



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

7-13 SEPTEMBER 2011

Key issues

- Israeli settler violence is on the rise, increasing the risk of displacement of Palestinian communities. This week, the residential tent of one family was burnt, eight people were physically assaulted, and at least 390 trees were uprooted or set on fire. Most attacks were perpetrated in the context of the 'price tag' strategy, by which radical settlers try to deter the Israeli authorities from evacuating unauthorized settlement outposts.
- The Israeli authorities resumed demolitions this week, following a six week lull. In the northern West Bank, the Israeli authorities demolished six water wells used for irrigation, which were reportedly dug without authorization, undermining the livelihoods of 160 families. Majority of the wells were located in Area B, where planning and zoning powers are held by the Palestinian Authority. Since the beginning of the 2011, Israel demolished 39 water-related structures in the West Bank.

WEST BANK

Settler violence on the rise

The wave of settler violence reported in the previous two weeks continued during the reporting period, resulting in Palestinian injuries, damage to property and displacement. The recent surge is connected to the so-called 'price tag' strategy carried out by radical settlers following two demolitions in the unauthorized settlement outpost of Ramat Migron in the Ramallah governorate. This strategy entails attacks on Palestinians and their property as means of deterring the Israeli authorities from enforcing the law on settlers, particularly the evacuation of outposts.

On 9 September, in one of the gravest incidents, settlers set fire to a residential tent in the herder community of Susiya in the Hebron governorate, injuring one Palestinian and displacing the residents of the tent (a family of 12 members, including seven children). Systematic violence and harassment by Israeli settlers has increased the risk of displacement among residents of this community (population 350). In July, an entire herder community in the Ramallah governorate, Al Baqa'a, was forced to relocate due to settler violence.

Settler-related incidents:

Incidents resulting in Palestinian injuries or property damage:
in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 296 vs. 193
Injured this week: 8
Palestinians injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 131 vs. 72
Settlers injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 26 vs. 36

In another three separate incidents this week (between 9 and 13 September), Israeli settlers injured seven Palestinians. These included four workers physically assaulted in East Jerusalem; a woman hit by a stone in Hebron City; and two men hit by stones when travelling near Yitzhar settlement (Nablus). One Israeli settler was also injured this week when Palestinians threw stones at Israeli-plated vehicles driving in the Ramallah governorate.

Also this week, OCHA documented 16 settler attacks that led to the damage of trees and vehicles. In five separate incidents, Israeli settlers cut down, uprooted or set fire to 390 olive and grape trees, bringing the total number of trees vandalized in this

context since the beginning of 2011 to at least 6,680. In another five separate incidents, settlers threw stones at and/or set fire to Palestinian vehicles, damaging nine of them (Ramallah and Nablus governorates). Also in the Ramallah area, settlers defaced the walls of a mosque with anti-Arab graffiti and the entrance of Birzeit University in Birzeit village.

Demolitions resumed; 26 people displaced and six water wells destroyed

Following a six-week lull, the Israeli authorities demolished 13 Palestinian-owned structures this week, due to lack of Israeli-issued permits.

The Israeli military destroyed six water wells in the villages of An Nasariya, Beit Hassan (Nablus governorate) and Tammun (Tubas governorate), which were reportedly constructed without authorization from the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee. The demolitions occurred despite the fact that all the wells are located in areas designated as Area B, where planning and zoning powers are held by the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, no demolition orders or prior notice were delivered in advance of the demolitions. The three demolished wells in An Nassariya were already targeted two months ago and subsequently re-constructed by the villagers. The six wells were used to irrigate around 2,100 dunums of agricultural land planted by 160 families (960 members) and as a water source for livestock.

Six structures were located in Area C in the Hebron governorate, including two residences and a latrine in the Bedouin community of Um al Kheir, displacing 16 people; a house under construction and a car workshop in Beit Ummar village; and electrical infrastructure in Khirbet Ghuwein community, which provided electricity to 150 people. In addition, a fruit stand was demolished in Nabi Samuel village in the Jerusalem governorate. Also, the Israeli authorities issued stop-work and demolition orders against two residences and a

Palestinian-owned structures demolished

Demolished this week: 14

Of which residences: 4; 26 people displaced

Structures demolished in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 401 vs. 282.

People displaced in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 771 vs. 374.

water collection pool Al Harayeq area (Hebron governorate).

Also this week, a Palestinian man demolished his house in Jabal al Mukabbir area of East Jerusalem after receiving a demolition order from the Israeli authorities. This led to the displacement of a family comprising ten members, including seven children.

Weekly demonstrations continue

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Killed in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 8 vs. 8

Injured this week: 5; 4 in demonstrations

Of whom were children: 0

Injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 1,078 vs. 786

While weekly demonstrations and resultant clashes continued, the number of Palestinian injuries was lower than in previous weeks. This week, four Palestinians were injured in three separate protests against the construction of the Barrier in Ni'lin village and the expansion of Hallamish settlement in the Ramallah governorate, and against access restrictions to agricultural land near Karmeit Zzur settlement in the Hebron governorate. Other clashes erupted between Israeli forces and Palestinians during search and arrest operations in the Silwan area in East Jerusalem and in Beit Rima village in the Ramallah governorate, resulting in no injuries. Overall this week, Israeli forces conducted over 80 search-and-arrest operations in West Bank cities and villages, around the weekly average of operations since the beginning of the year.

GAZA STRIP

Decline of violence

Violence inside the Gaza Strip and southern Israel has remained at low levels since 28 August, after Israel and Palestinian armed factions reached an informal understanding on the restoration of the calm (Tahdia'a). During the week, however, Israeli forces launched one air strike and fired a number of tank shells inside Gaza, and Palestinian armed factions fired a number of rockets towards southern Israel.

Despite the relative calm, Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access beyond three nautical miles from the shore continue to result in casualties and to severely impede livelihoods. In three separate incidents, the Israeli Navy fired warning shots towards Palestinian fishermen, injuring two of them, including a child (aged 17). Israeli forces detained the injured fishermen and six others after forcing them to take off their clothes and swim towards the navy's boat. The fishermen were later released without their boats after being detained and interrogated inside Israel for hours. This year, four fishermen have been injured in the same context. Since the beginning of 2011, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) has documented over 60 incidents by Israeli forces affecting fishermen.

Israeli forces also continue to restrict access to areas up to 1,500 meters from the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians living inside or near the restricted areas. On at least four separate occasions, Israeli forces launched incursions approximately 200 meters into the Gaza Strip, and withdrew after conducting land levelling. In one incident on 10 September, Israeli forces arrested three children and released them after a few hours.

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Of whom children: 0

Killed in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 83 vs. 48

Injured this week: 2

Of whom children: 1

Injured in 2011 vs. same period in 2010: 418 vs. 187

Increase in the number of people crossing Rafah

Access for Palestinians into Egypt through the Rafah Crossing, controlled by the Egyptian authorities, continues to be limited to specific categories of people, including patients, students, foreign passport holders and those with visas to other countries. As a result, the Border and Crossing authorities in Gaza are implementing a registration mechanism, with thousands of the aforementioned categories registered and waiting to exit in the coming months. During the reporting period, a daily average of 815 people left Gaza to Egypt, and another 740 entered Gaza per day, with a total of 97 people denied entry to Egypt for unspecified reasons. This is an increase compared to the number of people who crossed in recent weeks and compared to the period prior to the blockade, where 650 people crossed each way in the first five months of 2006, before the partial closure of the crossing.

Movement of goods (Kerem Shalom Crossing):

Imports:

Truckloads (TL) that entered this week: 1,124

TL carrying food: 51%

Weekly average of TL since the beginning of 2011: 933

Weekly average of TL before the blockade: 2,807

Exports:

Truckloads that left this week: 0 (zero)

Weekly average since the beginning of 2011: 6

Weekly average before the blockade: 240

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