



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

24 –30 JUNE 2009

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 30 June 2009

- On 1 July, Israeli military forces shot and injured four Palestinians, including three children in an area south of Nablus City. All four were transported to the hospitals for medical treatment. (Nablus)

West Bank

Military activities affecting civilians

This week, twelve Palestinians, were injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank—roughly 50% of the weekly average of Palestinians injured in the first quarter of 2009. Most of the Palestinian injuries (nine) occurred during a demolition of a structure in East Jerusalem. The remaining Palestinian injuries occurred when Palestinian farmers attempted to reach agricultural land in an area declared closed by the Israeli military. In addition, one Palestinian was physically assaulted by Israeli soldiers staffing a partial checkpoint close to Al Fawwar Refugee Camp.

For the second consecutive week, there have been no Palestinian casualties reported due to anti-Barrier demonstrations in Bil'in and Ni'lin villages. This week, all of those injured in the anti-Barrier demonstrations held in Bil'in and Ni'lin villages were members of Israeli forces—six Israeli troops were injured during anti-Barrier demonstrations and subsequent Israeli search operations. Since mid-April, two Palestinians have been killed by the IDF in anti-Barrier demonstrations. On average, fifteen Palestinians are injured each week at these demonstrations.

This week, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled in favor of a petition to change a ruling by the Israeli Judge Advocate General against a soldier and his commander involved in the shooting of a handcuffed detainee in Ni'lin, from “conduct unbecoming a soldier”, to better reflect the gravity of offence. The petition was submitted by a plaintiff injured in an anti-Barrier demonstration in July 2008 with the assistance of human rights organizations.

Israeli military restrictions on Palestinian access to agricultural land in the southern West Bank:

Near the village of Safa, north of the town of Beit Ummar (Hebron), Israeli soldiers continued to prevent weekly actions by Palestinians, with support from Israeli and international activists, to reach their agricultural land in the Abu Rish Valley. The valley is located beneath the settlement of Bat Ayin (Bethlehem). Fourteen Israeli activists and two foreign nationals were detained and two Palestinians, including a photo-journalist, and an Israeli activist were injured.

Israeli and Palestinian search and arrest operations in the West Bank

The number of Israeli search operations in the West Bank was approximately 12% higher than the average number of weekly searches in the first quarter of 2009. However, the number of Palestinians arrested by the IDF was 48% lower than the first quarter of 2009.

In addition, 69 Palestinians were arrested by Palestinian security forces, mainly in the northern West Bank, for alleged affiliation with Hamas.

Demolitions in the West Bank continue

East Jerusalem: There were three demolitions, including two forced self-demolitions, for lack of building permit, resulting in the displacement of eleven Palestinians, including seven children in Jabal al Mukabbir and Al 'Isawiya neighbourhoods. On 30 June, the Jerusalem municipality demolished an uninhabited part of a two-storey building in At Tur neighbourhood, affecting eight people, including six children. During the demolition, nine family members were injured when they tried to resist the demolition. They were evacuated to hospital for medical treatment.

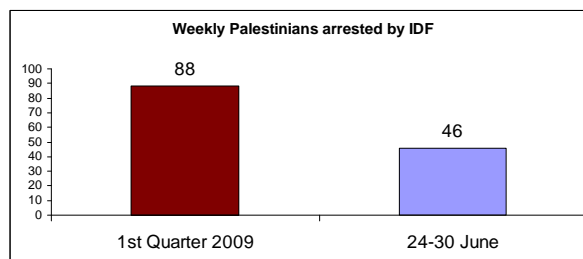
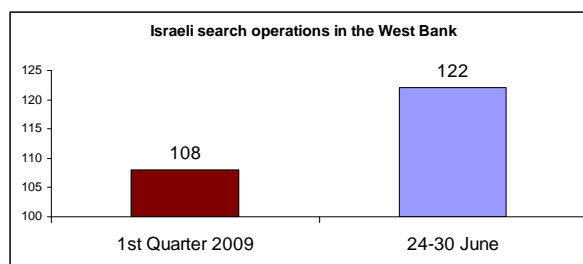
During the week, a group of Israeli settlers attempted to take over a Palestinian house belonging to a Palestinian family in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Palestinian residents of the neighbourhood prevented the settlers from entering the house. On 28 June, previously issued eviction orders against two Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah were renewed until 29 July 2009. The land on which the two houses are located is the subject of a protracted legal battle contesting ownership of the land. .

New demolition orders issued: During the week, the Jerusalem Municipality distributed demolition orders against two uninhabited structures in Al 'Isawiya and Al Tur neighbourhoods, and against a residence in As Suwwana neighbourhood.

According to Israeli media, the Jerusalem municipality has plans to freeze demolition orders against 70 percent of East Jerusalem homes that were built without a permit, and will negotiate compensation with the families affected by the execution of the remaining 30 percent of orders. Media reports quoted municipal officials stating that unauthorized construction is due to the restrictive permit policies imposed on Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, noting that in 2008 only 18 permits were issued.

Displacement in the Jordan Valley

After being informed by the Israeli authorities of planned military training in the area, approximately twenty families from Al Malih area (Tubas, Jordan Valley) were forced to evacuate their tents for several hours one night during the week, taking only their mattresses and tractors, and leaving behind their tents and sheep. However, following coordination between the Israeli and Palestinian District Coordination Liaison (DCL) offices, the families returned to their homes, but were forced to remain inside their tents for the duration of military training.



Israeli settler related violence and other related incidents

During the reporting period, settler harassment of Palestinian communities in the northern West Bank districts of Nablus and Qalqiliya increased, in comparison to previous weeks, with groups of Israeli settlers rioting and vandalizing Palestinian property in several villages on 29 June. In the village of 'Asira al Qibliya (Nablus), a group of more than 30 armed Israeli settlers, mostly from Yitzhar settlement, rioted, surrounding Palestinian homes, and setting fire to trees and crops on village land. Clashes erupted between the villages' Palestinian residents and the Israeli settlers resulting in the injury of two Palestinians and one Israeli settler. On the same day, Israeli settlers targeted the Palestinian villages of Burin (Nablus) and Far'ata (Nablus), setting fire to agricultural land and uprooting approximately 20 trees.

Also during the week, on 23 June, a group of Israeli settlers from Avne Hefez settlement erected a tent west of Kafr Al Labad village. This site had been previously leveled by an Israeli bulldozer in 2005. (Tulkarm)

Israeli settler violence in East Jerusalem

Seven Palestinians, including a woman and an infant, were physically assaulted with clubs and rifle butts by a group of armed Israeli settlers in Silwan neighbourhood. The clashes began after an Israeli settler prevented a Silwan resident from parking his car, after which a group of armed settlers arrived and physically assaulted Palestinians in the area. Clash erupted, resulting in seven Palestinians injured, three of whom were evacuated to the hospital. In addition, three vehicles were damaged.

Proposal to declare 138,500 dunums near the Dead Sea as "State Land"

During the reporting period, the Land Registration Office in the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim placed twelve notices in the Palestinian newspaper *Al Quds* regarding the registration of 138,500 dunums of West Bank land, near the Dead Sea, as "State Land." The total land area to be registered comprises approximately 2% of the West Bank. Israeli authorities (Custodian of State Property) claim that the lands were previously part of the Dead Sea, but later uncovered as a result of evaporation. According to the authorities, their intention is to prevent the land from being taken over by private parties.

Gaza Strip

Military activities continue to impact civilians' livelihoods

Israeli military forces continue to enforce access restrictions on the so-called "buffer zone" in Gaza border areas and beyond three nautical miles from Gaza's coast, driving Palestinians hundreds of meters away from the Gaza Strip's border with Israel and fishing areas. The buffer zone, officially up to 300 metres from the border, is enforced by frequent warning fire from the IDF in the direction of Palestinian farmers working in the area. This week, a 10-year-old Palestinian boy was injured when IDF troops stationed on the border east of Johr Ed Deek area, north-east of Buriej Camp, opened fire towards a group of farmers working near the border. In addition, Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire on three separate occasions, targeting Palestinian fishing boats west of Beit Lahia, forcing the boats to return to shore.

Palestinian armed factions continued to launch sporadic rounds of rudimentary rocket fire towards southern Israel and IDF troops stationed at the border. In addition, Palestinian factions set off explosives on two separate occasions near Israeli troops patrolling in border areas. No Israeli injuries were reported due to any of these attacks.

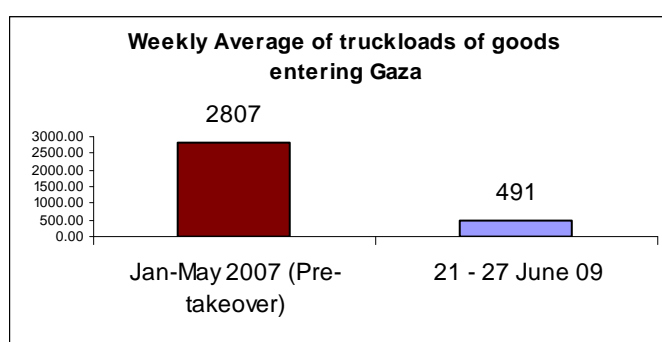
Other Casualties

Two Palestinians workers were killed and two others were injured when a house damaged during Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive collapsed while they were removing the rubble, east of Gaza city. A joint UNRWA-UNDP housing survey found that 3,700 housing units were totally destroyed and 2,700 sustained major damages.

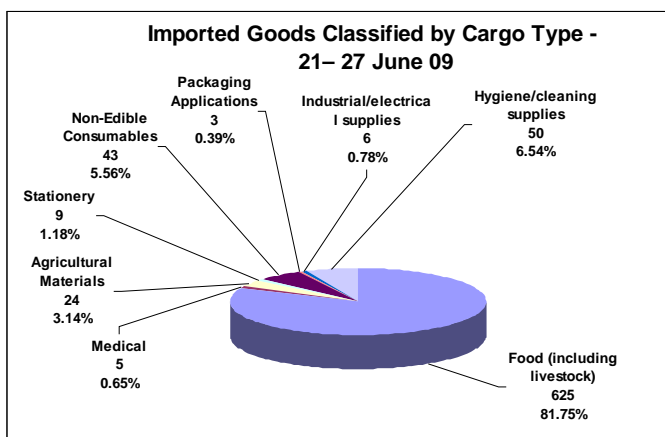
Weekly average of imported truckloads remains below needs

Restrictions imposed by Israel on imports and exports to and from the Gaza Strip continue to damage the living conditions of the population. Only limited numbers of select items are allowed entry to Gaza.

This week, a total of 417 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, less than 18% of the weekly average during the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas takeover.



The entry of other major essential goods, including materials for reconstruction, spare parts for water and sanitation projects, and industrial and agricultural materials remain barred from entry or restricted to limited quantities.



Decline in cooking gas continues, and other limitations on fuel imports

(21 -27 June 2009)

For the third consecutive week, there has been a decrease in the amount of cooking gas entered into Gaza; 544 tonnes of cooking gas entered this week, roughly 53% of the average weekly import in April and May 2009, and less than 32% of Gaza's needs as estimated by GSOA. Cooking gas is still available on the open market, albeit with occasional shortages.

In addition, approximately two million litres of industrial gas for the power plant entered this week, approximately 64% of weekly fuel needed for the power plant's operation. No petrol or diesel fuel has been imported into Gaza through the Nahal Oz fuel pipeline since 2 November 2008, except for limited quantities for UNRWA. Since that date, most petrol and diesel in Gaza, available on the open market for public use, is transferred through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

Tunnels incidents along Gaza-Egypt border continue to cause fatalities

The transfer of basic goods continues through underground tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. This week, one Palestinian was killed and six others were trapped for several hours when a tunnel collapsed in As Salam area, south of Rafah.

Access to and from Gaza remains severely restricted

It has been two years since Rafah, the main crossing for the Gaza population, closed in June 2007. Since then, the crossing has opened on an exceptional basis to allow the departure and return of humanitarian cases. This week, Rafah Crossing was partially opened from 27 - 29 June for the passage of a limited number of Palestinian medical and humanitarian cases.