

Monthly report on Israeli violations in Abu Dis, February 2008

The Israeli violations on the people in Abu Dis continued during February. During this month there were repeated invasions of houses and arrests included the family of a prisoner, which has not been seen in the past years. The two parents of the prisoner Ahmed Yousef Bader were arrested and taken to the police station in Maale Adumim and investigated. There were arrests of young people from Abu Dis and students from the Al Quds University. At this time the military attack on the Gaza Strip was continuing and dozens of people were being killed and buildings and homes being destroyed. In this report, we will give details about the Israeli violations that took place in Abu Dis in February:

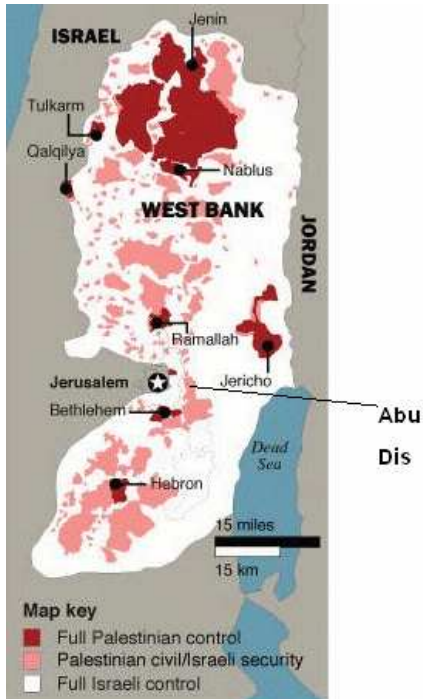
Building the Wall & confiscating land



This photo was taken while an Israeli military officer was giving a land confiscation order to local landowners.

The Israeli authority continued to confiscate land and build settlements:

In the first half of February 2008, the occupation authorities representing of the Israeli National Road Construction Company announced that they would confiscate 1500 donums of land from the villages of Assawiyeh and Anata and the area of al Khan al Ahmar to make improvements to the roads leading to the eastern settlements encircling Jerusalem.



Maps adapted from Gush Shalom

In map below:
Blue blocks = settlements near Abu Dis
Red blocks = closed military zones near Abu Dis





Land confiscation decisions did not stop at all, and more and more Palestinian land was taken specially in the area of Jerusalem in order to connect the settlements with each other and to create easy movement for the settlers via bridges, tunnels and roads.

This new confiscation decision means that Assawiye has lost 83% of its lands, and that the people of Anata who are now forbidden from using 34 000 donums which is 94% of their lands. The lands around al-Khan al-Ahmar which is now available for the settlers and for the Israeli military and used to be land owned by the country, and by the Islamic Waqf.

This decision is to open a new road instead of the Abu George Road which starts from the entrance of the Mishor Adumim settlement, near the petrol station on the Aizariyeh-Jericho road. This is currently a mixed road used by settlers and Palestinians. The Israeli authorities want to separate them and to connect the settlements in East Jerusalem (including Maale Adumim and Kidar) with the settlements in north Jerusalem (including Pisgat Zeev) and south Jerusalem (including Har Homa) with a direct north-south road.

There is more information about the current situation of 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*" 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 Adumim, they have put a checkpoint that can only be used by people with Jerusalem passes. In this part of the report we will record the Israeli violations at the checkpoints in the Wall in the area round East Jerusalem.

(*Note - 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.)



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

On Friday 8th February, a force of occupation soldiers gave a severe beating to thirteen year old child, Mohannad Noor Johar, aged, near to the Abu Dis mosque in the middle of the town, and they caused him physical harm and he was taken to the nearby medical centre for treatment.

On Friday 22nd February A group of young people from the town of Abu Dis were attacked with rubber bullets during a demonstration of solidarity in the village of Bil'in when the political parties in Abu Dis had organised a visit to join the weekly demonstration against the building of the Wall in Bil'in.

Israeli pass laws and the issue of Jerusalem citizenship

Following a recommendation made in 1973 by Golda Meir's Israeli Ministerial Committee for Jerusalem, different Israeli governments have worked to reduce the percentage of Palestinians in Jerusalem to under 22%. This has led to many different policies that have made great pressure on Palestinians in Jerusalem, and many thousands of people having their Jerusalem IDs taken from them. Five thousand families in Jerusalem have lost their IDs since 1973. The pressure has been increasing. During just the year 2006, 1,363 Jerusalem residents lost their Jerusalem IDs (from 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)

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 Wednesday 13th February: an Israeli occupation force came into Abu Dis on a mission of arrest and they came into several houses in the Halabiye quarter of Abu Dis and arrested Ameer Dawood Halabiye, Ahmed Yousef Halabiye and Mahdi Halabiye, and they searched the houses and brought terror into the hearts of their families.

On Thursday 14th February, at about midnight, a force of occupation soldiers entered the house of Omar Rabiya of Abu Dis and searched the house before arresting him.

On Sunday 17th February, after midnight, a force of occupation soldiers and Israeli intelligence invaded the house of Khamees Eid Bahr in Abu Dis. They searched in detail through the flats of the five families who live there and then arrested his son Khalid, aged 28, and beat him in front of his family. Then they arrested him and took him to Kfar Atsion.

On Monday 18th February, at a late hour of the night, a force of occupation soldier and Israeli intelligence invaded the house of Ahmed Yousef Bader, aged 18, in the Halabiye neighbourhood of Abu Dis and they searched the house and took everyone inside to go outside in the severe cold, and they created a mess/ craziness inside, and then they arrested the father of the prisoner, Yousef Ahmed Bader, aged 56, and his mother Fatima Ali Lafee aged 46 years, and they took them to the interrogation centre in Maale Adumim, and held them there for four hours and submitted them to psychological pressure to give evidence against their son, tempting them with a promise of his release.

On Sunday 24th February, an Israeli force invaded the house of Wajdi Ayyad, in the Halabiye quarter of Abu Dis. People there said that the soldiers entered Wajdi's house and the house next to it where there are students from the university living. They arrested two of the students and took them away, but local people don't know yet where they have been taken.

The Students' Affairs Office at the Al Quds University announced that seven students from different places in the West Bank had been arrested during February: Ahmed Mahoud Nimr, Hamzy Hamad Mir'ey, Ibrahim Abdul Fatah Hebiye, Jamal Mousa Nimr Haj Ali, Mujaid Mahmoud Kmeel, Salah Salah Uddin, Amjad Fahd Balout, which increased the number of student prisoners from the University to over seventy.

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 children.

At the end of February 2008, there were 75 prisoners from Abu Dis in Israeli jails. Among them there were 20 children. In addition there are currently more than seventy student prisoners from Al Quds University Abu Dis campus.

Many of these people have suffered bad treatment, torture, forced confessions, imprisonment without trial. There is further information on Abu Dis prisoners at <http://www.camdenabudis.net/prisoners.html>

- On Sunday 13th February, the Israeli military court sentenced the imprisoned student Haithem Eriqat to a period of four months and a fine of 1500 shekels and then they released Haithem at the end of February.
- On Sunday 13th February, the Israeli military court sentenced the imprisoned student Saif Khalil Abu Hilal to a period of twenty-three months and a fine of 3000 shekels.

Abu Dis Boys' School

Details of the attack by Israeli Border Police on boys inside Abu Dis Boys' School on 14th February 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.

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.