



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

18 – 24 NOVEMBER 2009

### Latest Developments since Tuesday, 24 November

- According to a media report, on 26 November a Palestinian man stabbed and injured an Israeli man and an Israeli girl inside the Kiriya settlement (Hebron), and was subsequently shot and critically injured by an Israeli soldier.

## West Bank

### Military activities: a relatively calm week

During the reporting period, Israeli forces injured five Palestinians, down from 12 Palestinians wounded during last week and a weekly average of 16 since the beginning of 2009. All injuries occurred during the weekly anti-Barrier demonstrations, in which three Palestinians sustained wounds by live ammunition in Ni'lin village (Ramallah) and two Palestinian women were physically assaulted and injured by Israeli forces in Al Ma'sara village (Bethlehem). This is the second consecutive week, in which injuries from live ammunition in demonstrations are recorded, after several months. No Israeli injuries were recorded this week.

Israeli forces conducted 56 search operations inside Palestinian villages, the majority of which took place in the south (31). This compares to a weekly average of around 100 operations since the beginning of 2009.

### Demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem continue

On 18 November, the Jerusalem municipality demolished two Palestinian-owned buildings and three animal pens in East Jerusalem due to the lack of building permits. Among the demolished houses was a building housing a Palestinian NGO, the Women's Society Office, which provides various educational and vocational training services to women and children in the Silwan neighbourhood, affecting dozens of children and women beneficiaries. In addition, three animal pens, also in Silwan, were demolished, affecting the source of income for a Palestinian family of 14. Since the beginning of 2009, 64 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem due to the lack of permits, of which 51 were residential, resulting in the displacement of 300 people, including 149 children.

In a press release issued this week, the Jerusalem municipality stated that it is promoting a number of zoning plans (outline and detailed), currently under consideration by the local and regional planning committees, which, if approved, will allow Palestinians to construct more than 5,000 new housing units in various areas of East Jerusalem. Since the annexation of occupied East Jerusalem to Israel, it has been very difficult for Palestinian residents of the city to obtain building permits, leaving many of them with no choice but to build "illegally". Conservative estimates indicate that as many as 60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem may be at risk of having their homes demolished due to "illegal" construction.

Also in East Jerusalem, a Palestinian family of four persons was forced to leave the house they were renting in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, following an eviction order previously issued by the Israeli authorities. This event followed an Israeli court decision in favor of the Israeli settlers, who claim ownership over the land on which the house is built. Previous to this, in early August 2009, 53 Palestinians were displaced after being evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah under similar circumstances.

According to the Palestinian media, another eviction order was issued this week against a number of Palestinian owned buildings in the Samiramis neighborhood of East Jerusalem, following similar ownership claims by Israeli settlers. This neighborhood, located in the northern edge of East Jerusalem, has been isolated from the rest of the city by the Barrier.

## **Israeli authorities continue to issue demolition orders in the West Bank**

In Area C of the West Bank, the Israeli Civil Administration handed ten demolition and stop work orders against Palestinian-owned structures in the villages of 'Azzun (Qalqiliya) and Al 'Aqaba (Tubas), due to the lack of building permit. The orders include one house under construction in 'Azzun, affecting a family of five people, including three children, and nine structures in Al 'Aqaba, which include: a road linking the village to the main road, three uninhabited residences, a water cistern a storage structure and three agricultural structures. The majority of the structures in Al 'Aqaba village are at risk of demolition, since this village lies in an area declared as a closed military zone. Since the beginning of the year, 180 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C due to the lack of building permits, with the last demolition occurring in July.

## **Israeli settler-related incidents in the West Bank**

Six settler-related incidents were reported this week throughout the West Bank two of which resulted in the injury of two Palestinian men.

On 19 November, an Israeli settler stabbed and moderately injured a Palestinian man while he was standing at a bus station in the settlement of Ramat Eshkol (East Jerusalem). The perpetrator turned himself in to the police later the same day. The other Palestinian injury occurred when Israeli settlers hurled stones at a Palestinian vehicle driving near Yitzhar settlement (Nablus), wounding one Palestinian and damaging the vehicle. Another incident reported this week involved Israeli settlers from an outpost near Ma'ale 'Amos settlement preventing access for herders from Kisan village (Bethlehem) to graze their animals on their land in the vicinity of the settlement.

Lack of adequate law enforcement on violent Israeli settlers remains an issue of concern. The Israeli human rights group Yesh Din reported this week that most of the 69 incidents involving vandalism against Palestinian orchards and trees by settlers, monitored by the organization since 2005, were closed by the Israeli police for lack of evidence or due to "unknown perpetrator"; not a single investigation has led to the indictment of a suspect.

According to the IDF Spokesperson, during the reporting period, there were eight incidents that involved Palestinians hurling stones at Israeli-plated vehicles driving on West Bank roads, two of which resulted in light injuries to two settlers. An additional three incidents involving throwing Molotov cocktail were also reported. Following some of the incidents, Israeli forces conducted search operations in nearby villages.

## Gaza Strip

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### Increase in Israeli air strikes and resulting injuries

During the reporting period, Israeli forces injured five Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, all of them in the course of airstrikes.

In two separate incidents on 22 November, the Israeli air force attacked two metal workshops, southeast of Jabaliya and in Gaza City, one of which resulted in the injury of four Palestinian civilians. Another civilian sustained wounds when Israeli planes targeted tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. While since the end of the “Cast Lead” offensive tunnels have been regularly targeted by the Israeli air force, this is only the second time that airstrikes have been conducted in urban areas.

Two militants were also killed this week when they accidentally detonated an unexploded ordnance in an area, east of Gaza City. According to the IDF, the Palestinians were planting a roadside explosive device. Additionally, one man died and another one was injured as a result of a tunnel collapse.

According to various media reports, on 21 November a number of Palestinian armed factions in Gaza declared a unilateral end to all rocket and mortar fire into southern Israel; however, some of the factions denied the agreement the following day.

During the period, Israeli forces continued to prevent access into areas next to the Gaza-Israel border and beyond a fishing area of three nautical miles from the shore, through firing warning shots towards people entering or approaching these areas. In two different incidents during the reporting period, Israeli naval forces opened warning fire towards fishing boats, forcing them to return to shore. Also, on four separate occasions, Israeli forces launched an incursion a few hundred metres into the border areas and withdrew after conducting land-leveling operations. In one of the incidents, Israeli forces arrested 12 Palestinians while collecting scrap metal near the border area (Beit Lahiya) for a short period of time and released them before they withdrew from the area.

### 750 university students at risk of losing the academic year

According to the committee representing Gazan students, there are currently about 750 students, the majority of whom are newly admitted students, waiting to leave Gaza to reach universities abroad, in which they have been enrolled. Unless they are allowed to leave Gaza in the coming weeks, these students will lose the academic year.

The ability of students in Gaza to pursue their education abroad is largely restricted since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Exit via Israel to students is subject to strict criterion, competing with hundreds of other humanitarian classified cases to leave Gaza. The criterion include: the student must have a scholarship with a ‘recognized’ university (although no such list has been produced by the Israeli authorities) and a diplomat from the country that awarded the scholarship must accompany the student from the Erez Crossing, across Israel and the West Bank, until the student reaches the border crossing between Israel and Jordan.

Rafah Crossing, which has been officially closed since June 2007, opens on a sporadic basis and requires students to undergo a lengthy registration process that usually takes approximately 20 days. The crossing also involves a complex queuing system, limiting the number of students allowed to

leave. During the last opening of Rafah Crossing (1-3 November), for example, most students with assigned seats were unable to exit, as the Egyptian authorities closed the crossing before the buses carrying the students reached the front of the queue. The committee indicates that some students have tried to cross Rafah up to six times before they succeeded.

### Despite increase in cooking gas imports, shortages continue

This week, the imports of cooking gas that entered Gaza was six times higher compared to last week (298 tonnes vs. 49.5 tonnes). Nevertheless, the amount constituted only 17 percent of the weekly needs, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners association (GSOA). This week’s amount is also one of the lowest quantities that entered Gaza since the end of the “Cast Lead” offensive in January 2009. The impact of this week’s increase is minimal: only eight of the 30 cooking gas stations that were forced to close in the second week of November, due to the lack of cooking gas, have been able to operate partly for a few hours on the days on which the gas was delivered; hospitals, including the European Hospital, continue to use contingency stocks to run their laundry and cooking facilities; people’s coping mechanisms continue to erode.

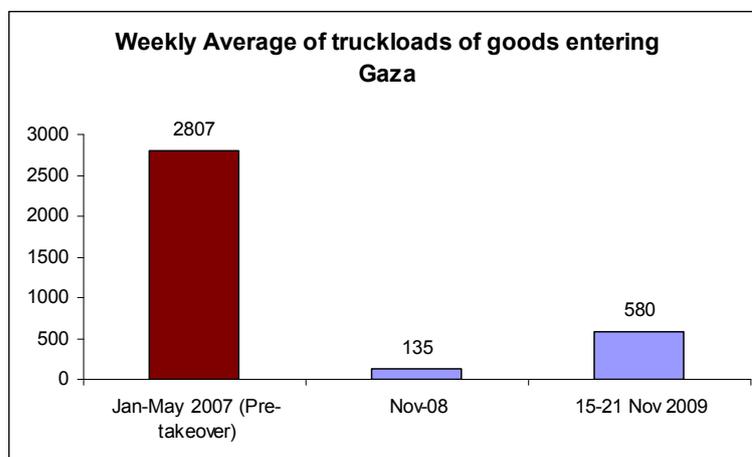
Despite shortages of cooking gas, no bakeries are currently closed. Since the shortages of cooking gas last year, many bakeries have turned to other fuels as contingencies; only 22 of the 50 bakeries throughout the Gaza Strip rely on cooking gas and they are currently using their gas stocks. The remaining 28 are reliant on diesel or electricity. On 23 November, Oxfam International called on Israel to allow in the daily needed quantities of cooking gas, warning that households, bakeries and hospitals in Gaza will be left short of cooking gas during the upcoming Muslim feast, Eid Al Adha.

### Fuel update

Nahal Oz and Kerem Shalom fuel pipelines have continued to operate on one day only and four days, respectively, during the week. Imports of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant that entered this week declined by 31 percent compared to the last week (2 million litres vs. 2.9 million litres). No commercial petrol or diesel entered Gaza this week; only 40,500 litres of petrol and another 400,450 litres of diesel were allowed 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 remain below needs (15-21 November)

A total of 580 truckloads of goods entered Gaza this week, constituting an approximately 16 percent decline compared to the number of truckloads that entered during the last week (687). This week’s figure constituted around 21 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 - 545 truckloads or 94 percent of total imports. The remaining six percent of goods included limited shipments of agricultural and construction materials and medical supplies.

This week's construction material included gravel (four truckloads) for the construction of an inter-basin road at the Beit Lahiya Wastewater Treatment project. This is the second time in the last two weeks that gravel is allowed into Gaza. Additionally, 97 truckloads of calves (include 2,889 calves) also entered Gaza, the largest amount of calves to enter in a week since June 2008. However, 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 from Gaza this week. Exports from Gaza were last allowed out on 27 April 2009.