



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

25 - 31 May 2011

West Bank

13 injured by Israeli forces

This week, Israeli forces injured 13 Palestinians in weekly protests and during search-and-arrest operations throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Also this week, 15 members of Israeli forces were injured by stones thrown by Palestinians. Thus far in 2011, 699 Palestinians and 47 Israeli soldiers and policemen were injured in conflict-related incidents in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, a six per cent increase and 44 per cent decline, respectively, compared to the equivalent period of 2010.

Five Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli forces during 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). Around 40 olive trees were burnt by tear gas canisters fired by Israeli forces in the former protest.

The remaining eight Palestinians were injured during Israeli raids on Palestinian communities in the Jericho, Nablus, Hebron and Ramallah governorates and in East Jerusalem. Overall this week, Israeli forces conducted over 100 search-and-arrest operations throughout the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, a slight increase compared to the weekly average for such operations since the beginning of 2011 (90).

A total of 15 Israeli soldiers and border policemen were injured during the week, in four separate incidents, when hit by stones thrown by Palestinians near the settlements of Har Adar and Beit Orot and along the Barrier section next to Qatanna village in the Jerusalem area and near Beituniya town in the Ramallah area.

Settler violence continues; two Palestinians and three settlers injured

During the reporting period, OCHA documented six settler attacks that resulted in two Palestinian injuries and damage to Palestinian property. Three settlers were also injured this week by Palestinians in two separate incidents. Since the beginning of the year, three Palestinians (including two children) and six Israeli settlers (including three children) have been killed, and 87 Palestinian and 14 Israeli settlers have been injured in the context of settler-related incidents in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

In two separate incidents this week, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured two elderly shepherds, including a woman, while they were herding their sheep on land near the settlements of Yitzhar (Nablus governorate) and Susiya (Hebron governorate). Three Israelis were also injured in two separate incidents by stones thrown by Palestinians at vehicles in Al 'Isawiya and At Tur villages in East Jerusalem.

Also this week, Israeli settlers reportedly set fire to land, belonging to the villages of Far'ata (Qalqiliya governorate) and Madama village (Nablus governorate), planted with wheat crops, burning six dunums of land and damaging the crops. In a separate incident, some 1,600 settlers entered Joseph's Tomb in Nablus City. The entry of several hundred of those settlers was coordinated by Israeli forces and the Palestinian Authority, while more than 200 settlers entered without authorization. During the gathering, settlers damaged a number of Palestinian cars. Such visits are taking place on a regular basis and often evolve into clashes between settlers and Palestinian residents, resulting in damage to Palestinian property. In April 2011, a settler was killed by Palestinian forces when he failed to stop at a Palestinian checkpoint while a group of settlers were visiting the tomb without prior coordination with the Israeli or Palestinian authorities. Another Palestinian vehicle sustained damage in a separate incident when settlers threw stones at cars in the Old City of Hebron.

14 structures demolished in Area C and East Jerusalem; 8 wells sealed

After a three-week lull, the Israeli authorities demolished 12 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C of the West Bank due to a lack of Israeli-issued building permits. The structures included: four residences, four animal pens, two commercial structures and two cisterns in the communities of Al Farisiya in the Tubas governorate, Arab Abu Farda, Jinsafut and Haris in the Qalqiliya governorate and Idhna in the Hebron governorate. A total of three families, comprising 33 people, were displaced.

In East Jerusalem, a Palestinian was forced to demolish his ground floor house in Wadi al Joz neighbourhood after receiving a demolition order due to a lack of permit. Another Palestinian partially demolished an extension to his house containing three bedrooms in Jabal al Mukaber village (East Jerusalem) in the same context. Seven people were displaced as a result of both demolitions. Since the beginning of 2011, 207 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem and Area C, displacing 433 people. This represents more than double and triple the numbers of demolitions and people displaced, respectively, compared to the equivalent period in 2010. Restrictive planning and zoning regimes applied by the Israeli authorities in both East Jerusalem and Area C make it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain permits for legal construction.

Also this week, Israeli forces sealed eight unlicensed artesian wells in the village of Kafr Dan (Jenin governorate) in an area-defined as Area B, by cutting water pipes and filling the wells with soil. The wells are the only source of water for the village and are used by 80 farmers to irrigate at least 1,600 dunums of agricultural land. Under the Oslo Agreement, any water-related project, including in Areas A and B, needs the approval of the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee.

Gaza Strip

A calm week in Gaza

This week, there were no casualties reported in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip. Also, for the fourth consecutive week, there were no reports of Israeli air strikes or rocket firing by Palestinian armed factions. Since the beginning of 2011, 48 Palestinians (19 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.

The Israeli authorities continue to restrict access to fishing zones beyond three nautical miles from the shore and to areas up to 1,500 meters from the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In three separate incidents this week, Israeli naval forces opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore. While no injuries were reported, one fisherman was treated for shock and his boat incurred damage. In another incident near the fence, Israeli forces fired warning shots at farmers, forcing them to leave their land. Also, on three separate occasions, Israeli forces entered a few hundred meters into Gaza and withdrew after performing land leveling operations.

In two separate incidents (29 and 31 May) this week, three armed Palestinians were killed and two others injured as a result of explosions inside two military training camps in the Rafah area.

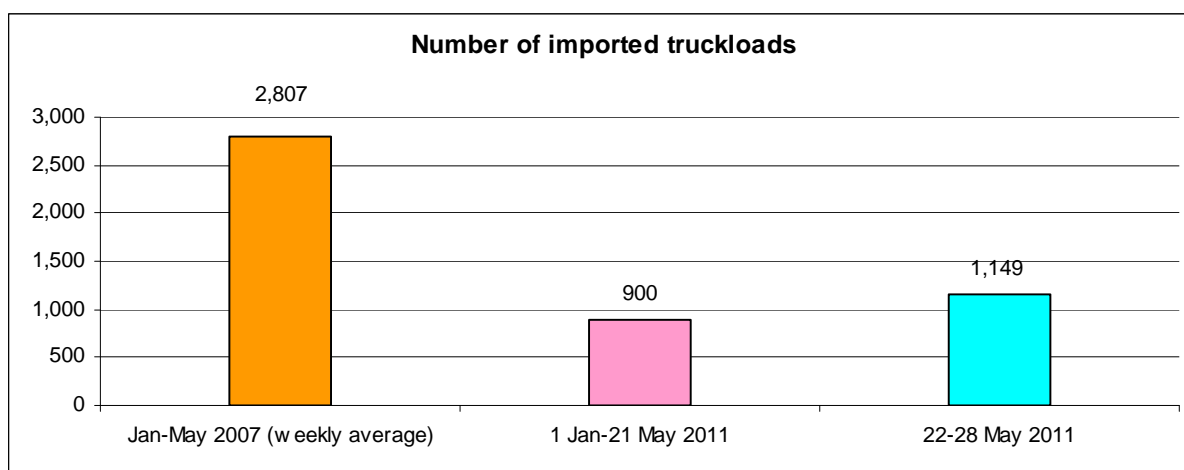
Gaza crossings with Israel; restrictions on imports and exports continue

A total of 1,149 truckloads of goods entered Gaza this week (22-28 May), around 28 per cent above the weekly average of truckloads that entered since the beginning of the year (900). This week's figure, however, represents only 41 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 per cent of imports, compared to less than 20 percent before the blockade.

This week, over 155 truckloads carrying 10,850 tonnes of gravel entered through the new facility recently opened at the Kerem Shalom Crossing, the largest amount allowed entry since the beginning of April 2011. While entry of basic construction materials, including aggregates, cement and steel bars, remains limited for a limited number of projects approved by Israel, a total of 139 truckloads of other construction materials including tiles, pipes and paints were allowed in this week for commercial purposes. Restricted construction materials continue to be transferred into Gaza in remarkable quantities via tunnels under the border with Egypt.

Following the end of the season for strawberries and flowers, no exports left the Gaza Strip for the second consecutive week. Over the course of the last export season, which started in late November 2010, a total of 290 truckloads were allowed out of Gaza, 98 percent of which consisted of strawberries and cut flowers. In the six months prior to the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, a monthly average of over 960 truckloads of textiles, furniture and agricultural produce left Gaza.



Cooking gas shortages continue

This week, 669 tonnes of cooking gas entered the Gaza Strip, representing only 56 per cent of the required weekly 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 began a few weeks ago due to a broken pump, which has yet to be fixed. Shortages of cooking gas continue to affect daily life in the Gaza Strip; the Gas Stations Owners 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.

Relaxation measures announced at Rafah Crossing

On 25 May, the Egyptian authorities announced a number of relaxation measures on the operation of the Rafah Crossing, including the opening of the crossing from Saturday through Thursday from 9am to 5pm (compared to five days a week from 12pm to 5pm before); and the revocation of the visa requirement to enter Egypt for female travelers holding a Palestinian ID card, along with male travelers below 18 and above 40. Males between 18 and 40 will require a visa and may, therefore, be denied exit. The changes have been effective since 28 May.

According to the Crossing and Border authorities in Gaza, despite these changes, travelers who were registered through the previous registration mechanism in the past few weeks will be given the priority to travel. Several thousands of people are registered and scheduled to travel in the next couple of months.

Between 28 and 31 May, a daily average of 480 people crossed into Egypt, compared to a quota of between 300 and 350 people crossing per day in recent weeks. Another 300 Palestinians have crossed

daily into Gaza. A total of 126 people were denied entry into Egypt during the reporting period for unclear reasons. Discussions are taking place between the Egyptian and Gazan authorities to clarify new mechanisms and procedures, including the number of people that will be able to cross each day.

A man sentenced to death

On 31 May, a military court in Gaza sentenced a Palestinian man to death after being convicted of collaborating with Israel. According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), this is the fourth recorded death sentence in Gaza in 2011. PCHR reports that since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, 116 people were sentenced to death, including 93 in the Gaza Strip. Of the latter, 17 people were actually executed, six of whom were killed in 2010 and 2011.