



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

8 - 21 June 2011

West Bank

35 injured by Israeli forces

During the two-week reporting period, Israeli forces injured 35 Palestinians. Thus far in 2011, 822 Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, around half of them during protests; this is a 17 percent increase compared to the equivalent period in 2010.

Twenty-eight (28) of this period's injuries occurred in demonstrations that evolved into clashes between protesters and Israeli forces. Of those, 24 Palestinians were injured in protests against the construction of the Barrier in the villages of Bili'n (Ramallah governorate) and Al Ma'sara (Bethlehem governorate); against the expansion of Hallamish settlement on Nabi Saleh's land (Ramallah governorate); and against settler violence in 'Iraq Burin (Nablus governorate). Two other demonstrations took place in the Ramallah area to protest an attempt to construct a settlement outpost near Kafr Malik village and the expansion of Nili settlement on land belonging to the village of Deir Qiddis. Four Palestinians and an Israeli soldier were injured during these protests.

Also this week, Israeli forces injured two Palestinians, in two separate incidents, during clashes with Palestinian residents of the villages of Qusra and Madama (Nablus), following attacks perpetrated by Israeli settlers on the villages (see related report below). Another Palestinian was injured when shot by Israeli forces, reportedly after he attempted to stab a female Israeli soldier at Qalqiliya DCO partial checkpoint.

On average during the reporting period, Israeli forces conducted 80 search-and-arrest operations throughout the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem; a decline compared to the weekly average of such operations since the beginning of 2011 (90).

Large-scale demolitions recorded; stop-work orders issued

The two-week reporting period saw a wave of demolitions, during which the Israeli authorities demolished 72 Palestinian-owned structures, including 43 residences, located in Area C, due to lack of Israeli-issued building permits. As a result, 218 people, including 141 children, were displaced.

The Bedouin community of Al Hadidya in the Jordan Valley (Tubas governorate) experienced two rounds of demolitions during the reporting period, with 33 structures, including eight residences, 21 animal shelters and four kitchens, demolished. As a result, 37 people, including 17 children, were displaced. In Fasayil Al Wusta, another Bedouin community in the Jordan Valley (Jericho governorate), 26 other structures were demolished for the same reason, displacing 100 people. Of the remaining structures, six tents, a sanitation unit and two water pools were also demolished in Bir al Idd and Al Harayeq communities in the Hebron governorate.

Also during the period, Israeli forces issued demolition and stop-work orders against at least 20 Palestinian-owned structures in the governorates of Tubas, Hebron, Nablus and Salfit. Since the beginning of 2011, 293 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem and Area C, displacing 691 people.

This represents more than three and four times the numbers of demolitions and people displaced, respectively, than during the equivalent period in 2010.

Settler violence continued

During the two-week period, OCHA documented nine settler attacks that resulted in two Palestinian injuries and damage to property.

In two separate incidents, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured two Palestinians in the village of Madama (Nablus governorate) and the Old City of Hebron. In a separate incident, settlers physically assaulted two children (aged 10 and 12) and damaged a tractor in Qusra village (Nablus governorate).

In another two incidents during the period, settlers reportedly set fire to 46 dunums of agricultural land planted with wheat and barley in Madama (Nablus) and Al Mughayyir (Ramallah) villages, damaging the crops. In the case of Madama, this is the fourth incident of this type in the past four weeks. Since the beginning of 2011, OCHA recorded 46 incidents involving damage to agricultural property, including setting fire to agricultural land and trees, by Israeli settlers.

Also, in two separate incidents, settlers bulldozed land surrounding a water cistern in Kisan village (Bethlehem), damaging the water canals; and damaged the fence surrounding a cistern in 'Aqraba village (Nablus governorate). The remaining two incidents resulted in damage to seven Palestinian vehicles, when settlers threw stones at vehicles driving in the Salfit and Hebron governorates.

Barrier Update

On 21 June, the Israeli authorities began dismantling a section of the Barrier that runs next to Bil'in village (Ramallah governorate), following the completion of re-routing a few hundred meters to the west of the dismantled section. This measure came in the context of an Israeli High Court ruling, issued three years ago, which ordered the re-routing of this section due to the disproportionate harm it caused to Palestinian farmers. As a result of this re-routing, the village's residents will re-gain unrestricted access to around 1,020 dunums of their agricultural land; however, as the new route is located some three kilometers east of the Green Line, it will leave another 1,280 dunums isolated by the Barrier.

Also recently, the Israeli authorities began re-routing a section of the Barrier next to Khirbet Jubara village (Tulkarm governorate), following an Israeli court decision from 2007. Once the old section is dismantled, the over 300 residents of the village will be "released" from the "seam zone", the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line, and re-connected to the rest of the West Bank. According to the village council, however, the new route will isolate around 600 dunums of the village's agricultural land, planted with olive trees remain, behind the Barrier.

Despite the limited positive impact on the two communities, the two new Barrier sections are still located in the occupied Palestinian territory. Therefore, the Barrier in these areas continues to be in contravention of international law.

Key south-north route partially opened

During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities partially opened the so-called "old Qedar settlement" road, which is a key route, located east of Jerusalem, which has been prohibited for Palestinians for the past ten years. This opening follows an Israeli announcement to that effect over a

year ago. The road has been so far opened only for north-bound traffic, reportedly until the rehabilitation and widening of some sections is complete. Due to the closure of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank since the early 1990s, all Palestinian north-south traffic (about one million vehicles a year) has been funneled to a single, topographically-difficult and congested road (Wadi Nar Road). The "old Qedar settlement" road therefore, constitutes, a key alternative route, which, once opened in both directions, will significantly reduce traffic load and travel time. Access to both roads remains controlled by a fully-staffed checkpoint.

Gaza Strip

Two weeks of relative calm in Gaza; one Palestinian injured by a rocket

During the two-week reporting period, one Palestinian was injured when a rocket fired by Palestinian armed factions landed short of the fence separating Gaza from Israel on 16 June, hitting a house east of Al Maghazi. Also, according to Israeli sources, a rocket fired by Palestinian armed factions landed in an open area in the Eshkol region (southern Israel), resulting in no injuries or damage to property. In response, Israeli forces launched an air strike on the Gaza Strip, hitting a chicken farm, east of Deir El Balah, resulting in partial damage to the farm. This is the first air strike launched inside the Gaza Strip in the last seven weeks. Since the beginning of 2011, 51 Palestinians (21 civilians) and two Israelis (one civilian) have been killed in the context of Israeli-Palestinian violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, and 283 Palestinians (255 civilians), and nine Israelis (five civilians) have been injured. A total of 32 Palestinians killed and 123 others injured in the same period in 2010.

Israeli restrictions on access to areas in the vicinity of the fence separating Gaza and Israel continued. On three occasions, Israeli tanks and bulldozers launched incursions some 300 meters inside the Gaza Strip, and conducted land leveling before withdrawal. Also, in one incident on 16 June, Israeli troops positioned at the border fence opened fire towards a Palestinian residential area, east of Khan Younis, resulting in no injuries or damage to property; the circumstances of this incident remain unclear. Similar restrictions are enforced on access to fishing zones beyond three nautical miles from the shore. In five incidents, Israeli naval forces opened fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore. No injuries were reported.

Tunnels continue to claim lives; one killed and another injured

In two separate incidents on 11 and 14 June, one Palestinian was killed by electrocution and another injured while they were working inside tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. The Palestinian civil defense in Gaza report that tunnel-related incidents, including electrocution, suffocation and tunnel collapse, continue as a result of lack of awareness about safety and security procedures. Since the beginning of 2011, 16 Palestinians have been killed and 27 others have been injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses and electrocution. A total of 46 Palestinians were killed and 89 others injured in 2010. Also, on 15 June, the Egyptian authorities reportedly prevented the transfer of cooking gas cylinders into Gaza, confiscating around 200 cylinders while on their way to Gaza. While tunnel activity has declined since the Israeli decision to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010, it remains a main source a variety for goods that are still restricted through the official crossings with Israel; particularly construction materials (see section on imports below).

Restrictions on movement of Gazans through Rafah Crossing continue; thousands struggle to travel

During the reporting period (8-21 June), a daily average of 400 to 450 people crossed through the Rafah Crossing in both directions, after the crossing, controlled by the Egyptian authorities, resumed operations in both directions on 8 June. Prior to that, the crossing was opened only for people entering Gaza for a few days (4-7 June). The low level of daily passengers comes in spite of the new changes announced by the Egyptian authorities on 23 May, which included an increase in the crossing's working hours and the removal of the limitation on the number of people allowed to exit Gaza through the crossing. Also, the 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.

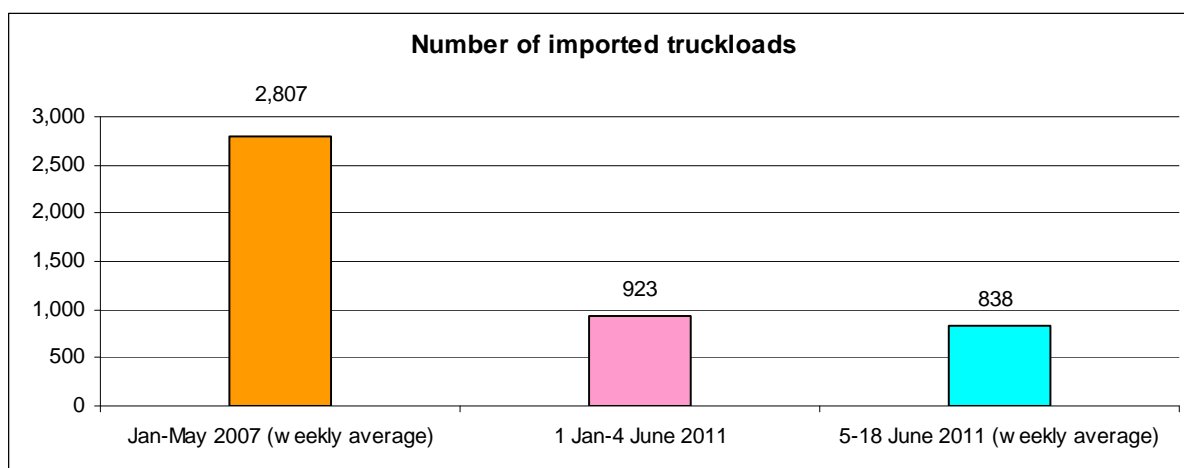
According to the Border and Crossing Authority, approximately 20,000 Gazans are registered to travel through the Rafah Crossing in the coming months. However, by the end of the reporting period, the Gazan authorities had announced that a new travel arrangement mechanism will be introduced, with priority given to certain categories of travelers (as prior to the announcement), including patients, foreign passports holders and students, and not necessarily to the people who already registered their names through the old mechanism.

Improvements in electricity supply continue

During the reporting period, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) continued operating a third power-generating turbine, producing a total of 80 megawatts. Consequently, daily power cuts throughout the Gaza Strip lasted four hours, down from six to eight hours per day in the previous weeks. However, the GPP authority stated that this is a temporary arrangement that will last until the end of the one-month Tawjihi (matriculation exam), which started in late May. In addition, one of the Israeli electricity feeding lines malfunctioned on three days during the reporting period, increasing electricity blackouts in the Gaza City up to eight hours per day.

Gaza crossings with Israel; restrictions on imports continue

Between 5 and 18 June, a weekly average of 838 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, around nine percent below the weekly average of truckloads that entered since the beginning of the year (923). This represents only 30 per cent of the weekly average of 2,807 truckloads that entered Gaza during the first five months of 2007, prior to the imposition of the blockade. Most goods that enter Gaza continue to be consumer products, with food constituting around 46 percent of imports, compared to less than 20 percent before the blockade.



An average of 80 truckloads carrying over 5,600 tonnes of aggregate entered through the new facility recently opened at the Kerem Shalom Crossing. Entry of basic construction materials, including aggregates, cement and steel bars, remains restricted for a limited number of humanitarian projects approved by Israel. Also, an average of 120 truckloads of other types of construction materials including tiles, pipes and paints were allowed in during the two-week reporting period for commercial purposes. Restricted construction materials continue to be transferred into Gaza in considerable quantities via the tunnels under the border with Egypt. According to local sources, an average of nearly 2,000 tonnes of aggregate, 3,000 tonnes of cement and 300 tonnes of steel bars are transferred into Gaza through tunnels each day.

Cooking gas shortages continue

On average, 500 tonnes of cooking gas entered the Gaza Strip per week during the reporting period, representing only 42 percent of the required weekly amount of 1,200 tonnes. This shortage of cooking gas is reportedly the result of a reduction in the capacity of the fuel pipes at the Kerem Shalom Crossing, which began a few weeks ago due to a broken pump. The pump was repaired on 19 June, which led to an increase in the supply of cooking gas to 200 tonnes per day. Shortages of cooking gas continue to affect daily life in the Gaza Strip; the Gas Stations Owners Association in Gaza reports that nearly ten of the 28 cooking gas stations are only partially operating due to lack of cooking gas, while a rationing system remains in place.

Shortage of medical supplies continue to impact the provision of services

On 18 June, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza reported that shortages of medical supplies, including drugs and disposable items, are on the rise. Approximately, 180 out of 480 essential drug items (compared to 153 in April) and more than 200 out of 700 medical disposable items (compared to 155 in April) are at zero level (less than a month supply). In addition, two types of baby milk formula essential for children with special health needs are at zero level. These shortages are partially due to poor coordination between the two ministries of health in Ramallah and Gaza. The last shipments of drugs and disposables delivered to Gaza from Ramallah entered in April and February 2011, respectively.

Towards the end of the reporting period, the MoH in Gaza received shipments of drug items from its counterpart in Ramallah that are enough for approximately four weeks, reducing the number of essential drug items that are at zero level from 180 to approximately 128. Gaza hospitals also received small shipments of medical supplies, including drugs and disposable items, from the Egypt and Turkish Red Crescent Societies.