



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

27 April - 3 May 2011

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 3 MAY

- 4 May: The Gaza authorities executed a Palestinian man convicted of collaboration with Israel. The man was sentenced to death on 19 April 2011.
- 4 May: After a three-week lull, the Israeli authorities demolished eight Palestinian-owned structures in the Bedouin community of Susiya in the Hebron governorate.

West Bank

52 Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

This week, Israeli forces injured 52 Palestinians, including 20 children (aged between 2 and 17), most of them in East Jerusalem clashes. This is the highest number of injuries in a week since late January 2011. Thus far in 2011, five Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank and 427 have been injured, compared to six fatalities and 601 injured in the same period in 2010.

A total of 31 Palestinians were injured during clashes with Israeli forces in the East Jerusalem area of Silwan that erupted after this week's Friday prayer. Of those injured, 19 people, of whom five were children, were injured by rubber-coated metal bullets, and the remaining sustained injuries as a result of tear gas inhalation. Tension continues in Silwan mainly as a result of the presence of settlers and due to an earlier Israeli plan to demolish dozens of houses to make way for a touristic complex.

Also this week, two Palestinians, including a child, were injured in weekly protests in the Ramallah governorate against the expansion of Hallamish settlement on An Nabi Saleh's land and the construction of the Barrier in Bil'in village. The remaining 20 Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli forces at checkpoints, during stone-throwing incidents or in Israeli raids on villages. Also, Israeli forces physically assaulted and injured four international activists while attempting to prevent Israeli forces from raiding the village of 'Izbet at Tabib (Qalqiliya governorate). Overall this week, Israeli forces conducted around 90 search and arrest operations throughout the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, the same as the weekly average of such operations that have been conducted since the beginning of 2011.

Settler violence continues

During the reporting period, OCHA documented nine settler-related incidents that resulted in two Palestinian injuries and damage to property, the same as the weekly average of such incidents recorded since the beginning of the year. A number of access prevention and intimidation incidents affecting Palestinians perpetrated by settlers were also reported during the week.

On 3 May, Israeli settlers from Nof Harim settlement outpost physically assaulted and injured a Palestinian farmer while working his land in the vicinity of the settlement near Qaryut village (Nablus). The farmer

fled the area as settlers attempted to stab him. In a separate incident, another Palestinian was physically assaulted by settlers in Silwan.

Also, Israeli settlers threw stones at Palestinian houses and vandalized 22 olive trees in Burin village (Nablus governorate). The settlers then clashed with the residents, after which, Israeli forces intervened and fired tear gas canisters to disperse the groups, injuring five Palestinians (included in total above). In two separate incidents in the Jerusalem area, Israeli settlers set fire or uprooted dozens of olive trees belonging to the village of Hizma and the Beit Hanina neighborhood of East Jerusalem. In a separate incident, a group of Israeli settlers set fire to a room in the Huwwara Boys' Secondary School (Nablus), damaging its contents. Palestinian; Israeli forces are investigating the incident. In another three separate incidents, settlers threw stones at Palestinian-plated vehicles in the Qalqiliya governorate and set fire to a car in the Jerusalem governorate, causing damage to three vehicles. In two incidents reported during the week, Palestinians threw stones at Israeli cars in the Ramallah governorate, resulting in damages to the vehicles.

No demolitions recorded; demolition and eviction orders issued

For the third consecutive week, there were no demolitions reported in Area C and East Jerusalem, compared to a weekly average of 11 Palestinian-owned structures demolished since the beginning of the year. In 2011, 192 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem and Area C, displacing 339 people – a sharp increase compared to the figures during the equivalent period in 2010 (70 demolitions and 142 people displaced).

This week, however, the Israeli authorities delivered stop work and demolition orders against 25 structures in the Jericho, Qalqiliya, Hebron and Ramallah governorates due to a lack of Israeli-issued permits. The structures mainly included residential buildings and tents, animal shelters and commercial workshops. Also, on 27 April, the Israeli authorities issued eviction orders against ten Palestinian Bedouin families residing in the vicinity of Adam settlement (Jerusalem governorate). The families were given two weeks notice to leave the area. Fourteen other eviction orders were issued against over 200 dunums of agricultural land in the Hebron and Salfit governorate, belonging to 33 families.

Municipal decision on curriculum taught in East Jerusalem schools revoked

This week, the Israeli authorities revoked a decision issued on 7 March that, if implemented, would have prevented private and semi-private schools in East Jerusalem that receive funding from the Jerusalem Municipality to acquire textbooks from any source other than the municipality itself. The revocation of the decision followed a series of activities and protests held by civil society bodies raising concerns that such a step would undermine Palestinian education in East Jerusalem and disrupt the feeling of belonging and identity among East Jerusalem students.

Gaza Strip

Four Palestinians, including two children, injured near the fence

This week, Israeli forces injured four Palestinians, including two children, near the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of 2011, 45 Palestinians (18 civilians), one Israeli civilian and one Israeli soldier have been killed in the context of Israeli-Palestinian violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, and 176 Palestinians (148 civilians), five Israeli civilians and four members of the Israeli forces have been injured.

In one incident on 28 April, armed Palestinians fired mortar shells towards Israeli troops patrolling the fence near Al Bureij camp, after which the troops responded by firing tank shells. At least one shell hit a Palestinian house in Johr Al-Dik village, injuring four Palestinian civilians, including a woman and two children (aged 6 and 10). The house also sustained damage. The children's mother was killed last year (on 13 July) when Israeli forces fired a flechette shell (an anti-personnel ammunition that explodes in the air releasing thousands of small lethal darts over a wide radius) that hit the same house.

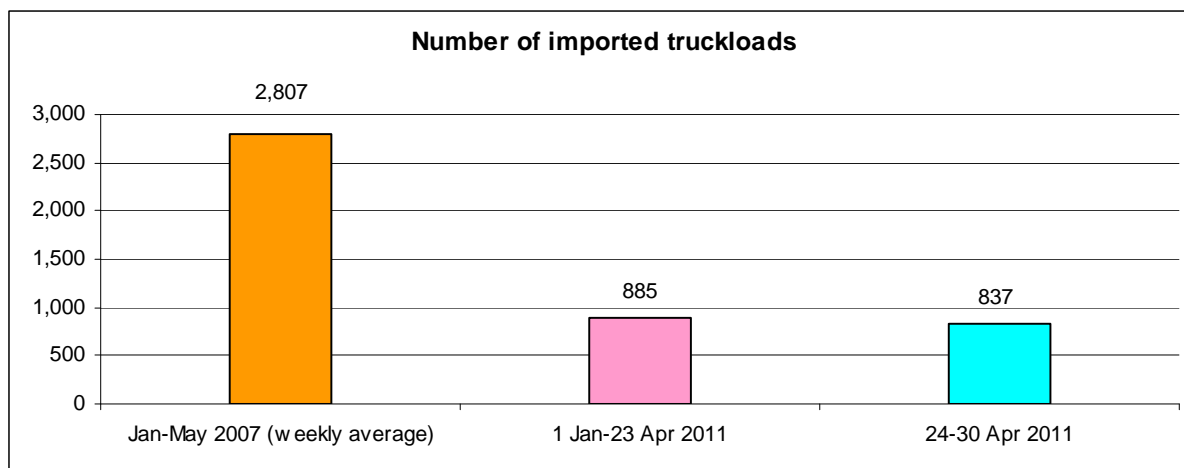
On one incident, Israeli forces entered a few hundred metres inside the Gaza Strip and withdrew after conducting a search operation and land leveling. While Israel has officially prohibited Palestinian access to areas within 300 metres from the fence, in practice, incidents of "warning fire" at civilians are frequently reported in areas up to 1,500 metres from the fence. These restrictions disrupt people's lives and livelihoods, particularly during peak agricultural seasons, such as the current wheat harvest season. In addition, access restrictions continue to be enforced on fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore, affecting the ongoing sardine catch.

Also this week, three Palestinian boys, all aged 14, were injured while handling an UXO (unexploded ordnance) in Tel El Sultan area, west of Rafah. According to the United Nations Mine Action Team (UNMAT), in 2011, one person was killed and 12 others, including nine children, were injured in similar incidents in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza crossings with Israel

A total of 837 truckloads of goods entered Gaza this week (24-30 April), slightly below the weekly average of truckloads that entered since the beginning of the year (885). This week's figure 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. As in previous weeks, most goods that entered Gaza were consumer products, with food constituting 63 percent. Prior to the blockade, food items made up less than 20 percent of all imports.

For the second consecutive week, no aggregates for international projects approved by Israel could enter Gaza (commercial import of basic construction materials remains banned). This is because the alternative facility at Kerem Shalom crossing, designed to compensate for the closure of the conveyer belt at Karni crossing in March 2011, is not yet ready. Sufa Crossing, which was exceptionally operated between 9 March and 20 April 2011 for the transfer of aggregates, remains closed. Large quantities of construction materials, which are banned entry through the crossings, are entering via tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.



As of 3 May, wheat grain and wheat flour stocks in Gaza were sufficient to cover the needs of approximately 15 days, half the 30 days of reserves held in Gaza. The closure of Karni Crossing in March and the shift in operations to Kerem Shalom has compounded existing shortages of wheat grains as well as construction materials in the Gaza strip.

Exports from Gaza have remained limited to specific authorized agricultural crops. Two truckloads of cut flowers (150,000 stems) were allowed to exit Gaza this week. During the export season, between 28 November 2010 and 30 April 2011, a total of 287 truckloads, including 210 truckloads of strawberries (397 tonnes), 71 of cut flowers (10,482,000 stems), three truckloads of sweet peppers (6 tonnes) and three truckloads of cherry tomatoes (6.7 tonnes), were allowed out of Gaza.

Shortages of cooking gas continue. This week, 684 tonnes of cooking gas entered Gaza, representing 57 percent of the weekly average of the required amount of 1,200 tonnes. The Gas Stations Owner Association in Gaza indicates that almost half the 28 cooking gas stations are partially operating due to lack of cooking gas, while a rationing system remains in place.

Electricity supply improved; power cuts decreased to six hours a day

This week, the three damaged Israeli power lines supplying the Gaza Strip with electricity were fixed. As a result, daily power cuts were reduced to six hours, down from 12 hours in the previous week. However, on 28 April, one of the lines supplying Gaza City went out of order, triggering eight hours of daily power cuts inside the city. Coordination attempts to fix the line are underway. Electricity outages continue to affect the provision of basic services, water supplies and sewage treatment. The current electricity deficit in the Gaza Strip stands at around 34 percent.

Rafah Crossing

During the reporting period, approximately 1,630 Palestinians were allowed into Gaza and over 1,400 others crossed out of Gaza through the Rafah Crossing controlled by the Egyptian authorities. A further 226 people were denied entry into Egypt for unclear reasons. Due to the current access restrictions and the limited operations of the crossing, the Border and Crossing authorities in Gaza continue to implement a registration mechanism to facilitate the travel of only those registered as urgent and humanitarian cases, including patients, students and foreign passport holders, to Egypt. Nearly 3000 people are so far registered and scheduled to travel until 11 May.

Also during the period, according to media reports, the Egyptian authorities announced that it will permanently re-open the Rafah Crossing. This crossing was partially re-opened in early June 2010 after being closed for three years, following the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip. The combination of the Israeli blockade on Gaza and the closure of Rafah has left the people of Gaza 'locked in'. Opening of Rafah might mitigate the effects of the blockade.

oPt-wide issues

Fatah-Hamas reconciliation

After more than three years of rift between Palestinian factions of Fatah and Hamas, the two groups announced a unity deal on 27 April 2011. The factions said they will create an interim unity government and hold elections within a year. The final agreement was signed in Cairo on 4 May. The humanitarian implications of this reconciliation remain unclear: such a development could lead to

better coordination between the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and Ramallah, significantly improving the provision of basic services in the Gaza Strip.

However, on 1 May, the Israeli Minister of Finance announced the suspension of the payment of some 300 million shekels (about US\$ 88 million) in tax and customs revenues due to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Withholding these funds, which are Palestinian money, will affect the salaries of over 150,000 PA employees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who support around one million dependents. The nonpayment of public servants' salaries led to protracted strikes and resulted at times in temporary suspension and, eventually, the gradual deterioration of public services, such as health and education.