



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

8 - 14 December 2010

### West Bank

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#### Eight Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

During the week, Israeli forces injured eight Palestinians, the majority in weekly demonstrations held throughout the West Bank. Since the beginning of 2010, Israeli forces have injured 1,097 Palestinians in the West Bank compared to 785 during the equivalent period in 2009. Around 30 percent of 2010's injuries (329) occurred during weekly protests compared to around 40 percent in 2009 (314).

Six Palestinians and an international activist were injured in three separate weekly demonstrations that took place against Barrier construction in the villages of Al Ma'sara in the Bethlehem area and Bil'in in the Ramallah area; and against the expansion of Hallamish settlement in the Ramallah area. In the latter protest, two houses sustained damage when hit by tear gas canisters. Another two Palestinians were injured when they clashed with Israeli forces staffing the Al Hamra checkpoint that controls access to the Jordan Valley in the northern West Bank.

Israeli forces conducted around 100 search and arrest operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), slightly above the weekly average of 90 such operations in 2010.

Also this week, the Israeli authorities forcibly transferred Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member, Mahmoud Abu Tir, from his home in East Jerusalem to the West Bank following an Israeli court ruling forbidding him to continue living in Jerusalem.

#### Settler violence declines

During the reporting period, OCHA documented one settler-related incident that resulted in a Palestinian injury when a man from the village of Susiya (Hebron governorate) was physically assaulted by a group of Israeli settlers. This is in contrast to a weekly average of six such incidents recorded since the beginning of the year, resulting in Palestinian injuries or damage to Palestinian property, including the uprooting and burning of thousands of trees. In 2010, one child has been killed and 105 Palestinians injured during attacks by Israeli settlers.

Also on four consecutive days during the week, sewage leaked from the Israeli settlement of Sha'are Tiqwa (Qalqiliya governorate) flooding the garden of an adjacent school, attended by boys from the villages of 'Azzun and Beit Amin. As a result, the students were prevented from using the school's garden. A team from the settlement was later sent to clean the garden.

Additionally, the village council of Al 'Araqa (Jenin governorate) reported that Israeli settlers from the settlement of Shaked forced a group of farmers from the village out of their land located next to the settlement, while they were implementing an agricultural project supervised by an international NGO. Israeli forces subsequently arrived at the site and allowed the Palestinians to resume their work. In order to access this land, located in the closed area behind the Barrier and near a settlement, the farmers had to obtain "visitor permits" and cross a Barrier checkpoint and had to coordinate their access to the land in advance with the Israeli DCL.

In two separate incidents this week, Palestinians threw stones at Israeli-plated vehicles driving on West Bank roads in the Ramallah area, causing damage to two settler vehicles.

## **Sharp increase in demolitions: 49 structures demolished in Area C and East Jerusalem**

During the week, the Israeli authorities demolished 47 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C of the West Bank due to the lack of a permit, 43 of them in communities located in areas declared closed military zone (also known as “firing zone”).

The most significant incident occurred in Khirbet Tana village (Nablus governorate), where 29 structures were demolished, including 11 residences, 17 animal shelters and an elementary school. As a result, 61 people, including 13 children, were displaced, and over 100, including at least 22 children studying in the school, were otherwise affected. This is the third time this community has suffered extensive demolitions since 2005.

The remaining structures demolished in Area C included: 14 water cisterns in the Bedouin communities of Umm Ad Daraj (7) and Khashem ad Daraj (7) in the Hebron area, affecting around 960 people and 4,000 sheep; and four vegetable stalls located on Road 90 in the Jordan Valley, affecting at least four families. Eight trees were also uprooted in the latter demolition incident. In 2010, 339 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C, up from 186 in the equivalent period in 2009. As a result, 454 people have been displaced and about 1,300 have been otherwise affected.

Also in Area C, the Israeli authorities issued stop work and demolition orders against six Palestinian-owned structures, including a building under construction in Haris village (Salfit governorate), an electric pylon in Ad Deirat village (Hebron governorate), and four structures in Deir Abu Mash'al village (Ramallah governorate). During the previous reporting period (unreported), eviction orders were issued against four families (comprising 46 people, including 30 children) in a Bedouin community near Al Mughayyir village (Ramallah governorate), on the grounds that the community is located in a closed military zone.

In East Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities demolished two houses under construction in Ras al Amud and Sur Baher, due to the lack of building permits. Two families of 14 members were affected. In 2010, 58 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem (compared to 80 in the same period in 2009) displacing 62 people and affecting additional 260.

## **Gaza Strip**

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### **Israeli air strikes and restrictions on access to land continue; two killed and 13 injured**

During the reporting period, Israeli forces killed two Palestinians and injured 13 others near the fence dividing Israel and the Gaza Strip; two Israelis were also injured. In 2010, 62 Palestinians (including at least 22 civilians), three Israeli soldiers and one foreign national have been killed and 264 Palestinians (including 236 civilians) and ten members of Israeli forces have been injured in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip. In addition this week, two boys, aged 16, were killed when unexploded ordnance (UXO) exploded in the area of As Shuja'iyeh.

In one incident on 11 December, two Palestinian men were killed in unclear circumstances. It is still not known whether the men were armed or belonged to an armed group. During the incident, one

Israeli soldier was also injured; the Israeli media reported that the initial findings of an IDF investigation indicate that the soldier was injured by “friendly-fire”. Due to access restrictions imposed by the Israeli military on areas near the fence, the corpses were only evacuated two days later.

Earlier on 9 December, a mortar shell fired by armed Palestinians at southern Israel landed in an Israeli community close to the fence, injuring an Israeli security guard. This is the first Israeli casualty from Palestinian fire from Gaza since March 2010. In response, the Israeli Air Force launched a series of air strikes targeting military bases, open areas and tunnels inside the Gaza Strip. As a result, part of the Gaza Power Plant and two schools sustained damage. The schools were closed for one day, affecting 1,300 students. In a separate incident, Israeli forces positioned at the fence fired a flechette projectile (a shell that explodes in the air and releases thousands of small metal darts) at a group of armed Palestinians, injuring two of them. Another two armed men were injured when a rocket that they were intending to launch at southern Israel exploded prematurely.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas located up to 1,500 metres from the fence (17 percent of the Gaza Strip’s territory) continue to affect civilian lives and livelihoods. In four separate incidents this week, Israeli forces opened fire at Palestinian workers collecting scrap metal near the fence, injuring eleven of them, including four children (aged 16 and 17). In 2010, 85 Palestinians have been injured in such incidents. On a number of occasions, Israeli forces launched incursions with bulldozers and tanks a few hundred meters into the Gaza Strip and withdrew after conducting land leveling. In another incident, Israeli forces fired two flechette shells at an area east of Gaza City, one of which hit a residential building without exploding, causing damage to the building.

### **Limited exports continue; wheat reserves remain low**

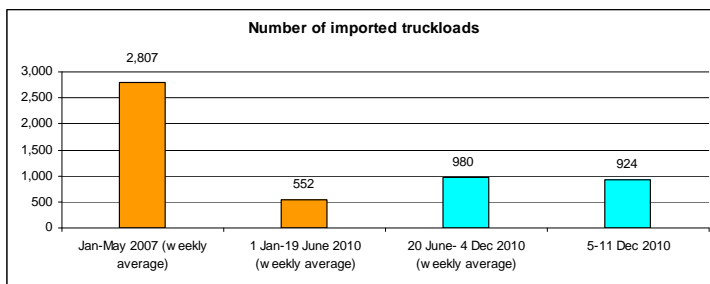
During the reporting period (5-11 December), a total of 924 truckloads entered the Gaza Strip, a decline compared to a weekly average of 980 truckloads entering since the Israeli announcement to ease the blockade on 20 June 2010. This week’s figure represents only one-third of the weekly average of imports recorded before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Food items made up 58 percent of imports, compared to less than 20 percent of total imports prior to the blockade.

A few truckloads of strawberries and cut flowers continued to leave the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of the season on 28 November, a total of 33 truckloads carrying strawberries (60 tonnes) and cut flowers (229,000 stems) have left Gaza. On 8 December, the Government of Israel announced that it will allow more exports to leave the Gaza Strip, including agricultural produce, furniture and textiles, subject to security and logistical capacity. So far, only exports of strawberries and cut flowers have been allowed out of the Gaza Strip. Since the increased blockade restrictions on Gaza commenced in June 2007, less than 300 truckloads of exports have left Gaza, all of which were strawberries and cut flowers. This compares to a monthly average of 1,086 exported truckloads from Gaza in the first five months of 2007 before the blockade.

Wheat reserves inside Gaza remain extremely low, due to the limited operation of the conveyor belt at Karni Crossing. Although this week the facility operated on two days, instead of one, for the transfer of wheat, availability of wheat flour at the local market remains limited. Four of the seven mills in Gaza were forced to shut down. As of 13 December, there were some 1,120 tonnes of grain available at seven mills in the Gaza Strip and 20 tonnes of wheat flour at the local market, quantities that cover the population’s needs for less than two days. According to the World Food Programme, there are over 500 truckloads (19,540 tonnes) of wheat delayed and waiting to enter Gaza. The decline of wheat reserves began on July 2010, following the resumption on the import of gravel for

international projects through the same conveyer belt used for the transfer of wheat, thus reducing the time allocated for wheat transfer.

### Daily power cuts of up to 8 hours throughout the Gaza Strip



Imports of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) slightly increased this week, compared to last week (1.62 vs. 1.23 million litres). Despite low levels of fuel, the GPP began operating a second turbine, producing 60 megawatts (MW) of electricity, up from the 30 MW produced in recent months. Electricity available throughout the Gaza Strip (including electricity purchased from Israel and Egypt) stands at about 30 percent below the estimated daily demand. As a result, the majority of the population experienced power cuts of 6-8 hours, down from 8-12 hours per day when the GPP runs one turbine.

The ongoing power cuts affect daily life throughout the Gaza Strip, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage treatment and removal, and the functioning of health services. Access to running water also remains a daily challenge for the population due to power cuts. Ten percent of Gazans living in areas including Gaza City, Rafah and Jabaliya, have access to running water only once every four days (6 to 8 hours); 80 percent have access once every 2-3 days (6-8 hours); and ten percent receive running water once a day (6 to 8 hours).

### High-speed winds cause extensive damage throughout the oPt

During the week, both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were hit by high-speed winds, causing extensive damage. In the Gaza Strip an unknown number of houses sustained damage, many losing their zinc panel roofs. Roofs in Gaza are often constructed from zinc panels due to ongoing Israeli restrictions on the entry of construction materials, and due to economic hardship. According to the local Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Gaza, the winds destroyed or severely damaged some 200 animal shelters and approximately 1,000 of the existing 8,000 greenhouses, with losses estimated at three million dollars. In addition, according to the fishermen’s syndicate in Gaza, some 15 fishing boats were damaged or destroyed and the equipment of 70 boats was damaged. In the West Bank, the PA Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) indicated that some 3,300 dunums of greenhouses, 6,600 dunums of open field crops and 80 poultry barracks were destroyed or damaged, causing losses estimated at 3.5 million dollars.