



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

10 - 23 November 2010

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

Since 24 November: The Israeli authorities demolished 18 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), as well as a mosque. These actions forcibly displaced 54 people.

The Israeli authorities approved the export of a shipment of strawberries and cut flowers from Gaza at the beginning of next week, the first such exports since 18 April 2010.

West Bank

23 Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

During the two-week reporting period, Israeli forces injured 23 Palestinians, the majority of them in weekly demonstrations. Since the beginning of 2010, Israeli forces have injured 1,074 Palestinians, of whom 30 percent were injured in weekly protests. In comparison, a total of 764 Palestinians were injured during the equivalent period in 2009.

Fifteen Palestinians and one Israeli activist were injured in clashes that erupted during the weekly demonstrations against the expansion of an Israeli settlement (Hallamish) and the construction of the Barrier (Bil'in village) in the Ramallah area, and against restrictions on access to land (Beit Ummar village) in the Hebron area. Another four Palestinians, including two children (aged 12 and 14), who were herding their animals near the settlements of Suseya and Karmel in the Hebron area, were physically assaulted and injured by Israeli forces in two separate confrontations.

Also this week, Israeli forces surrounded a high school in the village of Jit (Qalqiliya governorate) while the students were holding a ceremony in commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the death of the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. The school management evacuated the students after Israeli forces threatened to raid the school. The trigger for the Israeli operation remains unclear.

During the week, Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail at soldiers staffing the Qalandiya checkpoint, the main Barrier checkpoint controlling access into East Jerusalem from the north, injuring one Israeli soldier.

Israeli forces conducted 57 search and arrest operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) during the week, well below the weekly average of such operations in 2010 (93). In one case, in the Beit Ula village (Hebron governorate), the furniture and windows of nine houses sustained damage.

East Jerusalem: Evictions of Palestinian families and demolitions

On 23 November, a group of Israeli settlers, accompanied by the Israeli police, took over a Palestinian residential building consisting of three apartments in Jabal al Mukabber village in East Jerusalem. As a result, three families comprising 14 people (including five children) were displaced. Initial reports indicate that the settlers claim to have purchased the building from a deceased relative of the family a few years ago. However, the exact nature of the transaction remains disputed as some of the former Palestinian owners claim that their signatures on sales documents were falsified.

This is the second building taken over by settlers since the beginning of the year. In late July, settlers took over eight of nine housing units in a building in the Old City of Jerusalem, displacing eight families (29 people). In 2008 and 2009, three Palestinian families were evicted from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem.

In the Al 'Isawiya village in East Jerusalem, the Jerusalem municipality demolished four structures, including three animal shacks and a storage room for fodder, due to the lack of permit. Twenty trees were uprooted and two dunums of land were leveled during the demolition. Israeli forces continue to seal two out of four entrances to the village, while access through an additional entrance is controlled by a flying checkpoint, forcing the residents to make long detours. In the last three weeks, Al 'Isawiya is undergoing a wave of operations targeting tax evaders and "illegal" buildings. These have led to violent clashes where 19 children were injured.

Incidents in the context of Israeli settler violence

During the reporting period, OCHA documented five settler-related incidents that resulted in Palestinian injuries and damage to Palestinian property. Since the beginning of the year, OCHA has recorded a weekly average of six incidents resulting in injuries or damage to property, including the uprooting and burning of thousands of trees. Another seven incidents this week involving Palestinians affected settlers and their property.

Settlers threw stones at Palestinian children on their way to school on the main road near Tuqu' village (Bethlehem governorate), injuring two of them (aged 10 and 13). Confrontations erupted between Israeli forces and residents of the village following the incident; no injuries were reported. Fires, allegedly set by Israeli settlers, were reported in the villages of Safa and Surif in the Hebron area, Jit in the Qalqiliya area and Salim in the Nablus area. As a result, over 300 olive trees and dozens of fig and pine trees were damaged in the four villages.

In two separate incidents, Palestinians hurled stones at Israeli-plated vehicles driving in the Hebron area, injuring three settlers. Five similar incidents occurred in the Hebron and Bethlehem governorates, resulting in damage to five settler vehicles.

Israeli authorities announced an easing of access restrictions

On the occasion of the Muslim feast of Eid Al Adha from 17 to 20 November, the Israeli authorities announced a number of easings on access restrictions in the West Bank. These measures included: the removal of 24 closure obstacles; expanding the operating hours at two crossings located on the Green Line in the Jenin area; and allowing men over 50 over and women over 45, who hold West Bank IDs, to enter Jerusalem for the Friday prayer without a permit. The last two measures were in effect only during the period of the feast. OCHA is in the process of confirming the removal of the closures announced.

Gaza Strip

Air strikes and restrictions on access to land continue; two boys killed in tunnel collapse

During the reporting period, Israeli forces killed two Palestinians and injured ten others in incidents involving air strikes and access restrictions to land near the fence dividing Israel and the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of the year, 58 Palestinians (including 22 civilians) have been killed and 233 Palestinians (including 208 civilians) have been injured in Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip.

On 17 November, the Israeli Air Force targeted a car containing an alleged senior member of the “Army of Islam” faction in Gaza City. The man and his brother, also allegedly affiliated to this faction, were killed. Two separate air strikes hit a house under construction in the Deir Al Balah area and an open field east of Khan Younis, injuring five Palestinian civilians including two children (aged 13 and 2.5). The house also sustained severe damage. The air strikes were reportedly carried out in retaliation for the firing of rockets at southern Israel by Palestinian factions. No Israeli injuries or damage to property were reported as a result of the rocket fire.

Israeli restrictions on access to areas located up to 1,500 metres (a buffer zone comprising 17 percent of Gaza’s territory) from the fence continue to result in casualties. In five separate incidents this week, Israeli forces opened fire at Palestinian workers collecting scrap metal in this buffer zone, injuring five of them, including a 13-year-old boy. In another two separate incidents, Israeli forces opened fire at farmers working on their land near the fence; no injuries were reported. One farmer, however, sustained shrapnel wounds this week when an UXO (unexploded ordnance) exploded near the fence, east of Khan Younis. On eight separate occasions, Israeli forces launched incursions with bulldozers and tanks a few hundred meters into the Gaza Strip and withdrew after leveling land.

Barring access to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore remains in place. In four separate incidents, Israeli naval forces opened ‘warning’ fire at Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore. No injuries were reported.

Also this week, two boys (aged 11 and 12) were killed and another one (aged 14) was injured when one of the tunnels, allegedly built for military purposes by Palestinian factions in the Jabaliya area, collapsed.

A three-month suspended prison sentence for the use of a child as a human shield during the “Cast Lead” offensive

Two Israeli soldiers received a three-month suspended prison sentence after being convicted by an Israeli military court of using a Palestinian child as a human shield during Israel “Cast Lead” offensive last year. The soldiers were charged with forcing a nine-year-old boy to open bags they thought might contain explosives. So far, four Israeli soldiers, including the two convicted this week, have been prosecuted in the context of allegations of misconduct during “Cast Lead”.

Reduction in operating days at Rafah Crossing

According to the Palestinian Crossing and Border authorities in Gaza, the opening days at Rafah Crossing, which is controlled by the Egyptian authorities, will be reduced from seven to five days a week. The crossing was also closed over a four-day period during the Eid Al Adha holiday. The crossing has been partially opened since 31 May 2010, allowing certain categories of people to pass through, including humanitarian cases, mainly patients and their companions, students and holders of foreign passports. Prior to this date, Rafah only opened sporadically for three days a month. Since the beginning of the year, 337 people have entered Gaza and 344 people have exited on average each day. These figures are well below the daily average of 650 people who crossed each way in the first five months of 2006, before the partial closure of the crossing.

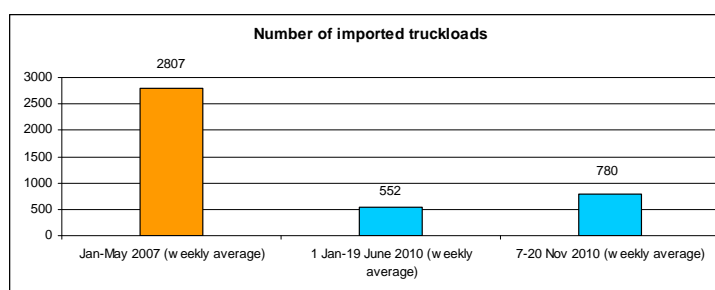
Wheat reserves continue to decline

During the reporting period (7-20 November), a weekly average of 780 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, well below the weekly average entering since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade on

20 June 2010 (944). The closure of the crossings over Eid Al Adha period is the reason for the decline. This represents around 28 percent of the weekly average of imports recorded before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Food items made up 53 percent of imports, compared to less than 20 percent of total imports prior to the blockade.

Low quantities of wheat continue to enter Gaza through the conveyor belt at Karni Crossing. This crossing operates only two days a week: one day is allocated for the transfer of wheat and animal feed; and the other for gravel for approved international projects. Prior to the easing, wheat and animal feed entered on both days. While overall volumes of imports have increased since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade, there has been a sharp decline in the volume of wheat grain allowed into Gaza, with imports decreasing by around one-quarter in the period from June to October compared to the previous five months (48,609 vs. 64,273 tonnes). The main constraint is the limited operation of the conveyor belt at the Karni crossing.

According to the Gaza six mills, there are over 500 truckloads of wheat delayed and waiting to enter Gaza. As of 23 November, there were some 3,990 tonnes of grain available at the six mills in the Gaza Strip and 160 tonnes of wheat flour at the local market, quantities that cover the population's needs for up to six and a half days. As a result of depletion of wheat reserves, five mills were forced to close over a period of two days during the reporting period (16-18 November).



Electricity production remains below demand; daily power cuts reached up to 12 hours

A weekly average of around 1.5 million litres of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) entered Gaza, almost the same amount as since the beginning of the year. The total provision of electricity throughout the Gaza Strip stands at about 40 percent below the estimated daily demand of 280 MW. Approximately 30 MW of power are produced by the GPP and 120 MW and 17 MW are purchased from Israel and Egypt, respectively, providing Gaza with less than 200 MW. This shortfall results in average daily power cuts of up to 12 hours. However, during the Eid Al Adha feast (17-20 November), the GPP electricity production stood at 60 MW, as saved fuel was used. Consequently, power cuts were reduced to 4-6 hours per day.

The ongoing power cuts affect daily life throughout the Gaza Strip, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage treatment and removal, and the functioning of health services. Access to running water also remains a daily challenge for the population due to power cuts. Twenty percent of Gazans living in areas including Gaza City, Rafah and Jabaliya, have access to running water only once every five days (6 to 8 hours); 50 percent have access once every four days (6 hours); and 30 percent receive running water once every two days (6 to 8 hours).