



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

30 SEPTEMBER – 6 OCTOBER 2009

Latest Developments since Tuesday, 6 October

- 6 October: According to Israeli media, an Israeli soldier was arrested on suspicion of beating the Palestinian head of the Bil'in Committee against the Wall, during a nighttime raid of the village. According to the reports, the man was later hospitalized for injuries and the Israeli army has imposed a gag order on information about the soldier or the investigation.
- 7 October: Israeli media reported that approximately 3,000 members of the Likud party gathered near Sebastia village, to the northwest of Nablus, in a "demonstration of Israeli sovereignty in the region."

West Bank, including East Jerusalem

Tensions remain high in and around the Old City of Jerusalem; a boy killed in Ya'abad (Jenin)

During the reporting period, Israeli-Palestinian violence continued to increase. Israeli forces killed a 17-year-old Palestinian boy and injured 29 Palestinians, including five children. Since the beginning of 2009, 18 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and 700 injured.

On 30 September, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy died after he was hit by an Israeli jeep in the village of Ya'bad (Jenin). Following the incident, which Israeli forces said was an accident, clashes took place between Israeli forces and the boy's classmates, who threw stones at Israeli troops. Tear gas was fired at the demonstrators. No additional injuries were reported.¹

Tensions continued to be high in East Jerusalem this week. Clashes erupted for the second time in a two-week period between Palestinian residents and Israeli forces inside the Old City of Jerusalem, spreading to the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Wadi al Joz, Ras al 'Amud, At Tur and Shufat camp, Abu Dis and at the checkpoint of Qalandiya.

The clashes began after the Israeli authorities imposed age restrictions on access to the Mosque, following the entry of tens of Palestinians into the Mosque compound. According to Palestinian media, there are between 150 – 200 Palestinian worshippers maintaining an ongoing presence in the Mosque, following the calls of various political and religious leaders to protect Al Aqsa from attempts by Israeli settlers to break in to the Mosque compound. An attempted visit to the Mosque compound by a group of Israelis, protected by Israeli security forces, on 27 September sparked widespread protest. This week, Israeli security forces prohibited Palestinian men under 50 from entering the Mosque, allowing entry only to Palestinian men over 50 who hold Jerusalem IDs, along with women of all ages.

1. Please note that in the previous week's report, this child was reported in the "Latest Developments" section as having been hit by the jeep *during* clashes. Information available in the days that followed clarified that the boy was hit *before* the clashes began.

During the clashes, 18 Palestinians sustained injuries, including 16 Palestinians (of whom, two were children) in the Old City and another two at Qalandiya checkpoint. In the course of the confrontations, Israeli police closed off areas in and around the Old City of Jerusalem over a period of three days (4, 5 and 6 October). In addition, all schools located inside the Old City of Jerusalem were forced to close over this period. Restrictions on entry to the Old City itself have also been reported.

Among this week's other injuries, eight Palestinians were wounded during the weekly anti-Barrier demonstrations in Ni'lin, Bil'in (Ramallah) and Al Ma'sara village (Bethlehem), including three children. In addition, two international activists and two Israeli soldiers were wounded during the demonstrations. Of the remaining three injuries, one was sustained in a search operation in Jaba' village (Jerusalem), and the two others took place on two separate incidents when physically assaulted by Israeli forces at the checkpoints of Tappuah (Salfit) and Shu'fat (Jerusalem). Additionally, an Israeli soldier sustained light wounds at the latter checkpoint, after he was stabbed by a 16-year-old Palestinian boy; the boy was subsequently detained by Israeli police.

During the period, Israeli forces conducted a total of 134 search and arrest operations throughout the West Bank, the majority of which took place in the northern West Bank (103); a total of 98 Palestinians were arrested.

Rise in settler-related incidents

During the reporting period, OCHA recorded a total of 13 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians, almost twice the weekly average since the beginning of 2009 (7). Incidents included property damage, physical assault and access prevention, with four separate incidents resulting in four Palestinian injuries.

Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured two children (aged 4 and 13) on two separate incidents inside the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2). A Palestinian man was physically assaulted and injured by Israeli settlers in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood (Jerusalem) and another sustained wounds when hit by a settler vehicle, driving on Road 60 near Al Khader village (Bethlehem).

Settlers from Eli settlement set fire to Palestinian land belonging to Qaryut village (Nablus), damaging 70 olive trees. This event happened shortly after the villagers removed part of the earthmound blocking the village entrance, located between the Eli and Shilo settlements. The Israeli army later replaced the earthmound. In the Ramallah governorate, a group of settlers cut down 50 olive trees belonging to Deir Ammar village and damaged a shack, stole agricultural tools, and uprooted five trees belonging to a farmer from Turmus 'Ayya village. In Wadi Al Hussein area (H2 Hebron), Israeli bulldozers ploughed an area of 1.5 dunams, which was used by settlers for religious celebrations.

Israeli forces intensified their presence in the H2 area of Hebron and increased the number of raids and patrols in the Palestinian-controlled area of H1 during the reporting period, when an estimated 30,000 Israeli Jewish worshippers entered the H2 area to celebrate the Jewish feast of Sukkot. The Ibrahimi Mosque was closed to Muslim prayers during the Jewish holidays.

A further two incidents affecting settlers took place during the reporting period, one of which resulted in the injury of one settler, when Palestinians hurled stones at his car while travelling on

Road 60 near Turmus 'Ayya village. Israeli forces conducted a search operation in the village. Palestinians near Ma'aleh Adumim settlement (Jericho) also hurled stones at Israeli vehicles driving in the area resulting in no injury or damage.

Findings of OCHA field monitoring into the IDF's announced removal of closures

During the reporting period, OCHA completed its fieldwork monitoring the announced removal of 100 closure obstacles, mainly earthmounds, by the Israeli authorities during the previous period.

Based on the GPS coordinates provided by the IDF and following completion of its fieldwork, OCHA can confirm that 35 of the 100 were removed, and 22 remained in place. OCHA was unable to locate the remaining 43 obstacles on the IDF list, either because there was no evidence of obstacles removed at the coordinates provided, or because the coordinates indicated a position outside the West Bank. Only 39 of the obstacles included on the list of 100 are included in OCHA's regular database, indicating that the significance of the remaining 61, in terms of access and movement, could be minimal. In the course of this fieldwork, OCHA identified the removal of an additional six obstacles, not included on the IDF list.

At present, there are 592 movement obstacles in the West Bank (excluding eight Green Line checkpoints), down from 618. Of the 592, there are: 69 permanently staffed checkpoints, 23 partial checkpoints and 500 unstaffed obstacles (earthmounds, road gates, roadblocks, earthwalls and trenches).

During the period, the Israeli authorities imposed a general closure, beginning 1 October, to last through 10 October. All Palestinians holding West Bank IDs, including permit holders, are prohibited access into Jerusalem and Israel, with the exception for employees of international organizations and humanitarian cases.

Nine stop work orders affecting Palestinian-owned structures in Area C delivered

During the period, OCHA received reports that the Israeli authorities' distributed nine stop work orders against Palestinian-owned structures in Area C due to the fact that the construction was being conducted without an Israeli-issued permit. Eight of the affected structures, including seven residential buildings (with over 12 apartments), and one structure for poultry production, are in Azzun village (Qalqiliya). Over 40 people, of whom at least 12 are children, currently live in these houses. An additional stop work order was issued against a house in the village of Al Ma'sara (Bethlehem), affecting 10 people. There are some 3,000 outstanding demolition orders affecting structures in Area C of the West Bank.

20 Female Palestinian prisoners released

During the week, the Israeli authorities released 20 Palestinian females from Israeli prisons. The women were freed in return for the release of a short video of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, currently held captive by Hamas. According to the Palestinian NGO Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, which represents Palestinians arrested and tried by the Israeli military authorities, following the release, there are 33 Palestinian women being held in Israeli prison and detention facilities.

Foundations being laid for 800 settlement housing units

During the week, the Israeli organization Peace Now released findings indicating that significant settlement expansion has taken place in the past three months. According to Peace Now, expansion work is taking place in 34 settlements, 16 of which are located east of the Barrier. The organization estimates that the infrastructure works underway lay the foundation for a total of 800 housing units. In addition, some 55 buildings are being completed and another 50 have had their foundations laid.

Also during the week, the Israeli media reported that the Israeli High Court of Justice reversed a previous decision and issued an interim order halting unauthorized construction of 15 houses in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Netafim (Salfit). The development occurred in the context of a Peace Now petition to force the Israeli authorities to act against illegal construction in the settlement. According to the media, while the Court had originally denied the request, it reconsidered upon receiving information that construction was ongoing, in spite of stop-work orders issued by the Israeli Civil Administration.

Gaza Strip

Two Palestinian civilians killed, military activities continue to affect civilians' lives

Two Palestinian civilians were killed and 12 injured during the week; all but one casualty occurred during Israeli air force attacks on tunnels. This week's casualties compare to three killed and another three injured the previous week.

On 30 September, two Palestinian civilians were killed (aged 35 and 45) and nine others were injured when the Israeli air force fired at least two rockets near the underground tunnels they were working in. Two other Palestinians were injured in a similar incident later the same day. According to the Israeli media, the attacks were in response to the firing of rockets from Gaza towards southern Israel. Sporadic rocket and mortar shell fire towards southern Israel, including military bases, located at the border, continued during the week. No Israeli casualties or damage were reported.

On 6 October, Ash-Shuhada Boys Secondary School in the Ash-Shuja'iyya neighborhood of Gaza City, with a total of 500 students, came under fire from Israeli tank shells; seven of the artillery shells hit near the school, with one making direct impact. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, this is the fourth time that Israeli forces have hit this school since the "Cast Lead" offensive, during which five of the school's students were killed. The school is located less than 1.5 kilometres from the Gaza border fence, in the closest built-up area in Gaza to the border.

Israeli forces continued to enforce access restrictions by opening warning fire in the direction of farmers and fishermen accessing agricultural areas along the border fence with Israel, and fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the coast. A 16-year-old boy was shot and injured on 5 October, when IDF troops, northwest of Beit Lahia, opened fire in his direction while he was approaching the border fence. In addition, on nine separate occasions, IDF tanks and bulldozers entered a few hundred meters into the border areas, forcing Palestinian farmers to leave their agricultural lands. On three incidents during the reporting period, Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them to return to shore.

Also, on 1 October, three men were injured when an explosive device they were handling detonated. Two children were injured the same day while playing with explosive ordnance.

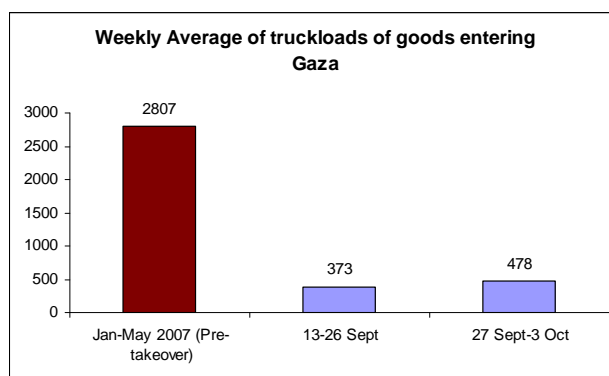
Two killed as tunnels under Gaza-Egypt border continue to claim lives

This week, in addition to the tunnels-related deaths and injuries reported above, there were two separate incidents, during which two Palestinian were killed while working inside tunnels along the Rafah-Egypt border. A 22-year-old male was killed after being electrocuted while inside a tunnel and a 27-year-old male was killed in a tunnel collapse.

The transfer of basic goods through the tunnels continues to pose risks to the lives of those working inside them. While the tunnels have provided some short term relief to the population, through the supply of otherwise unavailable goods, economically, they do not constitute a sustainable alternative to lifting the blockade and the resumption of movement through the official crossings into Israel. Since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, OCHA has recorded the death of 107 people in tunnel-related incidents. Of these, 51 were killed in 2009.

Weekly average of imported truckloads remains below needs (27 Sep -3 Oct 2009)

This week, a total of 478 truckloads of goods, including 54 truckloads (11 percent) designated for aid agencies, entered Gaza, 37 percent higher than the number of truckloads entered last week (303). This week's figure constitutes around 17 percent of the weekly average of the 2,807 truckloads entered during the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas takeover. An average of 80 truckloads /day was allowed entry this week, nearly 83 percent below the daily average of 475 truckloads entered during May 2007.



Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods, 462 truckloads, or 97 percent, of total imports. The remaining three percent included limited shipments of agricultural materials, packaging materials, medical supply and non-edible consumables. The entry of other major essential goods, including materials for reconstruction (cement, steel bars, glass, wood and others), spare parts for water and sanitation projects, packaging material, industrial and electrical materials, IT equipment and vehicles remain either restricted to limited quantities, or barred from entry. No exports were allowed this week. Gaza's last shipment of exports was on 27 April 2009.

Fuel imports remain below estimated needs

No petrol or diesel was entered via Nahal Oz this week. However, Egyptian petrol and diesel, which is transferred through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, remain available on the open market with nearly 100,000 litres of diesel and 100,000 litres of petrol transferred into Gaza per day.

Imports of cooking gas decreased by five percent, compared to the previous week (558 vs. 587 tons). While this amount represents only 32 percent of the weekly needs, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association, cooking gas is still available on the open market, but with limited shortages.

This week, there was a 37 percent increase in the amount of industrial gas delivered to the Gaza Power Plant (GPP), compared to the previous week (3,551,540 vs. 2,226,010). This amount represents 13 percent more than the estimated weekly needs. The GPP authority indicated that the increase is to compensate for the lack of gas delivered during the closure taking place during the Jewish holidays.