



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

2 – 8 SEPTEMBER 2009

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 8 September 2009

- 9 September: Israeli security forces demolished an outpost, west of the Palestinian community of Susiya. In response, settlers from the nearby settlement of Susiya attacked the Palestinian community and caused body injuries (bruises) to 15 Palestinians. During the night, the settlers re-constructed the evacuated outpost.
- 9 September: The Israeli High Court of Justice issued a decision on four petitions (dealt with jointly) against the route of the Barrier on the section between Tulkarm and Qalqiliya cities. The decision establishes that the current route causes a disproportionate harm to Palestinians and orders the relocation of part of this section along an alternative route proposed by the state. Despite the improvement, the new route keeps thousands of dunums of agricultural land behind the Barrier.

West Bank

Military activities affecting civilians

During the week, Israeli forces injured eight Palestinians throughout the West Bank, down from ten the previous week and a weekly average of 18 since the beginning of 2009. In addition, one Palestinian child was injured by UXO (unexploded ordnance).

Five of the injuries, including two boys, occurred during the weekly anti-Barrier demonstrations in the villages of Ni'lin and Bil'in (Ramallah), three of which were caused by rubber-coated metal bullets and the other two by tear gas canisters. Several other demonstrators suffered from tear gas inhalation. Since the beginning of 2009, a total of 284 Palestinians have been injured in anti-Barrier demonstrations held every week in these two villages, as well as in the Al Ma'sara village (Bethlehem). In addition, an eight year-old boy from Ni'lin was injured after an unexploded sound grenade he picked up next to his school, previously fired by Israeli forces during an anti-Barrier demonstration, exploded in his hands.

The remaining three Palestinians were injured as a result of physical assault by Israeli security forces; two in the course of a demolition in Hebron (see below) and one during an incident at a checkpoint into Qalqiliya City. As part of a series of measures aimed at easing Palestinian movement implemented by the Israeli authorities in June 2009, this checkpoint was turned into a "partial checkpoint", staffed only occasionally; most of the checkpoint's infrastructure remained intact.

Settler-related incidents

During the week, there were six settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians, nearly the same number of incidents as the weekly average since the beginning of 2009 (7). Incidents included physical assault, property damage and trespassing, with one incident resulting in an injury. In the northern West Bank, a group of settlers from the Havat Gil'ad settlement outpost physically assaulted and injured one Palestinian man from Far'ata village (Qalqiliya), while the latter was working in his land in the vicinity of the outpost. In Ramallah governorate, Israeli settlers from the Adei Ad settlement outpost uprooted 180 olive trees

belonging to farmers from the neighbouring village of Al Mughayyir. In a similar incident in the same area, settlers from Halamish settlement uprooted 42 olive and lemon trees belonging to farmers from Deir Nitham village.

In another incident (not included in the six above), a Palestinian taxi driver from East Jerusalem was physically assaulted and seriously injured in West Jerusalem by a group of ultra-orthodox Israelis.

Also this week, there were four reported incidents affecting settlers, resulting in no injuries. Two of the incidents involved stone and cocktail Molotov throwing by Palestinians at Israeli vehicles traveling on main roads next to Huwwara village in Nablus (Road 60) and Azzun village in Qalqiliya (Road 55). The Israeli military imposed three-hour curfews in both villages and subsequently searched some houses. The other two incidents involved stone throwing by Palestinians at settlers' vehicles in the central West Bank (Ramallah).

Three agricultural ponds demolished

On 3 September, the Israeli Civil Administration demolished three agricultural water ponds with a combined capacity of 6,200 cubic metres belonging to Palestinian farmers from Al Baqa'a village (Hebron), due to the lack of construction permits. Two of the ponds, one of which was constructed in 2001 and another earlier in 2009, have been used to irrigate at least 35 dunums of agricultural land area belonging to ten families comprising of 77 members, including 60 children. Another pool, which was still under construction when demolished, was planned to irrigate an area of eight dunums, affecting the livelihoods of three families of 24 people, including 18 children.

Nearly 60 percent of the Muslim/Palestinian population denied access to Friday prayers in East Jerusalem

Access for eligible Palestinians to East Jerusalem during the second Friday of Ramadan (4 September) was more problematic than the previous week, particularly at the Qalandia checkpoint, due to inadequate preparations for handling a much larger amount of people. At least 19 people required medical treatment due to overcrowding. All have been released from hospitals except one, who died a few days later (9 September) after suffering a heart attack. According to Israeli authorities, approximately 130,000 Palestinians entered Jerusalem through the four authorized checkpoints (Qalandia, Gilo, Shufat Camp and Az Zeitun), compared to 60,000 the previous Friday.

Access for Palestinians with West Bank IDs has remained restricted to men over 50 and women over 45 years of age, and boys and girls under 12, who could pass without permits. Men between 45-50 and women between 30-45 years of age are eligible for special permits. West Bankers not included in these age groups (or denied a permit), as well as the entire population of the Gaza Strip, are denied access to East Jerusalem for the Friday prayers of Ramadan. These segments of the population constitute nearly 60 percent of the Muslim/Palestinian population in the oPt.

Access to the Jordan Valley eased

On 2 September, Israeli authorities removed part of the infrastructure at the Ma'ale Efrayim checkpoint, one of four staffed checkpoints controlling access to the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank. According to the Israeli DCL, this checkpoint will no longer be regularly staffed; however, there will be random checks of vehicles. From now on, Palestinian-plated vehicles are allowed to enter the Jordan Valley through this checkpoint without a permit, thus facilitating access from the northern West Bank to some areas in the Jordan Valley. The benefit of this measure for Palestinian farmers cultivating land in the northern part Jordan Valley is likely to be very limited due to their dependence on the routes controlled by another two checkpoints (Tayasir and Hamra), which still require permits.

Gaza Strip

Second Palestinian boy killed near the border fence

This week, Israeli forces killed a Palestinian boy near the border fence and injured two men, the same number of deaths and injuries as last week. This is the second boy killed near the border fence in northern Gaza in the last two weeks. Since the end of the “Cast Lead” operation, Israeli forces have killed 43 Palestinians, including five children, in the Gaza Strip, and injured 100.

On 4 September, Israeli soldiers shot and killed a 14 year-old Palestinian boy while he was walking, together with his family, in an agricultural area more than 600 metres away from the border fence. According to two human rights groups in Gaza, the Israeli forces opened fire in the direction of the family without any prior warning. On at least six other occasions, Israeli forces opened warning fire in the direction of farmers working in areas adjacent to the border fence, forcing them to leave their land. On a number of occasions, IDF soldiers entered a few hundred metres inside Gaza and levelled land; in one of these incidents, north of Beit Lahia town, Israeli soldiers detained five Palestinian boys and released them shortly after.

Also this week, two men, including one unarmed civilian, were injured in an exchange of gunfire between Israeli troops and a group of Palestinian militants, east of Beit Hanoun.

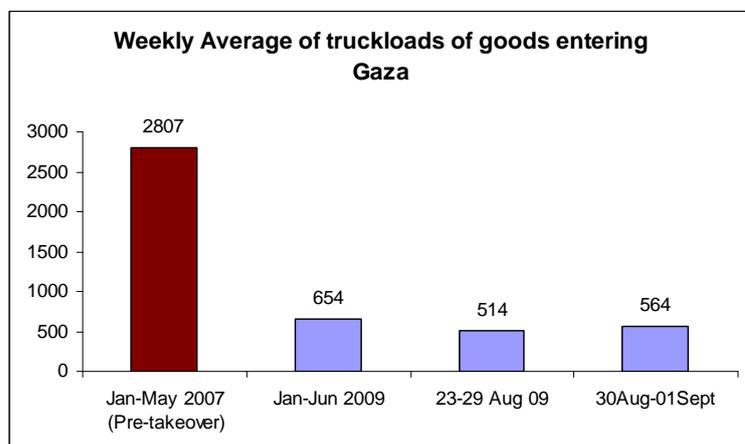
Palestinian factions have continued to fire sporadic rudimentary rockets and mortar shells towards southern Israel, including military bases. No Israeli casualties or damage were reported.

Weekly average of imported truckloads, including fuel, remain below needs (30 Aug-01 Sept 2009)

This week, Gaza imports increased slightly: 564 compared to 514 truckloads last week. This week's figure constitutes around 20 percent of the weekly average of truckloads that entered Gaza during the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas takeover. Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods (520 truckloads or 92% of total imports). The remaining 8 percent included limited shipments of agricultural materials, packaging materials, medical supplies and non-edible consumables.

The entry of other essential goods including materials for reconstruction (cement, steel bars, glass, wood), spare parts for water and sanitation projects, packaging material, industrial and electrical materials, IT equipment and vehicles remain either restricted to limited quantities, or barred from entry entirely. No exports were allowed this week. Gaza's last shipment of exports was on 27 April 2009.

Import of cooking gas increased by around 14 percent compared to the previous week (683 tonnes vs. 601 tonnes). While this amount represents only 34% of the weekly needs, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association, cooking gas is still available on the open market with limited shortages. No Israeli petrol or diesel entered Gaza during the week, with the exception of 30,000 litres of petrol and 300,000 litres of diesel for UNRWA that entered via Nahal Oz



fuel pipeline. However, Egyptian petrol and diesel, which is transferred through the tunnels, remain available on the open market.

In addition, approximately 2.2 million liters of industrial gas to operate the Gaza Power Plant entered this week, constituting approximately 70 percent of the plant's weekly needs. As a result, Gaza's electricity company continued to implement scheduled blackouts of 6-8 hours a day, five days a week. These blackouts have continued to affect the normal functioning of public services, including water and waste water pumping and management and hospitals' services.

Humanitarian organizations raise concerns over the ongoing water and sanitation crisis in Gaza

In an event held in Gaza on 3 September, a number of humanitarian aid agencies, including UN agencies and international NGOs, expressed deep concern over the ongoing water and sanitation crisis. They called on the Government of Israel to ensure full and unrestricted access for spare parts and materials critically needed to restore water and sanitation services inside Gaza.

Some 10,000 people remain without access to the water network in the Gaza Strip and approximately 60 percent of the population does not have continuous access to water. Furthermore, approximately 80 million litres of raw and partially treated wastewater are being discharged into the environment (including the Mediterranean Sea) each day since January 2008, as a result of damage incurred to sewage treatment facilities, lack of treatment capacity due to pending projects for upgrading the treatment plant and a critical shortage of fuel and electricity.

Access to and from Gaza remains severely restricted

Access for Gazans in and out of the Gaza Strip through the Israeli-controlled crossing of Erez and the Egyptian-controlled crossing of Rafah has remained largely restricted. Only a limited number of humanitarian cases, including patients, are allowed entry and exit using a special authorization. The Rafah Crossing has remained officially closed since June 2007. However, since the end of the "Cast Lead" offensive, the Egyptian authorities have been opening the crossing two to three days a month. According to the Border Authorities in Gaza, thousands of people, including nearly 600 students, are waiting for the next opening of Rafah Crossing to exit Gaza.