



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

1-7 December 2010

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

Since 8 December :

- The Israeli Air force launched air strikes on the Gaza Strip early Thursday morning after a mortar shell fired by an armed group wounded an Israeli man near the fence. No Palestinian casualties were reported, but two schools and part of the Gaza Power Plant sustained damage. The schools are now temporarily closed and one turbine at the plant was damaged and forced to shut down.
- The Government of Israel announced that it will allow the export of agricultural products, furniture and textiles from Gaza to the West Bank and foreign destinations, subject to security and logistical capacity.
- The Israeli authorities demolished ten residential structures, 17 animal shelters and a school in Khirbet Tana village (Nablus governorate) due to the lack of building permits. Around 15 families, comprising 101 people, and 2000 sheep were affected. This is the third time since 2005 that this community suffers extensive demolitions.
- Following five months of detention, the Israeli authorities forcibly transferred Palestinian Legislative Council member Mohammad Abu Tir from East Jerusalem, after an Israeli court ruled that he was not permitted to continue living in Jerusalem.

West Bank

Four Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

During the week, Israeli forces injured four Palestinians, compared to eleven last week. Since the beginning of 2010, Israeli forces have injured 1,089 Palestinians, the majority of whom were wounded in East Jerusalem clashes (over 50 percent) and during weekly demonstrations in other areas of the West Bank (30 percent). In comparison, a total of 775 Palestinians were injured during the equivalent period in 2009.

In two separate incidents, four Palestinians were injured in An Nabi Saleh village in the Ramallah area. One was injured when Israeli forces clashed with villagers attempting to prevent dozens of settlers from entering the village. The other three Palestinians were injured in a weekly demonstration that took place against the expansion of the Hallamish settlement in the area. A number of houses also sustained damage during the protest. Other weekly protests continued this week, with no injuries reported. These included demonstrations against the construction of the Barrier (Bil'in and Ni'lin villages) in the Ramallah area, and against restrictions on access to land (Beit Ummar village) in the Hebron area.

Also this week, an Israeli security guard was injured near the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim in the Jerusalem area when Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail at an Israel-plated vehicle driving on a nearby road.

Israeli forces conducted 83 search and arrest operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), compared to a weekly average of 90 such operations in 2010.

Settler violence continues; some 150 olive trees burnt

During the reporting period, OCHA documented three settler-related incidents that resulted in damage to Palestinian property. Since the beginning of the year, OCHA has recorded a weekly average of six incidents resulting in injuries or damage to property, including the uprooting and burning of thousands of trees.

In two separate incidents, the village councils of Madama and Burqa villages in the Nablus area reported that Israeli settlers from the settlements of Yitzhar and Homesh burnt 150 olive trees belonging to the two villages. Since the beginning of the olive harvest in mid-September, some 5,900 olive trees have been damaged or destroyed, and over 800 dunums of land have been torched, allegedly by settlers. In another incident, settlers from Asfar settlement in the Hebron area levelled land belonging to Sa'ir village over a period of two days. The work was halted due to a dispute over ownership of the land between the settlers and villagers in the area.

Also this week, a Palestinian boy, aged 11, was injured when a settler vehicle ran over him near the settlement of Kiryat 'Arba' in the Hebron area. A total of 19 Palestinians have been injured in similar incidents in 2010. Since the beginning of the year, one child was killed and 104 Palestinians injured during settler-related incidents.

Demolitions and demolition and eviction orders in Area C of the West Bank

The Israeli authorities demolished a water-well in the area of Ar Rashayida (Bethlehem governorate) in Area C of the West Bank, due to the lack of a permit. The well, recently rehabilitated by an international NGO, is used by five families (comprising 50 people) as a source of water for their livestock. 292 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C in 2010 (including ten structures demolished by their owners following demolition orders), 393 people have been displaced, and 1,200 individuals have been otherwise affected.

Also in Area C, the Israeli authorities issued stop work and demolition orders against five Palestinian-owned structures, including four houses (one under construction) and an animal shelter, in Nahhalin village (Bethlehem governorate). During the previous reporting period, stop work orders were issued against 26 structures, including 25 houses (three under construction) and an animal pen, in Qibiya village (Ramallah governorate). These are in addition to those reported last week. The orders affected 26 families comprising 134 persons, 83 of whom are children. In addition, the Israeli authorities issued an eviction order against 70 dunums of agricultural land planted with grape vines and almond trees, west of Dura town (Hebron governorate), belonging to three families of 21 persons. The order was issued on the grounds that it is 'state land'.

Also this week, Israeli forces disassembled a tent and a fence, used to fence livestock, from the Bedouin community of Um al 'Obar (Jordan Valley). These items were confiscated, along with some fifteen feeding troughs. Most of the items had been provided by an international NGO after structures were demolished in the same community in September 2010, on the grounds that they are located in an Israeli-declared nature reserve. A total of 11 families comprising 60 persons, including 34 children, were affected.

Gaza Strip

Two killed and six injured near the fence

This week, Israeli forces killed two alleged members of an armed group and injured six other Palestinians near the fence dividing Israel and the Gaza Strip. In 2010, 60 Palestinians (including 22 civilians) have been killed and 251 Palestinians (including 225 civilians) have been injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip.

On 2 December, Israeli forces fired mortar shells and launched an air strike targeting and killing two allegedly armed Palestinians near the fence east of Jabaliya. The Palestinians were reportedly spotted approaching the fence. In a separate incident, Israeli forces positioned on the fence opened fire at a group of armed Palestinians, injuring one of them.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas located up to 1,500 metres (an area comprising 17 percent of the Gaza Strip's territory) from the fence remain in place and continue to result in injuries. In four separate incidents, Israeli forces injured five Palestinian workers, including one child (aged 17), collecting scrap metal near the fence. So far this year, 74 Palestinian workers have been injured in similar incidents. On five occasions, Israeli forces launched incursions with their bulldozers and tanks a few hundred meters into the Gaza Strip and withdrew after conducting land leveling. In two of these incidents, Israeli forces fired mortar shells into open areas; no injuries were reported.

This week, Palestinian armed factions launched a number of rockets and mortar shells targeting southern Israel, including military bases located along the border. Some of these rocket attacks reportedly took place in response to the killing of the two armed Palestinians; no Israeli injuries or damage to property were reported.

Gaza court sentences four men to death

On 6 December, a military court in Gaza sentenced four Palestinian men to death, three for convictions of kidnapping and killing a man in 2007 and the other for collaborating with Israel. Only one of the men is held in prison in Gaza. According to the Palestinian Center for Human rights (PCHR), in 2010, 12 Palestinians have been sentenced to death in the Gaza Strip. PCHR reports that a total of 89 death sentences have been issued in the Gaza Strip since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994.

Tunnels continue to claim lives

On 2 December, a Palestinian died when he was electrocuted while working inside a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border in the Rafah area. In 2010, 46 Palestinians have been killed and 87 others have been injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses and other incidents of electrocution and the explosion of gas cylinders. Of these casualties, 17 deaths and 37 injuries occurred following the 20 June 2010 "easing" of the Israeli blockade. Tunnel activity has reportedly been on the decline since then

Gaza authorities suspend operations of youth forum

This week, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the occupied Palestinian Territory, Maxwell Gaylard, voiced his concern about the forced closure on 30 November by the Gaza

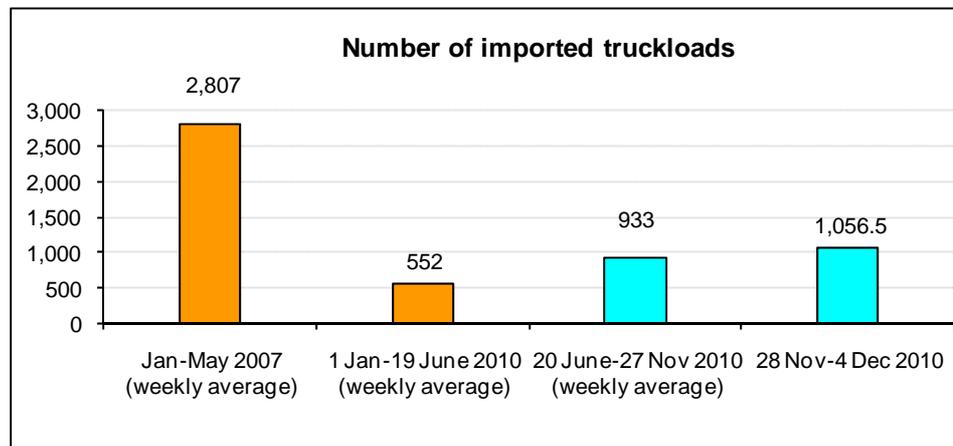
authorities of all Gaza-based offices of the non-governmental organization Sharek Youth Forum. Mr. Gaylard noted that “Sharek’s work forms part of the many important activities carried out by civil society organizations in the occupied Palestinian Territory promoting development and the protection of human rights.” According to the organization, it serves 65,000 Palestinian children and youth in Gaza on a monthly basis.

Limited exports continue; wheat reserves continue to decline

During the reporting period (28 November-4 December), a total of 1,056.5 truckloads entered the Gaza Strip compared to a weekly average of 933 truckloads entering since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010. However, this week’s figure represents only 38 percent of the weekly average of imports recorded before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Food items made up 45 percent of imports, compared to less than 20 percent of total imports prior to the blockade.

This week, Gaza exports were allowed out for the second consecutive week. Since the beginning of the export season for strawberries and cut flowers on 28 November, 19 truckloads carrying strawberries (32 tonnes) and cut flowers (142,000 stems) have left Gaza. These truckloads are the first to leave Gaza since 18 April 2010. According to the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), an estimated 700 tonnes of strawberries and 30 million cut flower stems are due to leave Gaza during this year’s season. While Gaza is capable of exporting 2,300 tonnes of strawberries and 55 million flowers each season, during the 2009-2010 season, only around 50 tonnes of strawberries and only one-third of the 40 million cut flowers intended for export were allowed out, due to the ongoing restrictions on exports and the lack of necessary agricultural inputs. (*see Latest Developments box for recent export-related announcement*).

Since the increased blockade restrictions on Gaza commenced in June 2007, only 690 truckloads of exports have left Gaza, all of which were strawberries and cut flowers. A monthly average of 1,086 exported truckloads left Gaza



in the first five months of 2007 before the blockade.

Wheat reserves inside Gaza have continued to decline as low quantities of wheat are entering through the conveyor belt at Karni Crossing. This week, the crossing was closed for a couple of hours on 6 December, following a shooting incident, where Israeli forces fired warning shots at a Palestinian near the crossing. This crossing operates only two days a week: one day is allocated for the transfer of wheat and animal feed; and the other for gravel for approved international projects. Prior to the 20 June “easing”, wheat and animal feed entered on both days. As a result, there has been a sharp decline in the volume of wheat grain allowed into Gaza. As of 5 December, there were some 1,630 tonnes of grain available at the six mills in the Gaza Strip and 106 tonnes of wheat flour at the local market, quantities that cover the population’s needs for less than three days. According to local sources, there are over 500 truckloads (19,540 tonnes) of wheat delayed and waiting to enter Gaza.

Power cuts remain close to 12 hours per day

Imports of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) slightly increased this week compared to last week (1.23 vs. 1.16 million litres). The total provision of electricity throughout the Gaza Strip stands at about 40 percent below the estimated daily demand of 280 MW. Approximately 30 MW of power is produced by the GPP, as it continues to run one turbine only. 120 MW and 17 MW are purchased from Israel and Egypt respectively, providing Gaza with a total of less than 170 MW. This shortfall results in a daily average of power cuts of up to 12 hours throughout the Gaza Strip. On 7 December, three lines feeding electricity from Israel to northern Gaza and parts of Gaza City malfunctioned. As a result, the affected areas experienced an almost complete blackout, which lasted for more than seven hours in northern Gaza until two of the lines were repaired. The third line, which supplies electricity to parts of Gaza City, could not be fixed due to access restrictions. The GPP compensated for the shortfall by using previously saved fuel, producing more electricity to supply the affected areas.

The ongoing power cuts affect daily life throughout the Gaza Strip, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage treatment and removal, and the functioning of health services. Access to running water also remains a daily challenge for the population due to power cuts. Ten percent of Gazans living in areas including Gaza City, Rafah and Jabaliya, have access to running water only once every four days (6 to 8 hours); 80 percent have access once every 2-3 days (6-8 hours); and ten percent receive running water once a day (6 to 8 hours).