



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

12-18 OCTOBER 2011

Key issues

- On 18 October, the Israeli authorities carried out the first of two agreed upon prisoner releases; 477 Palestinian prisoners, 300 of whom were serving life sentences, were freed in exchange for the release of IDF soldier, Gilad Shalit, held by Hamas in Gaza since June 2006.
- As the olive harvest officially begins, settler violence continues, with six Palestinians injured and around 900 olive trees damaged this week.

OPT-WIDE ISSUES

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners released in exchange for Israeli soldier

On 18 October, the Israeli authorities released 477 Palestinian prisoners, including 27 women, in exchange for the IDF soldier, Gilad Shalit, who had been held by Hamas since June 2006. Over 300 of the released prisoners were serving life sentences. The exchange took place in the context of prisoner swap agreement between Israel and Hamas, mediated by Egypt.

Around 200 of the prisoners were either expelled from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip (approximately

160) or were deported to Syria, Qatar, Jordan or Turkey (approximately 40). A second, agreed stage of release, of around 550 additional Palestinian prisoners, should take place in the coming months. On the day of the prisoner release, all Palestinian inmates who started a hunger strike on 27 September in protest at their conditions of detention halted their strike for three days.

In the context of the release, UNICEF appealed to the Israeli authorities to free all Palestinian children held in Israeli military detention. According to UNICEF, as of 1 October, there were 164 children (under 18) being detained by the Israeli authorities, most of them on charges of throwing stones in the West Bank.

WEST BANK

Settler violence leaves six Palestinians injured and around 900 olive trees damaged

Settler violence against Palestinians and their property remains high, with 11 settler-related incidents documented this week, resulting in six Palestinian injuries and damage to around 900 olive trees.

In three separate incidents in East Jerusalem, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured three Palestinians, including two children (ages 10 and

Settler-related incidents:

Incidents resulting in Palestinian injuries or property damage:

in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 347 vs. 239

Injured this week: 6

Palestinians injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 201 vs. 90

Settlers injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 29 vs. 40

15 years), in Al Thouri (Abu Tour) neighbourhood, Silwan and near the Old City. Also in Silwan, a Palestinian man was physically assaulted and

injured by settler guards from the City of David settlement. Elsewhere in the West Bank, settlers physically assaulted and injured a Palestinian farmer while he was harvesting olives near Qarne Shomoron settlement (Qalqiliya governorate), and settlers also injured an 11-year-old Palestinian girl while they were stoning at Palestinian-plated vehicles driving near Bet El settlement (Ramallah governorate). Also this week, a female settler was injured when her car was hit by stones thrown by Palestinians in the Hebron governorate.

In three separate incidents this week, Israeli settlers set fire to around 800 olive trees in the villages of Bruqin in the Salfit governorate (680) and Ras Karkar in the Ramallah governorate (120). Also, settlers sprayed chemicals on around 80 olive trees in Turmus 'Ayya (Ramallah governorate), damaging them. Since the beginning of 2011, over 8,000 Palestinian-owned trees have been damaged by settlers. Moreover, settlers attacked Palestinian farmers in six separate incidents in Qalqiliya, Nablus and Salfit governorates, preventing them from picking olives. All of these incidents occurred on Palestinian-owned land located in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, during times which had been coordinated in advance by the Israeli authorities to allow farmers to access their land and harvest their olives. In some of these incidents, Israeli forces intervened and removed the settlers.

In two separate locations this week, Israeli settlers began establishing or expanding settlement outposts: in the Ramallah governorate, settlers erected tents in a location near Bet El settlement (Ramallah governorate), and, in the Salfit governorate, settlers levelled over 30 dunums of Palestinian-owned land near Iskaka village and installed new caravans to expand a nearby settlement outpost.

Clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians continue

This week, Israeli forces injured five Palestinians, including two children, in different areas of the West Bank. Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Killed in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 9 vs. 13

Injured this week: five; 1 in a demonstration

Of whom were children: 2

Injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 1,202 vs. 971

youth in Qalandiya village (Jerusalem governorate), injuring one of them (aged 14). Also, two men were injured in two separate incidents in Beit Ummar village (Hebron governorate), during a stone-throwing incident at the entrance of the village and in a weekly demonstration against access restrictions to land near Karmeit Zur settlement. Another Palestinian was injured in a confrontation with Israeli forces at Zayim checkpoint (East Jerusalem). This week, Israeli forces conducted over 80 search-and-arrest operations in West Bank cities and villages, slightly less than the weekly average for such operations since the beginning of the year (around 90).

No demolitions recorded

This week, there were no demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures by the Israeli authorities, compared to 39 structures demolished over the past two weeks, all of them in Area C. Overall, there has been a significant rise in demolitions and, in particular, displacement this year, compared to last year.

Palestinian-owned structures demolished

Demolished this week: 0

Of which residences: 0

Structures demolished in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 448 vs. 300.

People displaced in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 834 vs. 402.

GAZA STRIP

Calm continues

The situation in the Gaza Strip remains calm. This week, there were no reports of casualties, Israeli air strikes or incursions inside the Gaza Strip, or rocket firing by Palestinian armed factions towards southern Israel.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas up to 1,500 meters from the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip, and to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore, continue to hinder the livelihoods of thousands of farmers and fishermen.

Movement through Rafah Crossing

According to the Border and Crossing authorities in Gaza, over 2,600 Palestinian pilgrims registered to leave for pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia crossed the Rafah Crossing into Egypt. Overall during the reporting period, around 4,170 people left Gaza through the Rafah Crossing controlled by Egypt, and 3,310 others entered Gaza. The number of people who crossed this week, however, remains slightly below the average number of people who crossed per week in the first five months of 2006, before the partial closure of the crossing, when an average of 650 people crossed daily each way. Also this week, a total of 86 people were denied entry to Egypt for

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Of whom children: 0

Killed in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 85 vs. 55

Injured this week: 0

Of whom children: 0

Injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 425 vs. 211

unspecified reasons. There are still thousands of travelers, registered with the Border and Crossing authorities in Gaza, waiting to exit in the coming months due to the backlog generated as a result of restricted access. While only certain categories of people, including patients and humanitarian workers, are allowed to cross Erez into Israel, Rafah remains the only crossing open for Gazans to access the outside world.

Movement of goods (Kerem Shalom Crossing):

Imports:

Truckloads (TL) that entered this week: 658

TL carrying food: 57%

Weekly average of TL since the beginning of 2011: 947

Weekly average of TL before the blockade: 2,807

Exports:

Truckloads that left this week: 0 (zero)

Weekly average since the beginning of 2011: 5

Weekly average before the blockade: 240

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