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Protection of Civilians Weekly Report No. 278**17 - 23 September 2008****Military activities affecting civilians: a child and a woman killed**

This week, IDF soldiers shot and killed a 15 year-old Palestinian boy from 'Asira al Qibliya village (Nablus) while he was near the fence of Yitzhar settlement. IDF troops alleged that the boy was carrying a fire bomb. Also, a 61-year-old Palestinian woman from Abu Dis (Jerusalem) died as a result of internal bleeding after she was pushed to the ground and sustained a fractured skull by IDF soldiers during an attempt to storm her house in a search operation. Two Palestinian men were reported injured by rubber coated metal bullets shot at them by the IDF during clashes that erupted following the event.

During the week, one homemade rocket exploded prematurely east of Bureij Camp while militants were attempting to launch it towards Israel. No injuries were reported. Also, two mortar shells were fired towards Israel, landing within Gaza and resulting in no injuries or property damage.

IDF soldiers arrested or detained a total of 57 Palestinians during 75 search campaigns in the West Bank this week, while Palestinian security forces arrested 35 Palestinians in 28 search campaigns. Among those arrested by Palestinian forces were Hamas members. In the Gaza Strip, security forces (affiliated with Hamas) arrested or detained at least 23 Palestinians in 12 search campaigns. Among those arrested were Fatah members.

19 Israelis wounded and Palestinian driver killed as car strikes group in Jerusalem

22 September, a car struck a group of pedestrians near Jaffa Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, injuring nineteen Israelis, including 8 IDF soldiers. The driver, a Palestinian man from East Jerusalem, was shot dead by an IDF officer.

11 Palestinians killed due to collapsed or destroyed tunnels linking Gaza with Egypt

Four Palestinians were killed due to tunnel collapses, while five were killed, and four injured, when an explosion took place in two tunnels. An additional two Palestinians were killed due to tunnel-related incidents (one was fatally electrocuted while constructing a tunnel and one died when he fell into a tunnel).

Access and checkpoints incidents during Ramadan

One IDF soldier was injured, along with a Palestinian man, when a Palestinian woman poured an acid-like substance on the soldier at Huwwara checkpoint. IDF soldiers subsequently opened fire at the crowd of Palestinians at the checkpoint, injuring three men. The IDF closed the checkpoint and arrested the woman. According to the IDF spokesperson's report, the soldier lost his eyesight in the incident, the second of its kind at Huwwara checkpoint in the past two weeks.

Four Palestinian boys were reportedly beaten over the course of two days by IDF soldiers staffing the Tel Rumeida checkpoint in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron (H2). One of the boys is mentally challenged.

Access without permits into Jerusalem for the third Friday of Ramadan was restricted to men over 50 and women over 45. Permits were required for men between 45-50 and women between 30-45 years of age, while younger worshippers were denied access. An estimated 200,000 worshippers, including Palestinians with Israeli IDs, were able to reach Al Aqsa Mosque for prayers, compared to 120,000 the previous week. There were reported cases of individuals denied access to Jerusalem, despite possessing the requisite permits. As with the preceding two Fridays the IDF closed Qalandiya checkpoint for vehicular movement between pre-dawn and mid-afternoon hours. Opening hours remained extended for Ramadan at checkpoints around Nablus and at Jalama, 'Azzun 'Atma and Ras 'Atiya checkpoints.

Palestinian human rights groups call for investigation following armed clashes in Gaza

Al Mezan Center has called for a committee to investigate the allegations against Hamas-affiliated security officers of killing a number of persons from the Dugmush family after they laid down their weapons during last weeks armed clashes. In addition, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights has called for an investigation into the death of a Palestinian man following his abduction from his home by unknown militants in Gaza city.

Gaza CMWU issued appeal for emergency fuel supply to meet needs through Eid al Fitr

The Gaza Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) reported this week that it is in urgent need of 20,000 liters of fuel, in order to avoid a water shortage or encounter a wastewater crisis during the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan, Eid al Fitr. The CMWU reports that the 30,000 liters of fuel supplied to it by UNRWA ran out in mid-September.

Continuing casualties at anti-Barrier demonstrations in Ni'lin

Fifteen Palestinians, including 7 children, and one international peace activist were reportedly injured by IDF-fired rubber coated metal bullets shot at them during three anti-Barrier demonstrations in Ni'lin village. One Palestinian was injured by a shock grenade fired by the IDF during one of the demonstrations and another sustained a broken nose and injuries to the eyes and face after being hit in the face with a shock grenade during a tour of the Barrier with European Union diplomats, organized by the Ni'lin Anti-Wall Resistance Committee.

Settlement and settler-related incidents

Violence by settlers from Yitzhar settlement continued during the week: a group of Israeli settlers from Yitzhar burnt about 50 dunums of olive trees on land belonging to Palestinians from Burin and Madama villages. The land is located near the fence of the settlement and Palestinians need prior coordination with the IDF to reach it.

In Hebron city, Israeli settlers from the settlement of Al Rajabi house threw vegetables and garbage at Palestinian worshippers coming out of Al Taraweeh prayers at Al Ras Mosque, located next to the settlement in the H2 area of the city. A Palestinian family from Fasayil Al Fawqa in the Jordan Valley lost seven pregnant cows (with an estimated worth of NIS 105,000) after a security guard from the Ma'ale Efrayim settlement shot them while they were grazing 1 km away from the settlement. A complaint was filed at the Israeli DCL.

Also in the southern West Bank, the IDF verbally informed residents of the hamlet of Susiya, south of the town of Yatta (Hebron), that a military order was issued declaring 150 dunums north and south of the settlement of Susiya a "Closed Military Zone." The area has 13 water cisterns that are the main water source for the hamlet.

Rafah: Despite re-opening for two days, hundreds of students remain trapped

Rafah crossing was open several times during the week in both directions, allowing 32 patients who had received treatment in Egypt to enter the Gaza Strip and some 2,667 Palestinians to cross to Egypt, including more than 1,100 pilgrims and over 300 medical cases. In addition, 618

Palestinians stranded in Egypt were able to return to Gaza. On 21 September, while the Egyptian authorities had announced that the crossing would be open for a full day, the Hamas border authority reported that it closed abruptly in the afternoon. As a result, approximately 800 students who are registered on the Ministry of Interior's travelling list (and were scheduled to leave on 21 September) were unable to do so.

55% reduction in truckloads entering Gaza

Compared to the previous week, the total number of imported truckloads sharply declined, from 1,256 last week to 567 truckloads this week, due largely to the closure of the crossing points for two days following the firing of a rocket towards Israel. Gravel continues to constitute the highest percentage of imported commodities (39%). For the third week, the Gaza power plant received 80% of its weekly needs. Power outages decreased slightly as the electricity demand is reduced due to cooler weather. There was a slight increase in the diesel supply, however, only 67% of actual needs were met. Petrol supplies remained at 17% of the actual daily need.

Teachers and health workers strike in Gaza continues

The strike of PA teachers and health workers in the Gaza Strip continued, following the call of the teachers and health workers unions in Ramallah to extend the strike until 7 October. During the week, 31% of health personnel in the 11 MoH hospitals and 47% of primary health care (PHC) personnel were on strike. The 11 MoH hospitals continue to provide all required services, notwithstanding delays in the provision of some services and a reduction in the number of elective surgical operations in some hospitals. In addition, with the exception of one center in North Gaza, all the PHC centers and the community mental health centers in the five districts of the Gaza Strip are functioning.

Health facilities managed by NGOs reported an increase in the number of patients visiting their PHC centers and outpatient clinics, compared to the period before the strike and with Ramadan month last year. However, these hospitals and clinic reported a decrease in the number of surgical operations, as the MoH referral department is not referring patients due to the strike and striking MoH doctors are prohibited from treating their cases in these hospitals.

Given that there are currently enough teachers at PA schools in Gaza, teachers are no longer being recruited, as was the case following the onset of the strike. Students' and teachers' (including new teachers) attendance at PA schools in the Gaza Strip was about 95% during the week.