

Monthly report on Israeli violations in Abu Dis, August 2008

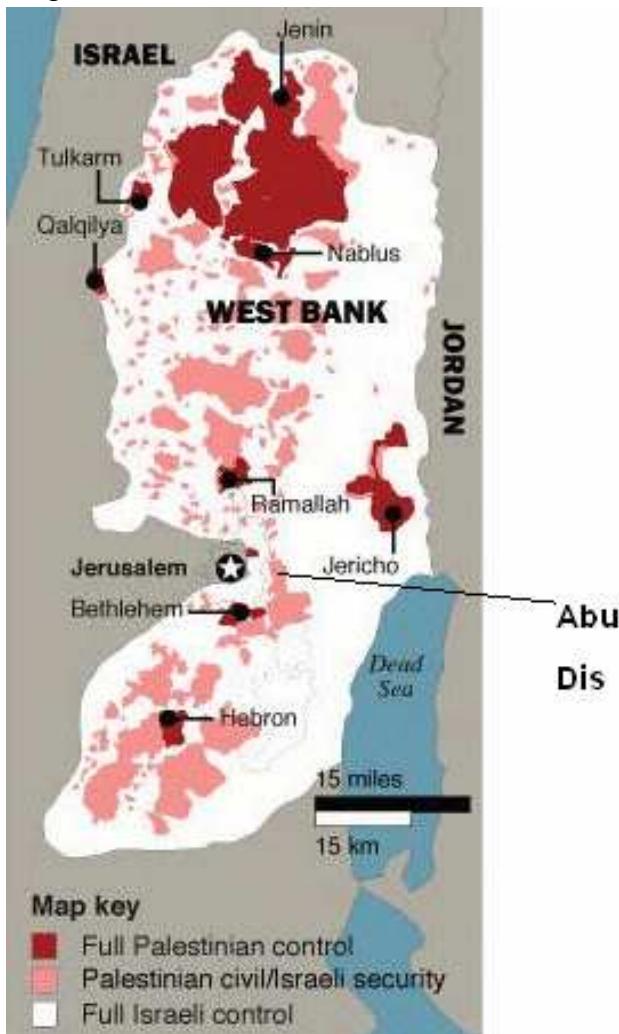


Container checkpoint summer 2008

The day of a prisoner release in Abu Dis August 2008



The Israeli violations on the people in Abu Dis continued during August. This month Israeli soldiers attached a student from Abu Dis boys' school, they beat him badly and they arrested him, and on another subject the Israeli authorities gave a new land confiscation decision in order to extend the settlements. Also in this month the Israeli procedures in the area around East Jerusalem became more violent.. This report tells what happened during this August.



Building the Wall & confiscating land On Monday the 4th August, the Israeli military authorities announced a decision to take more land from the towns of Abu Dis and Sawahreh. The Israeli military spokesman said that they would take 11800 donums from the eastern part of their lands, and this is the fourth decision to take land since last September that affects the lands in east Jerusalem. This decision takes the rest of the countryside around Abu Dis, Sawahreh and Aizariya that was designated a closed military zone in the year 1967. Note that the Israeli government had announced that they planned to extend the settlement of Kidar which was started in the year 1986 east of Sawahreh and owned by the

people of that town. We expect that the building and the extension of the Kidar settlement will be on the confiscated land,



- *There is more information about the settlements around Jerusalem in a useful UN report “The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of*

Israeli Settlements and Other Infrastructure in the West Bank” (July 2007)

http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaysection§ion_id=1&format=html

Israeli violations at the checkpoints round Abu Dis

Since the Israelis started to build the Separation Wall around Jerusalem they have worked to seal off Jerusalem very thoroughly from its suburb, and they have made special "terminals"¹ for people to go through to get into the city. For the towns on the east of Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities built a terminal in a place between the Mount of Olives and the town of Aizariyeh to allow people carrying West Bank passes and who have also got a permit, following



very long and complicated procedures, specially now they use finger prints as well as permits. And at al-Zayem on the Jerusalem road leading to the settlement of Maale Adummim, they have put a checkpoint that can only be used by people with Jerusalem passes.

Since the first intifada, the area of Abu Dis has been treated by Israel in some ways similarly to East Jerusalem, and it has been controlled by the Israeli Border Police. Some local people used to think that the area might be linked with Jerusalem and even hoped so. In March 08 we reported that Israel

¹ The Palestinians are now using the word “mua’bar” (translated into “terminal”) to describe the huge checkpoints, like international frontiers, that are the ways through the Wall.

appeared to have replaced the Border Police in this area with the military as in the rest of the West Bank. In fact in April, there were both Border Police and Israeli military in and around Abu Dis.

In this part of the report we will record the Israeli violations at the checkpoints in the area round East Jerusalem.

- The Israeli military authorities continued to work on extending the Container checkpoint in order to make a military “terminal” along the lines of Qalandya and al-Zaytouna. This will mean the doubling to six donums of the amount of land taken from the al-Sourkhi family from al-Sawahreh, which will threaten the houses of the people who live in that place. Note that this terminal will be among between the places in East Jerusalem that are cut off from East Jerusalem and them and the town of Bethlehem.
- On Sunday 10th August, the Israeli occupation authorities strengthened their forces around the town of Jerusalem on the occasion of anniversary of the destruction of the temple. There were many soldiers and they refused to allow people into Jerusalem even if they had permits to go in.
- On Tuesday 19th August, a force of Border Police made checkpoint in front of the Abu Dis Youth Club in the afternoon and stopped young people and took their ID cards. And one young man Mohammad Mahmoud Eriqat (17) said that he was stopped while he was returning from his work, and the soldiers beat him after looking at his ID. He said that this was not the first time that he was beaten by the Israeli border police. Each time they stop him, the soldiers beat him without giving any reason.



Maps adapted from Gush Shalom

This map shows the limited area of Palestinian control in the West Bank. In fact, Gush Shalom is optimistic in labelling any of the areas “full Palestinian control” – these red areas actually refer to Area A where the Palestinian police operate, but the Israeli army demonstrates its control by coming in regularly, whenever they want to.

- On Thursday 21st August The coalition of human rights organisations in Jerusalem reported that the Israeli police confiscated a car belonging to the chief justice in Palestine Doctor A-Sheikh Tayseer al-Tameemi at a checkpoint near Maale Adumim. The report added that the judge was forced to leave his car at gunpoint. The police searched the car and took it, together with the driver and the guard of Sheikh Tayseer. There were no problems with the papers of the car and the driver had not committed any offence.
- On Thursday 21st August the Israeli Border Police closed the road leading to the Al Quds University and put a checkpoint there. The soldiers stopped some of the young people, invaded the shops, saying they were looking for people who had been throwing stones. This went on till late in the night.
- On Monday 25th August, an Israeli occupation military force made a checkpoint on the road to Wad al-Nar near the cement factory. They stopped hundred of people and they took their IDs. These people had already been through the Container checkpoint, just a few metres away from the checkpoint.

Israeli pass laws and the issue of Jerusalem citizenship

Successive Israeli governments have worked to implement a recommendation made in 1973 by the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Jerusalem under the leadership of Golda Meir, to reduce the percentage of Palestinians in Jerusalem to under 22%. This has led to many different policies that have distorted the demography of Jerusalem. The most recent of these policies has been to put great pressure on Palestinians of Jerusalem, and led to many thousands of people having their Jerusalem IDs taken from them. Although five thousand families in Jerusalem have lost their IDs since 1973, the Palestinians still represent 35% of the population of Jerusalem city itself, because many Jerusalemites who had moved into the suburbs have moved back to live inside the city since the Wall was built. During just the year 2006, 1,363 Jerusalem residents lost their Jerusalem IDs (figures - Israeli Interior Ministry) This came after Israel had separated Jerusalem completely from its suburbs. Many people who have Jerusalem IDs, and many families who have mixed IDs live in these suburbs. Note that most people in Abu Dis have West Bank IDs but a minority have Jerusalem IDs.



This map shows main fixed checkpoints – There are often temporary “flying” checkpoints

Arresting and invading houses

During this month the Israeli authorities continued the policy of invading houses and arresting people. Israeli soldiers together with the intelligence forces invaded houses during the night, searched and damaged things, and made several arrests during the last month.

- On Monday 4th August, a force of Israeli Border Police invaded al-Ras neighbourhood of Abu Dis at a late hour in the night. The soldiers searched several cars, breaking open the

doors. And people did not know why. People said that the soldiers surrounded some houses and searched the cars of the owners of these houses and left the place without giving any reason.

- On Friday 15th August, a military unit arrested Dakhllallah Tawfiq Othman Dakhllallah from the area outside the Abu Dis youth club. Eyewitnesses say that the army came to the area outside the Abu Dis youth club at about 7pm and started to chase children, and when they caught Dakhllallah they started to beat him. People around were so concerned about the way that he was being treated that one woman tried to intervene, but was herself pushed by the soldiers, and a sound bomb was thrown between her legs. Other boys tried to intervene but with no success, and Osama Afendi and Tariq Afendi were arrested along with Dakhllallah. The three prisoners were taken to Maale Adumim police station where they said that Dakhllallah had been throwing stones but the other two were accused of trying to attack soldiers. Not that this student Dakhllallah had the highest marks in the towjehi in the Abu Dis Boys' School and he had been awarded a scholarship to go to the Al Quds University and was expecting to start his studies there at the beginning of September.

Prisoners' affairs

During the long years of the Occupation, hundreds of people from Abu Dis have been arrested, usually for peaceful resistance against the Occupation, such as demonstrations, just as in the rest of Palestine. Among these there have been many young people under the age of eighteen. At the end of

August 2008, there were 67 prisoners from Abu Dis in Israeli jails. Among them there were 17 children. In addition there are currently more than 70 student prisoners from Al Quds University Abu Dis campus.

The prisoners from Abu Dis include two people imprisoned with no trial (the Israelis call this administrative detention).

Many of these people have suffered bad treatment, physical and psychological torture, forced confessions, denial of family visits. There is further information on Abu Dis prisoners at <http://www.camdenabudis.net/prisoners.html>

- On Sunday 3rd August, the Israeli authorities released two young people, Sufian Jamal Abu Hilal and Mohammed Nasser Nasrah after imprisonment of a year and a fine of 4000 NIS each.
- On Monday 25th August, the Israeli authorities released the following prisoners: Nader Mahmoud Jaffal, after an imprisonment of seven and a half years, Hassan Eissa Shhadeh, after imprisonment of eight years, and a young man, Mohammad Halabiyeh, after imprisonment of two years. The Israelis claimed that the release of these three prisoners was a new initiative but in actual fact they had almost completed their time inside.
- On Monday 31st August, the Israeli authorities released the young man Mahmoud Jameel Eriqat after imprisonment of a year and ten months.
- On Monday 31st August, the Israeli authorities released Mustafa Emad Ejazi after an imprisonment of sixteen months in Israeli jails. Mustafa was a student in Abu Dis Boys' School and he was arrested from his home. He was found guilty of throwing stones after a forced confession.

Abu Dis Boys' School, and complaints about Israeli violence

Details of the attack by Israeli Border Police on boys inside Abu Dis Boys' School on 14th February 2007 and the follow-up to this are available on the CADFA website www.camdenabudis.net

We haven't received any response or information from the Israeli side about reopening the investigation in the case since the Abu Dis School Head teacher asked for the enquiry to be reopened in the middle of last May.

That this isn't unusual was demonstrated this month by a report published by an Israeli human rights organisation, Yesh Din, in the middle of July. They looked at the way in which the Israeli police dealt with their complaints about the behaviour of Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank. They reported that nine out of ten complaints had been dropped by the Israeli police. Last year they made 205 complaints and the Israeli police opened 163 files for these. Out of these 163, there were charges in only thirteen places – ie 8% of the original complaints. The police closed 149 cases (91%). There was one

file that the Israeli police said officially that they had lost (with all the statements etc).

Conclusions and recommendations

There is helpful information on human rights and international humanitarian law at the following United Nations site:

<http://www.ochr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/InternationalLaw.aspx>

Some important agreements and decisions which the Israeli occupying power are violating in their treatment of the Palestinian people are:

1. The Wall

The International Court of Justice asked Israel to stop work on the Separation Wall in the Palestinian occupied territories including East Jerusalem and the area around it, to destroy all the bits that are already built and to delete all the laws and decisions which the Israeli government had made in creating it (Hague decisions paragraph 133, 152 and 153 – Advisory Opinion of the ICJ, 9th July 2004)

2. Torture and the mistreatment of prisoners

There are many international agreements against torture and mistreatment of prisoners. Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) reads: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” The UN Convention against Torture was signed in 1984.

3. Confiscation of lands

According to The Hague agreement signed in 1907 paragraph 152, occupation forces must not confiscate lands or properties from the people under occupation.

4. Equal treatment of people (note the unequal treatment of people through the permit system and pressure on people around Jerusalem)

Israel is a signatory to the undertaking “ to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 2, paragraph 1, signed 1966, in effect from 1976)

5. Right to family life

The same international agreement states that “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation... Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks”

This month's report shows that the people of Abu Dis are suffering regular violations of all of these agreements and decisions. We call on the international community and all the supporters of the rights of the Palestinians to make some pressure on Israel as an occupying force to stop the violations and to guarantee their human rights and their rights under international humanitarian law.