



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

13 - 26 April 2011

### West Bank

#### Military activities affecting civilians

During the two-week reporting period, Israeli forces injured 46 Palestinians, including 14 children, in the West Bank, almost twice as many as those injured in the previous two-week period (20). The total number of Palestinian injuries since the beginning of 2011 (378) is roughly 34 percent below the parallel figure in 2010.

Most of the injuries (29, including 12 children) occurred during weekly demonstrations or other clashes with Israeli forces: in Bil'in and Ni'lin in protests against the Barrier; in An Nabi Salih village against the expansion of the Hallamish settlement and the take-over of Palestinian land; and in Silwan of East Jerusalem following Friday prayers. Also in Silwan, four people (three Palestinian males and one foreign woman) were injured during clashes that took place with Israeli forces during the 2011 Palestine Festival of Literature closing ceremony. Of the total number injured in demonstrations during the period, 17 were struck with rubber-coated-metal bullets (10 children), six (including an 11-year-old child) were directly hit with tear gas canisters, and two were hit with sound bombs.

Also of note, a 19-year-old Palestinian male was seriously injured when hit in the head by a tear gas canister fired by the Israeli border police towards Palestinian houses near the Barrier in Qatanna village. The man, who was present on his land near the Barrier at the time of the incident, was subsequently transferred to hospital. In recent weeks, three other Palestinians, all of them children, have been injured with live ammunition by Border Police in the village.

Eight of the remaining injuries were physical assaults by Israeli forces of Palestinians in the Old City of Hebron (two, including a nine-year-old-child), in Battir village in Bethlehem (four), in Illar village in Tulkarm (one), and at Az Azzayim checkpoint in Jerusalem (one). In addition, one child was injured from tear gas inhalation used to disperse Palestinians during a confrontation with Israeli settlers in the Nablus district.

#### Settler-related incidents

During the reporting period OCHA recorded a total of 15 incidents of settler violence leading to Palestinian casualties (nine incidents, 20 injuries) or property damage (six incidents); along with four incidents leading to Israeli settler casualties (one death and four injuries) or damage to their property (two incidents).

On 24 April in Nablus City, Palestinian security forces killed one Israeli settler and injured three others, when the latter approached a Palestinian checkpoint in a car and failed to stop after being ordered to do so. The settlers had entered the city without prior coordination with the Israeli or Palestinian authorities in order to visit the Joseph's Tomb shrine. Following the incident, Israeli forces closed nearby checkpoints for approximately four hours and made an incursion into Nablus City. Israeli settlers' regular visits to Joseph's Tomb have commonly triggered clashes between local residents and Israeli military forces escorting the settlers; such a clash occurred in the previous reporting period, during which Israeli soldiers broke into a school and occupied it for a period of a few hours.

Five of this period's incidents affecting Palestinians occurred in, or next to, the village of 'Iraq Burin, also in the Nablus district. Twice during the period (13 and 19 April), Israeli settlers from Yitzhar settlement fired live ammunition toward Palestinian houses, which precipitated clashes with village residents, during which a 30-year-old man was injured with live ammunition and two others were injured with stones. Additionally, on 16 and 25 April, Israeli settlers cut down 25 olive trees near Huwwara checkpoint belonging to a family from the village and set fire to two vehicles. Finally, a 51-year-old man was severely beaten on the outskirts of the village while working in his stone quarry; some of his equipment was also damaged.

During the period, the Israeli authorities arrested two Palestinians, 17 and 19-years-old, from the village of 'Awarta (Nablus), who were charged with the killing of five members of an Israeli family in the nearby Itamar settlement on 11 March 2011. Following the killings, there were several attempts by settlers from Itamar to take over land belonging to residents of 'Awarta. The latest such incident occurred on 20 April, when Israeli settlers established a new outpost on 'Awarta land, installing two caravans and two tents, and opening three asphalted roads to the outpost, as well as erecting electricity lamps. According to the 'Awarta village council, so far the affected land due to the outpost's establishment is about 1,000 dunums.

In the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, on 24 April, Israeli settlers attacked with pepper spray and stones a 46-year-old Palestinian woman and six children, between the ages of 14 and 17; two Palestinian vehicles were also damaged by stone throwing. The Israeli police arrived to the area and controlled the situation.

## Gaza Strip

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### Significant decrease in conflict-related casualties

The current two-week reporting period was characterized by a sharp decrease in Israeli–Palestinian hostilities and related casualties, compared with the escalation experienced in the previous four weeks. Overall, one Palestinian civilian was injured by Israeli fire, while working land in the vicinity of the perimeter fence north of Beit Lahia. Also during this period, a 16-year-old Israeli boy and a Palestinian militant died of wounds sustained in early April. Despite the relative calm, sporadic Israeli incursions into and air strikes on Gaza were reported, as was Palestinian rocket fire at southern Israel.

Israeli forces entered the Gaza Strip on at least five separate occasions to conduct search and land-leveling operations. In one of the operations, on 21 April, Israeli forces' tanks and bulldozers entered the Palestinian side of the Karni crossing (totally closed since March 2011), and demolished eight privately-owned commercial warehouses. During the incursion, essential infrastructure at the crossing, including its main power supply and electricity network and its water and waste-water pumping station, were damaged. Some of the warehouses were full of goods at the time of the demolitions. The next day, two Palestinian workers that approached the targeted area to repair damages were injured when an explosive device detonated. According to the Israeli army, the ordnance was set in place by armed militants to protect a tunnel, which the Israeli bulldozers had targeted the day before.

In another incursion on 6 April, Israeli forces detained two Palestinian men east of Al Bureij refugee camp near the perimeter fence, one of whom is mentally challenged, according to Al Mezan Center for Human Rights.

## Foreign peace activist kidnapped and killed; two militants killed in related incident

On 14 April, Italian journalist and peace activist Vittorio Arrigoni was kidnapped in the Gaza Strip. A few hours later, on 15 April, his dead body was found in a house north of Gaza city. Salafist Jihadists, a Hamas splinter group, claimed responsibility for the kidnapping in an online video. The Gaza police launched an investigation and, on 19 April, surrounded a house in El Nuseirat camp where the three main suspects were believed to be taking refuge. While the specific circumstances of the incident remain unclear, two of the suspects were killed and one was injured.

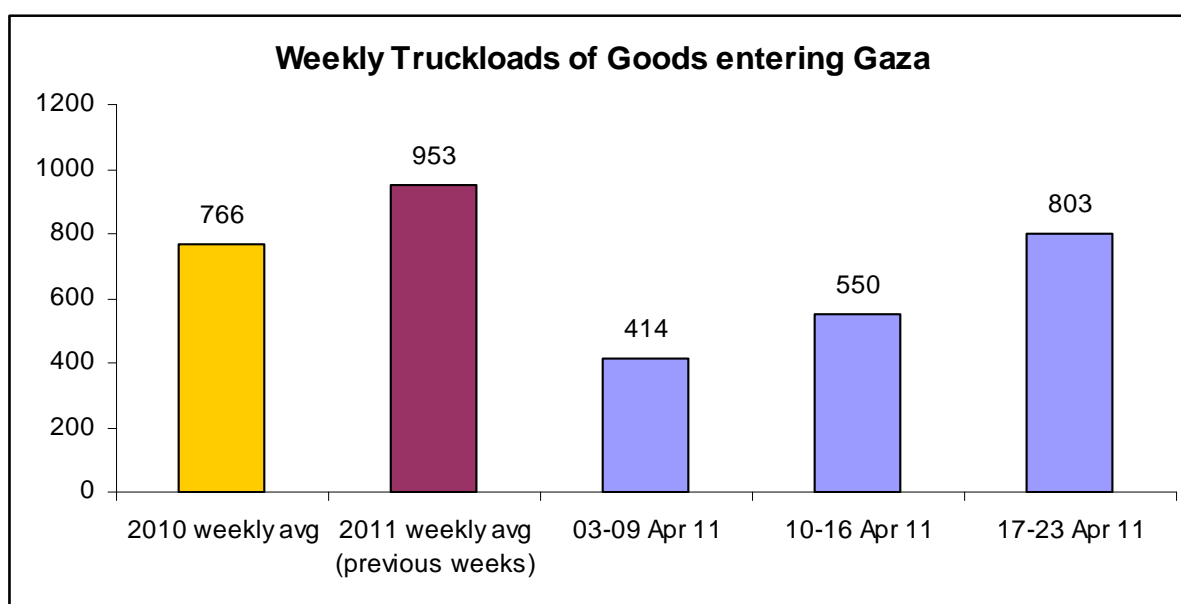
## Palestinian man dies while in custody in Gaza; two women physically assaulted during interrogations

On 19 April, a 52-year-old Palestinian man died in Shifa hospital in Gaza city. According to human rights groups in Gaza, the man was arrested by the Gaza authorities' Internal Security Forces on 14 April (reportedly in connection to the above-reported incidents involving the Salafist group) and remained in their custody until he was transferred to the hospital on 18 April, due to heart failure.

On 16 April, Hamas internal security officers arrested five members affiliated to the Salafist groups in the middle area. According to Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, the police also summoned a mother and daughter from Al-Nuseirat refugee camp, and, on 18 April, both presented themselves at the police station. In her affidavit to Al Mezan, the mother said that the security officers severely beat her with a water hose; her daughter was also physically assaulted. They received medical treatment at Shuhada' Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al Balah.

Human rights groups have demanded an immediate investigation into these incidents, and, on 26 April, the authorities in Gaza issued a statement reinforcing the prohibition against torture and instructing all security departments and interrogators to ban the use of torture in Gaza.

## Gaza Crossings



### Imports

After a nine-day-long closure, imposed by the Israeli authorities due to security concerns, the Kerem Shalom Crossing reopened on 13 April. During the reporting period, 1,353 truckloads of goods entered the Gaza Strip, almost 30 percent below the parallel two-week averages (1,906 truckloads per

two weeks) for the rest of the year. Consumer items continued to make-up the majority of imported goods, including food-items, which made-up roughly 52 percent of imported goods. Prior to the blockade, food items comprised less than 20 percent of all imports.

Because the conveyer belt used for the import of aggregates at Karni Crossing was closed in March 2011 and because the area designed for that purpose at Kerem Shalom Crossing is not yet operational, the Israeli authorities have allowed the use of Sufa crossing for the import of aggregates on an ad-hoc basis. During the reporting period, 86 truckloads (6,092 tonnes) of aggregates entered through this crossing for a limited number of building projects carried out by international organizations and approved by Israel. The import of basic construction materials (including aggregates, cement and steel) for commercial purposes remains banned by the Israeli authorities. While these materials continue to enter in large quantities through the tunnels under the border with Egypt, they are unaffordable to the majority of the population.

During the reporting period, 1,214 tonnes of cooking gas entered, compared to 404 tonnes entered during the previous reporting period—roughly 51 percent of the weekly average of the required to meet Gaza's needs (1,200 tonnes). The Gas Stations Owners' Association indicates that 10 to 15 of the 28 cooking gas stations are able to partially operate in Gaza, and the rationing system remains in place.

Given the gradual closure of crossing points for goods over the past several years, the Kerem Shalom crossing is now the sole operational crossing for goods, thus increasing the vulnerability of the population if an outbreak of hostilities prompts its closure. The prolonged closure of the Kerem Shalom crossing during the last reporting period prevented a replenishment of the previously depleted reserves of wheat grain and flour in Gaza. As of 25 April, the wheat grain and wheat flour stock in Gaza is only sufficient to cover the needs of approximately nine days, compared to about three weeks.

## Exports

During the reporting period, three truckloads of cut flowers (248,000 stems) were allowed to exit via Kerem Shalom. Since the beginning of this export season (from 28 November 2010 through 23 April 2011), a total of 285 truckloads, including 210 truckloads (397 tonnes) of strawberries, 69 truckloads (10,332,000 stems) of cut flowers, three truckloads (6 tonnes) of sweet pepper, and three truckloads of cherry tomatoes (6.7 tonnes), were exported via Kerem Shalom.

## Electricity shortages increase

At least three of the 10 Israeli power lines supplying Gaza with electricity have experienced recurrent technical problems since 7 April. As a result, Gaza Strip continues to experience an electricity deficit of approximately 43 percent, with daily outages of up to 12 hours, affecting services in hospitals, water supplies, sewage systems and schools. The damaged parts of the network have been traced to areas inside Israel. Because Palestinian electricity technicians are unable to reach the location and fix the lines, and Israeli electricity technicians have to coordinate their movements with the Israeli army in order to inspect the lines, and the process is time consuming. Coordination attempts are currently underway to have the Israeli electricity company fix the lines.