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Protection of Civilians Weekly Report No. 273

13 – 19 August 2008

Military activities affecting civilian lives and property: two children shot by plastic-coated metal bullets

The IDF injured 14 Palestinians in the West Bank this week, including three children and one woman. Among the children, two were injured with plastic-coated metal bullets during an incursion into Ad Duheisha refugee camp (Bethlehem) and one was physically assaulted during a search operation in Taffuh village (Hebron). The injured also include a mentally-challenged person whom the IDF physically assaulted while he was grazing his sheep in Ni'lin (Ramallah). Also in Ni'lin, the IDF fired over 140 tear gas canisters at worshippers gathered to perform Friday prayers to prevent an anti-Barrier demonstration after the prayers; as a result, six people were hospitalised due to severe asphyxia (see *Demonstrations*).

This week, 97 IDF search operations and 59 arrests/detentions of Palestinians were reported; one of the lowest weekly figures reported this year. Thus far, the August weekly averages represent a 28% reduction in IDF search operations and a 36% reduction in arrests/detentions compared to July 2008. However, significant property damage continues to be reported in the course of IDF search operations in the West Bank; more than 30 houses were reportedly damaged this week in the Hebron governorate.

Land destruction: The IDF began leveling land in Rummana village after requisitioning 6.5 dunums for military purposes (Jenin). Moreover, the IDF issued an order this week to requisition 1,500 m² from Tel Rumeida neighbourhood in Hebron City (H2) for the purpose of enlarging a military camp.

In the Gaza Strip, there were no casualties for the third consecutive week. Palestinian militants fired one mortar and three rockets towards southern Israel but no injuries or damage were reported. IDF patrol boats continued to obstruct the activities of Palestinian fishermen; IDF vessels pursued Palestinian fishing boats on 16 August, confiscated one boat and detained two fishermen before releasing them later in the day.

Decline in imports to Gaza and shortage in school supplies

During the past two months (19 June – 19 August), the Israeli authorities have allowed small quantities of several new items (e.g.

cement, clothes, juices, agricultural materials) to enter Gaza. Overall, this has not generated a significant improvement in the humanitarian and economic situation due to the continued ban on exports, the prohibited import of many items including almost all raw materials, and the limitations on the *quantity* of imported commodities. Indeed, over the past three weeks, the total number of imported truckloads into the Gaza Strip has consistently declined (1,478 to 1,366, 884 and 835 this week). Since 19 June 2008, 7,163 truckloads of goods have entered the Gaza Strip, which is 34% lower than May 2007 (10,921 truckloads) and 47% lower than December 2005 (13,430 truckloads).

The Israeli authorities continued to prohibit the import of several essential commodities, such as school stationery, school uniforms, kitchen appliances and raw materials for the food industry, among others. The shortage in school supplies has rendered school uniforms unaffordable to many families. As a result, the authorities in Gaza announced on 15 August that families will not be required to purchase school uniforms this year. Officials in Gaza also announced that they will distribute six million dollars in aid to needy families over the next six months. The academic year is scheduled to begin on 24 August for public schools and on 1 September for UNRWA schools. Gaza's student population is estimated at 450,000.

Israeli settlers injured 35 Palestinians, including nine children, in one month

Over the past month, Israeli settlers have injured 35 Palestinians, including nine children. During this period, settlers from Al Rajabi House and Kiryat Arba settlements have regularly attacked Palestinians and their houses in the H2 area of Hebron City. This week, Israeli settlers injured six Palestinians, including two children and two women, in this area by physically assaulting them or throwing stones and empty bottles at them. They also placed large quantities of garbage at the entrance of Al Ras Mosque and attempted to set it on fire but were prevented by Palestinians living in the area. South of As Samu', seven masked settlers from Asa'el outpost prevented four farmers from accessing their lands (Hebron).

In Salfit governorate, a 52-year-old farmer was injured when an Israeli settler from Revava settlement physically assaulted him while he was working in this land in Haris village near the settlement (Salfit).

Claiming that there is Jewish property inside Shu'fat refugee camp, a group of armed Israeli settlers attempted to establish an outpost inside the camp but were prevented by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) who also arrested two settlers (Jerusalem). In Beit Safafa, for the second time in two weeks, settlers attempted to take over a Palestinian house located on a 12-dunum plot of land belonging to a Palestinian family from East Jerusalem but were prevented from entering by Palestinian residents of the area.

Demonstrations

In the West Bank, anti-Barrier demonstrations continue, particularly in the western Ramallah governorate. This week, the IDF injured 28 Palestinians, including seven children, one Israeli journalist, and three internationals during demonstrations in Ni'lin village (Ramallah). The IDF also injured three internationals in a demonstration against Barrier construction in Bi'lin (Ramallah). In the Tulkarm governorate, Palestinians held a demonstration against the Barrier in Deir al Ghusun village, after which the IDF arrested two Palestinians (Tulkarm).

On 15 August, approximately 50 Palestinian journalists organised a sit-in in Gaza City to protest against the Israeli court decision absolving the IDF from responsibility for killing Reuter's cameraman Fadel Shana'a on 16 April 2008. Shana'a was killed along with three unarmed civilians by flechette rounds which struck a Reuters press vehicle on Salah Ed-Din road in the Central Gaza governorate. It remains unconfirmed whether the flechette shells were fired from the air or an IDF tank or a combination thereof.

House Demolitions: Two families displaced in East Jerusalem including 11 children

During the reporting period, the Jerusalem Municipality demolished two houses in Al Ashqariya neighbourhood of Beit Hanina (Jerusalem), resulting in the displacement of 16 people, including 11 children. The Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Border Police forcibly evacuated the two families and children from their homes using dogs. After the demolition, they demanded the families to pay the demolition fees. The IDF also demolished a building under construction in Al 'Isawiya village (Jerusalem). The three structures demolished this week lacked building permits from the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality, which are difficult for Palestinians to obtain.

One of the families displaced this week had their first house demolished by the IDF in 2005 and then lived in a caravan that was confiscated by the IDF in early 2007. Their new house, which was demolished this week, was built in 2007 by

the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD).

Two killed and three injured in internal conflicts

This week, one child was killed and one woman was injured due to family feuds in the Gaza Strip. A Palestinian affiliated with Fatah was also abducted and injured with live ammunition—Fatah has held Hamas members accountable. Another Palestinian died of wounds sustained during clashes between Palestinian security forces and the Fatah-affiliated Hillis family in Gaza City.

In another incident, masked gunmen abducted and physically assaulted one of the Bethlehem deportees – a group of Palestinian men deported to the Gaza Strip following the IDF siege around the Nativity Church in 2002. The motive behind the incident is unknown.

Protection of Civilians Weekly Briefing Notes – New Format

As of 20 August 2008, please be informed that data on casualties are available in a searchable format on OCHA's website (URL: <http://www.ochaopt.org/poc>). Detailed information on house demolitions, settler incidents, curfew, flying checkpoints, search and arrest operations, rockets, mortars and airstrikes, will be gradually made available in the near future.