



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

occupied Palestinian territory

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

18-24 May 2011

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

25 May: The Egyptian authorities announced a number of significant changes to the opening of Rafah Crossing, scheduled to be implemented on 28 May. According to the announcement, the crossing will be open to travelers Saturday through Thursday, 9am - 5pm. All female travelers holding a Palestinian ID card, along with male travelers below 18 and above 40, will not need a visa to enter Egypt. While some details remain unclear, restrictions will continue to apply to some segments of the population.

West Bank

19 injured by Israeli forces

This week, Israeli forces injured 19 Palestinians, while eleven Israelis, including nine members of Israeli forces and two journalists, were also injured. Thus far in 2011, 685 Palestinians have been injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, compared to 637 in the equivalent period of 2010.

In East Jerusalem, Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian residents of Silwan village, injuring four of them. Tension remains high in Silwan due to the presence of Israeli settlers and an Israeli plan to demolish dozens of Palestinian houses to make a way for a "biblical park" in the area.

Another four Palestinians were injured in clashes between Israeli forces and residents of 'Izbet at Tabib village (Qalqiliya governorate), as Israeli forces were erecting a fence along the main road next to the village. Also, six Palestinians were injured in weekly demonstrations that took place against the construction of the Barrier and the expansion of Hallamish settlement, both in the Ramallah governorate, and against continued settler activities in 'Iraq Burin village (Nablus governorate).

A total of nine Israeli soldiers and border policemen were injured by stones in two separate clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli forces next to Shu'fat and Qalandiya checkpoints in East Jerusalem. Also, two Israeli journalists accompanying members of the Israeli Parliament traveling near the latter checkpoint were injured by stones thrown by Palestinians.

Settler violence continues; over 100 olive trees vandalized

During the reporting period, OCHA documented four settler-related incidents that resulted in damage to Palestinian property, leading to the destruction of over 100 olive trees. Since the beginning of the year, Israeli settlers have vandalized around 3,000 olive trees belonging to Palestinians. One access prevention incident affecting Palestinians perpetrated by settlers was also reported during the week.

In two separate incidents, Israeli settlers uprooted or cut down more than 100 olive trees belonging to the villages of Beitillu (Ramallah governorate) and Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya governorate). In a separate incident, settlers from Yitzhar settlement set fire to wheat crops belonging to 'Asira al Qibliya village (Nablus governorate). Also near Yitzhar, settlers detained two Palestinian shepherds, who were grazing sheep. The shepherds were released after the intervention of Israeli forces. Finally, Israeli settlers

vandalized two zinc agricultural rooms near Gush Etzion settlement belonging to a Palestinian farmer (Bethlehem governorate).

The Israeli authorities have failed to enforce the rule of law when it comes to Israeli settlers' acts of violence against Palestinians and their property. The Israeli human rights organization, Yesh Din, has found that over 90 per cent of complaints regarding settler violence filed with the Israeli police in recent years have been closed without indictment.

No demolitions recorded; demolition orders issued

This week, there were no demolitions reported in Area C or East Jerusalem. Since the beginning of 2011, 207 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem and Area C, displacing 433 people – a sharp increase compared to the equivalent period in 2010 (70 demolitions and 142 people displaced). This week, however, the Israeli authorities delivered demolition orders against nine Palestinian-owned structures, including cisterns, agricultural rooms and fences in Beit Ula village (Hebron governorate), due to a lack of Israeli-issued permits, affecting seven families.

Gaza Strip

One Palestinian killed and another injured near the fence

This week, Israeli forces killed one Palestinian and injured another in two separate incidents near the fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Since the beginning of 2011, 49 Palestinians (20 civilians) and two Israelis (one civilian) have been killed in the context of Israeli-Palestinian violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, and 282 Palestinians (254 civilians), and nine Israelis (five civilians) have been injured.

On 21 May, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian civilian while he was reportedly attempting to illegally enter/cross the fence into Israel. Following the incident, Israeli tanks and bulldozers entered some 200 meters into the Gaza Strip, east of Al Bureij Camp, and conducted a search and land-leveling operation. Also, on one occasion this week, Israeli forces fired warning shots at farmers near the fence, forcing them to leave their land. Such incidents occur in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access up to 1,500 meters from the fence. Also near the fence, Israeli forces injured another Palestinian civilian when they opened fire to disperse demonstrators holding a protest, east of Abasan, to commemorate the 63rd anniversary of what Palestinians refer to as the 1948 *Nakba* (the catastrophe).

Access restrictions also continue to be enforced in fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore. In two separate incidents, the Israeli navy opened warning fire at Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore.

Tunnels continue to claim lives; one killed and another injured

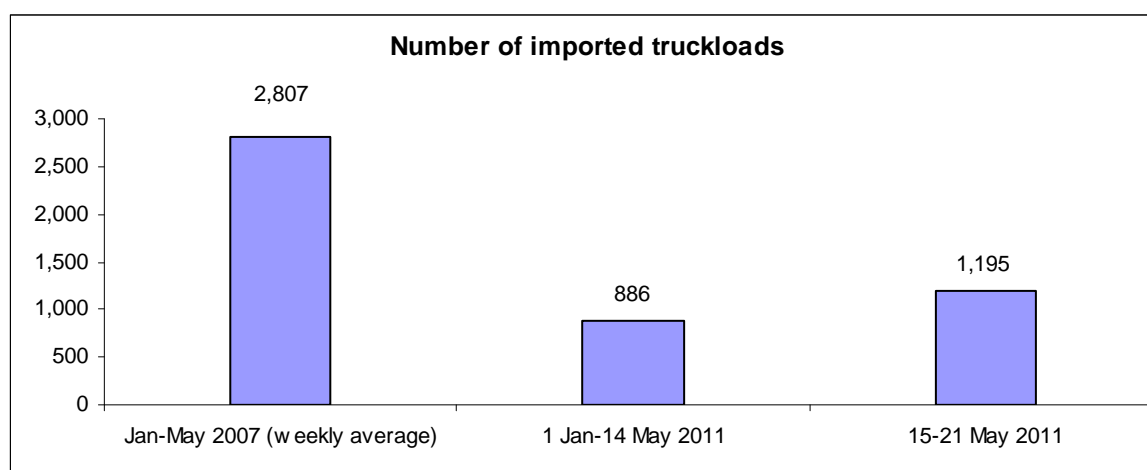
In one incident on 23 May, a Palestinian man was killed and another was injured when a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed while they were working inside it. Since the beginning of 2011, 14 Palestinians have been killed and 26 others have been injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses and electrocution; 46 Palestinians were killed and 89 others injured in 2010. While tunnel activity has declined since changes were made by Israel to the blockade in June 2010, it remains a main source for construction materials, which continue to be restricted through the official crossings with Israel, as well as fuel, which is significantly cheaper in Egypt than in Israel.

Gaza crossings with Israel

A total of 1,195 truckloads of goods entered Gaza this week (15-21 May), around 35 per cent above the weekly average of truckloads that entered since the beginning of the year (886). This week's figure, however, represents only 43 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 remain consumer products, with food constituting over 50 per cent. The Israeli authorities have imposed an unofficial quota of 300 trucks per day for all imports, although the crossing has capacity for more.

A total of 195 truckloads of gravel entered Gaza, of which 125 truckloads carrying 8,750 tonnes of gravel were allowed for UNRWA projects, the largest amount allowed entry since the beginning of April 2011. According to UNRWA, since the alternative facility at the Kerem Shalom Crossing became operational on 11 May, an average of 29 truckloads of aggregate a day has been transferred, far below the number of trucks requested per day.

Similarly, larger amounts of cooking gas (826 tonnes) entered the Gaza Strip compared to last week (457). However, this figure represents only two-thirds of the weekly required amount of 1,200 tonnes. This shortage of cooking gas is reportedly resulting from the reduced capacity of the fuel pipes at the Kerem Shalom Crossing, which occurred a few weeks ago due to a broken pump, which is still broken. The Gas Stations Owner Association in Gaza reports that nearly half of the 28 cooking gas stations are partially operating due to lack of cooking gas, while a rationing system remains in



place.

Rafah Crossing Update

The Rafah Crossing controlled by the Egyptian authorities remains partially operational. During the reporting period, approximately 1,513 Palestinians were allowed into Gaza and over 1,686 others left Gaza through the Rafah Crossing. A further 333 people were denied entry into Egypt. Since the beginning of April 2011, approximately 2,100 people have been denied entry into Egypt for unspecified reasons. Nearly 3,000 people are so far registered and scheduled to travel until 6 August.