green Line), which obstruct the internal movement of Palestinians, including access into East Jerusalem. Despite some definitional differences, this figure has been confirmed by the IDF Central Command and OCHA, following detailed cross-checking and a series of joint field trips.

Of the 613 closure obstacles, 68 are permanently staffed checkpoints (five fewer than one month ago). Thirty-eight (38) of these permanently staffed checkpoints are located on West Bank roads, which eventually lead to East Jerusalem and Israel. The Israeli authorities use these checkpoints to prevent Palestinian access into East Jerusalem and Israel without permits. The location of these checkpoints inside the West Bank blocks Palestinian access to West Bank communities and land on the other side of the checkpoint. In addition, there are 521 unstaffed obstacles, which include roadblocks, earthmounds, earth walls, road barriers,

road gates and trenches, and 24 “partial checkpoints”, which are points of control staffed on an ad-hoc basis.

Not included in the 613 figure, but equally important are 84 obstacles blocking Palestinian access and movement within the Israeli controlled area of Hebron City (H2), 63 crossing points along the Barrier, also known as “Barrier gates”, which control Palestinian movement into West Bank areas on the west side of the Barrier, and an average of 70 random (“flying”) checkpoints deployed every week.

The closure obstacles constitute only one of several layers of a complex system of access restrictions applicable to Palestinians, which include, inter alia, restrictions on the use of main roads, the Barrier and its permit regime, closed military zones and nature reserves, and Israeli settlements and adjacent “buffer zones”.

As elaborated in the latest West Bank Movement and Access Update issued by OCHA in May 2009, some of the measures implemented in the past year have contributed to a further entrenchment of the system of access restrictions. The key elements of this entrenchment are the expansion of the alternative (“fabric of life”) road network and of key permanently staffed checkpoints. While in some cases these measures have eased access, they exact a price from Palestinians in terms of land loss, disruption of traditional routes, and deepening fragmentation of West Bank territory. As a result, these measures have contributed to a reduction in the degree of control that Palestinians have over the West Bank physical space.