



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

11 - 17 NOVEMBER 2009

Latest Developments since Tuesday, 17 November

18 November:

- The Jerusalem municipality demolished five Palestinian-owned structures in East Jerusalem, due to the lack of building permits; one uninhabited residence in Al Isawiya (affecting 14 people, half of them children), three animal pens and a building housing a Palestinian NGO, the Women's Society Office, which provides various services to women and children.
- Eight of the 30 cooking gas stations that had closed this past week due to lack of cooking gas were able to re-open for a few hours after some 257 tonnes of cooking gas was transferred into Gaza through Nahal Oz.

19 November:

- The Israeli Air Force targeted and bombed two tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border and a training military camp, west of Khan Younis, injuring four Palestinians.
- An Israeli youth stabbed and injured a Palestinian man in the Ramat Eshkol settlement in East Jerusalem.

West Bank

Military activities affecting civilians

During the reporting period, Israeli forces injured 12 Palestinians, while two Israeli soldiers were wounded. These injury figures compare to a weekly average of 16 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier injured since the beginning of 2009.

Ten of this week's Palestinian injuries, as well as an Israeli injury, occurred during two anti-Barrier protests; four injuries in Ni'lin (Ramallah) and six in Deir Al Ghusun (Tulkarm). The latter demonstration, which was organised to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, resulted in the arrest of six Palestinians (including two boys) and damage to part of a Barrier gate, used to control access to farming land isolated by the Barrier. In Ni'lin, Israeli forces shot live ammunition at the demonstrators, injuring two of them with shrapnel. These injuries are the first caused by live ammunition in several months. Also this week, Israeli forces imposed a four-hour curfew on the village of Jayyus (Qalqiliya), allegedly after Palestinians set a fire at the Barrier gate, near the village.

Israeli forces shot and injured a Palestinian man from Misiliya village (Jenin) during a chase inside the Green Line in the Jerusalem area; the man had allegedly entered Israel without a permit. Also this week, a Palestinian man was physically assaulted by Israeli forces staffing a flying checkpoint erected near the village of Halhul (Hebron).

During the period, a female Israeli soldier was injured when Palestinians threw stones towards the checkpoint at the entrance of Shu'fat Refugee Camp.

Israeli forces conducted 117 search operations inside Palestinian villages, the majority of which took place in the north (90); 47 Palestinians were detained. This compares to a weekly average of 94 operations and 62 arrests since the beginning of 2009.

Demolitions in East Jerusalem intensify

On 17 November, the Jerusalem municipality demolished two residences in the Beit Hanina and Ras Al Amud neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, due to the lack of building permits. As a result, six families comprising 31 people, including 18 children, were displaced. During one of the demolitions, an additional apartment sustained damages, affecting a family of eight people. A further two houses in the Old City of Jerusalem received demolition orders on 12 November and were given ten days to demolish their homes, placing 16 people, including three children, at risk of imminent displacement.

Since the beginning of 2009, 59 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem, displacing 300 people, including 149 children.

Eviction and stop-work orders delivered in Area C

Nine eviction orders were delivered this week for the first time against the residents of a herder community near Al Mughayyir village (Ramallah) in order to evacuate their dwellings due to their location in a closed military area. The orders affect 21 residences and 20 animal pens, placing 13 households, comprising 98 persons, including 67 children, at risk of displacement. While the orders gave 48 hours to evacuate the targeted structures, the families were later told they had an additional week to leave.

This week, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) issued stop work orders (the step preceding a final demolition order) against 53 Palestinian-owned structures in different Area C locations throughout the West Bank. Twenty two (22) of the targeted structures are inhabited residences, putting over 100 Palestinians, including 80 children at risk of displacement. The remaining 31 include uninhabited residences (six), animal pens (ten), septic holes (six), water cisterns (four), storage structures (three), a poultry farm and the Al Bireh International Stadium, a sports facility.

In total, 180 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C in 2009; no additional demolition has been carried out, however, in Area C since 15 July.

Settler-related incidents

During the week, there were seven settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians reported throughout the West Bank, two of which resulted in the injury of a Palestinian woman and two female internationals. Incidents included physical assault, damage to property, prevention of access and trespassing.

Israeli settlers from the settlement outpost of Mitzpe Yair (Hebron) physically assaulted a group of Palestinian herders from the community of Khirbet Bir al 'Idd, south-east of Hebron; a woman was injured. In 1999-2000, some 20 families residing in this community were forced to evacuate their homes and stay with relatives, following repeated attacks from settlers. Last week, the residents returned to their homes, upon agreement reached between the Israeli human rights organisation

Rabbis for Human Rights and the ICA, in the shadow of a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice. In a separate incident, Israeli settlers from Havot Ma'on settlement outpost physically assaulted and injured two female internationals from the Christian Peacemakers Team, who were accompanying a Palestinian family en route to their house in Tuba village (Hebron). Due to the systematic harassment and attacks by Israeli settlers, this group has maintained a presence in this area since 2005, supporting Palestinian access. Also this week, Israeli settlers from Yitzhar settlement uprooted at least 81 olive trees belonging to Palestinians from Burin village (Nablus).

According to the IDF Spokesperson, during the reporting period, there were 16 incidents that involved Palestinians hurling stones at Israeli-plated vehicles driving on West Bank roads, along with one incident involving the throwing of a Molotov cocktail. While none of these incidents ended with injuries, most resulted in some damage to vehicles. Following most of the incidents, Israeli forces conducted search operations in nearby villages; in two of the operations, in Azzun and Kifl Haris villages, Israeli forces imposed a three and six hour-long curfew, respectively. During the curfews, Israeli forces closed the entrances of the two villages; Azzun was re-opened the following day, while Kifl Haris remains closed.

Also this week, Israeli forces demolished two inhabited houses located in an Israeli outpost near the settlement of Negohot, west of Beit Awwa village (Hebron).

Gaza Strip

One boy killed; two other Palestinians injured

Israeli forces continue to enforce access restrictions to a 300-metre-wide strip of land through opening warning fire towards people approaching or entering the area. In this context, on 13 November, Israeli forces killed a 16-year-old boy and injured another 17-year-old boy when they opened fire towards a group of boys standing near a solid waste dump in Juhr Al Deek area, southeast of Gaza City. This incident followed five weeks in which no fatalities occurred in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict in Gaza. Subsequently, Israeli forces entered the area and detained four youngsters, including the injured boy; all of whom were released two days later, except the injured boy who remains in hospital in Israel. In a separate incident, Israeli forces opened fire towards a group of farmers working their land in the vicinity of the 300-metre buffer zone, injuring one of them.

On two different occasions, Israeli tanks and bulldozers launched an incursion a few hundred metres into the border areas and withdrew after conducting land-leveling operations. In addition, Palestinian factions have continued to fire rockets and mortar shells towards southern Israel, including military bases, resulting in no Israeli injury or damage.

Also this week, on 16 November, four Palestinians sustained injuries in tunnel-related incidents while they were working inside the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

Repressive measures in the context of intra-Palestinian conflict

The local authorities in Gaza banned Palestinians from commemorating the 5th anniversary of the death of the late Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat. In a related event, security forces affiliated to Hamas stormed the Ramattan News Agency in Gaza ahead of a press conference that was supposed to report about the above measures.

Events in the Gaza Strip have come in parallel to a crackdown on Hamas activists in the West Bank. According to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) in Gaza, during the first two weeks of November, PA security forces arrested about a dozen Hamas activists, among them university students, professionals and two journalists, one of whom was released.

Only 3 percent of weekly cooking gas needs entered

This week, there was an approximately 88 percent drop in the amount of cooking gas that entered Gaza, compared to last week (49.5 tonnes vs. 408 tonnes), constituting only three percent of Gaza’s weekly needs of cooking gas (1,750 tonnes), as estimated by the local authorities. One reason behind this decline is that cooking gas was transferred only through Kerem Shalom fuel pipelines, which lack the capacity to transfer sufficient shipments of cooking gas. Nahal Oz, which allows entry of a greater volume of cooking gas, has only been open on three days since the beginning of November. According to an Israeli media report, the IDF is in the process of permanently shutting down the Nahal Oz fuel depot due to Israeli security considerations.

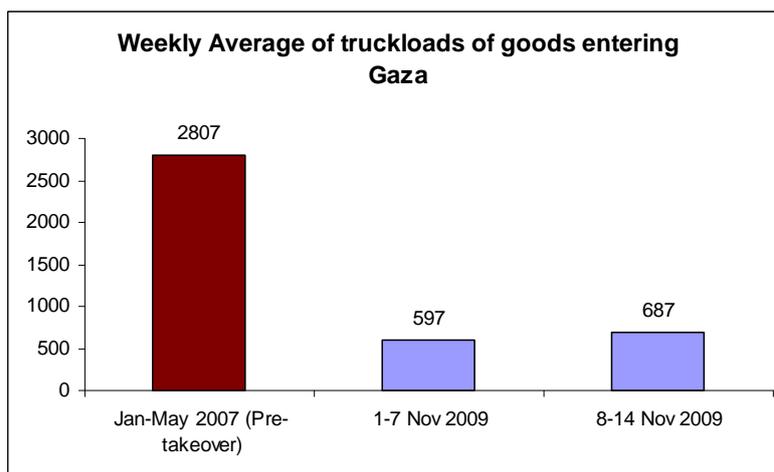
The decline in the entry of cooking gas comes in the context of a growing need for the gas by the population of Gaza during the winter season, when it is used traditionally to power heaters. As of 17 November, the World Food Programme (WFP) indicated that its 40 social institutions in Gaza have already consumed all of their emergency supplies of cooking gas. The Ministry of Health stated that some hospitals, including the European Hospital, may have to close cooking and laundry facilities within a few days, if this shortage continues. The closure of hospital laundries will have a significant impact on hygiene and, hence, health standards within hospitals. Cooking gas is also used for heating chicken farms; hundreds of thousands of chicks were killed by their owners in Gaza during November 2008, due to the lack of cooking gas to heat the compounds. According to the Gas Stations Owner Association, as of 16 November, all the 30 cooking gas stations in Gaza were closed due to lack of stocks.

Fuel Update

Nahal Oz and Kerem Shalom Crossings operated on one day and four days, respectively, during the week. In contrast to cooking gas, the amounts of industrial fuel that entered this week increased, compared to last week (2.9 million litres vs. 1.5 million litres).

No commercial petrol or diesel entered Gaza this week; only 30,000 litres of petrol and another 123,010 litres of diesel

were allowed via Nahal Oz for UNRWA use. Egyptian petrol and diesel, which is transferred through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, remain available on the open market with nearly 100,000 litres of diesel and 100,000 litres of petrol transferred into Gaza per day.



Weekly average of imported truckloads remains below needs (08-14 Nov 2009)

This week, a total of 687 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, constituting an approximately 15 percent increase, compared to the number of truckloads that entered during the previous week (597). This week's figure, however, constituted around only 24 percent of the weekly average of the number of truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007 (2,807), before the Hamas takeover.

Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods - 654 truckloads or 95 percent of total imports. The remaining five percent of truckloads included limited shipments of agricultural materials, medical supplies and stationery. This week's imports also included three truckloads of gravel for a water project, the first time such goods have entered since 26 June 2009.

The entry of other major essential goods, including materials for reconstruction (cement, steel bars, glass, wood and others), 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. No exports were allowed out of Gaza this week. Exports from Gaza were last allowed out on 27 April 2009.