

Monthly report on Israeli violations in Abu Dis, January 2008

The Israeli violations on the people in Abu Dis continued during last January. During this month there were repeated aggressions by the Israeli military against property in Abu Dis; they broke the windscreens of more than thirty cars parked in the main street, and repeatedly broke into houses supposedly searching for stone throwers during peace demonstrations in the town against the siege and the shelling by Israel of the Gaza Strip. During January there were a group of young people arrested, among them students from the Al Quds University. In this report, we will give details about the Israeli violations in January, as follows.

Below and on the following pages are photos of the damage caused by Israeli soldiers to car windows in Abu Dis.



Building the Wall & confiscating land

From the Jerusalem Centre for Human Rights' monthly report about the Israeli violations in Jerusalem:

“The new year 2008 started with a crazy attack by settlers in the middle of Jerusalem as part of election competition between the parties and the racist groups both within the Israeli government and outside it, using the meeting at Annapolis and the Paris Conference as an excuse; meanwhile Olmert claimed that he was making concessions in the occupied places.

“The Annapolis summit did not bring any new solution to the situation of the Palestinians but fitted in completely with the Israeli and American approach, and the initiative that Sharon took that was called the war of the hilltops, the Israeli consolidation of their presence that took place right in the middle of the second Camp David negotiations of 2000, the huge Judaisation of the demography and control in most of the lands and properties and the expansion and spread of Israeli settlements there.”



The month of January was full of plans for settlement expansion, among them:

- A plan to put 240 additional housing units in the Maale Adumim settlement and the increase the budget providing for that in the Housing Department in the year 2008.
- A plan to build 60 housing units in the Maale Zetim settlement built on the land of Hussein Al Ghoul in Ras al-Amoud which will increase the number of housing units there to 2005.
- A plan to build 500 housing units in the Har Homah settlement on Abu Ghneim Hill. The Housing Ministry gave 25 million follars as the budget for this explansion in 2008. Also the Israeli municipality in Jerusalem decided to build 1000 building units in the settlements and to extend five main settlements by building 7300 units in the other four settlements.
- A plan to 3000 housing units on the land of Al Walajeh which already includes 13,500 units on 2000 donums of land that they had confiscated in 2007/
- A plan to 400 housing units in the settlement of Neve Jacob on the lands of Beit Hanina, north of Jerusalem.
- A plan to 1200 housing units in the settlement of Ramot, north-west of Jerusalem, which is buildt on the lands of Lifa, Beit Hanina and Beit Ikxa and Nabi Samuel.
- A plan to 1200 housing units on the settlement of Pisgat Zeev, north-east of Jerusalem on the land of Beit Hanina and Hizma.

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

The economic situation in Abu Dis

The siege imposed by the Israelis on the Gaza Strip became seriously tight and the sufferings of the besieged people in Gaza was headline news. Going along with this suffocating siege were airstrikes and shelling and electricity cuts in most parts of the Gaza Strip; this led the people in the Gaza Strip to break through the wall to the Egyptian border to get hold of basic things they needed to survive; and this news from the Gaza Strip was reflected in demonstrations and protest marches in every city and district in the West Bank calling for an end to the isolation and suffering in Gaza.

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 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.)

- On Monday 7th January, the Israeli authorities announced a complete closure of the West Bank because of the visit of the American president to the area. They closed many checkpoints in the wall round the towns of East Jerusalem, which stopped movement between the city and Palestinian towns. The closure lasted until Friday 11th January.
- On Sunday 13th January, soldiers from the Israeli border guard erected military checkpoints on the road leading to the Al Quds University in Abu Dis and owners of shops told us that soldiers forced their way in to their shops and threatened the owners to close them if Israeli patrols continued to have stones thrown at them.
- On Tuesday 15th January, the Israeli soldiers at the al-Zayem checkpoint refused to let an ambulance carrying injured young people pass through to go to the Al Muqassed Hospital. The young people, Khalid Awwad and Rami Ayyad from Abu Dis had been injured by an Israeli military patrol which was chasing a group of young people in

their car, and destroyed the car belonging to Khalid Awwad and his friend – he was quite badly hurt.

- On Friday 18th January, the Israeli authority announced complete closure in the area of the towns of East Jerusalem. The soldiers at the checkpoint in the Wall refused to allow cars to move through the checkpoints.
- On Monday 21st January, people in Abu Dis organised a candlelit march to show sympathy with the besieged Palestinian citizens in the Gaza Strip. Israeli soldiers objected to the protest and threw sound bombs and tear gas at the protestors and at the houses in the area. Mr Dawood Awwad, who lives near the crossroads that leads to the university, told of a large number of sound bombs coming directly towards his house and said that some of them remained unexploded in the main street, which was a danger to passers-by. The soldiers entered the houses of Ayman Jaffal and Abed Jaffal, local people, on the pretext of chasing stone throwers. And the owners of shops and the internet café said that soldiers forced their way into their shops and ordered them to close, and then went aggressively to the Haifa Internet Café in the Al Quds University Street, where the soldiers entered, were aggressive to the young people inside, and also broke the glass of two cars that belonged to the owners, Ibraheem Hadadon and Waleed Salah Ahad who lives locally.





- On Monday 21st January, a number of soldiers from the Israeli border police forced their way into the house of Mohammed Abed Eriqat, head of the Jerusalem District Council, who lives near the Abu Dis Sports Club, and into nearby houses. They searched houses and caused chaos and terror on the excuse of looking for stone-throwers.
- On Wednesday 23rd January, at a late hour in the night, soldiers damaged cars parked in the main street of Abu Dis. A number of the local inhabitants who live near that street told us that soldiers broke the glass of their cars, and one of them, Eiz Jamos, reported that soldiers broke the windows of four cars belonging to him and his family and threw stones at his house and at his car that was next to the house.
- On Friday 25th January, occupation forces entered Abu Dis and clashed with people demonstrating against the siege of Gaza. The soldiers shot bullets and tear gas and prevented ambulances from

entering the place to give treatment that was needed, and they refused to let journalists cover the incident.

- On Saturday 26th January, a force of Israeli border police put a military checkpoint next to the Abu Dis Sports Club at a late hour of the night. The soldiers stopped a group of young men and gave them orders to present themselves to the Israeli intelligence officer at the army camp near Maale Adumim settlement. Among them were Ahmed Younis Afaneh and Ahmed Mohammed Afaneh.
- On Sunday 27th January, an Israeli military patrol put up a military checkpoint near Abu Dis Sports Club in the middle of Abu Dis, and the soldiers stopped dozens of young people and made them stand by the wall, then arrested three of them: Omar Mohammed Jaffal and Ussam Mohammed Atta Mutlaq and Ali Aadi Ayyad and took them to the police station in Maale Adumim. They were released the next day after each paying fines of 1000 shekels, and they were given a court date for 30th March. The young men said the authorities told them that they would keep hold of their IDs until the trial.
- On Monday 28th January at a late hour in the night, after a demonstration to protest against the siege imposed in the Gaza Strip, Israeli soldiers attacked people's cars that were parked in the main street of the town of Abu Dis and people said that soldiers broke the windows of cars as a collective punishment.

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)

Recently the Israeli authorities started to open the files of Palestinian women who have Jerusalem IDs and are married to Palestinian men who hold West Bank IDs. They have questioned the payments of health insurance to them and their children and threatened to take their Jerusalem IDs. Already the process of taking some of their Jerusalem IDs has begun.

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 Sunday 6th January, at 2 o'clock in the morning, an Israeli military force entered the house of Salah Saqer Khanafseh and searched the house and arrested a young man, Ahmed Salah Khanafseh, aged 19 and a student at the Al Quds University. The young man's family said that the soldiers wore masks, and that they beat Ahmed in front of his family before they took him away.
- On Monday the 7th January, there was an invasion of the house of Eissa Hassan Qreia and the arrest of his son Hassan who is a student in the fourth year in the medical school of the Al Quds University and Hassan's family said that masked soldiers burst into their house and searched it and arrested Hassan. And on the same evening, the same force of Israelis invaded houses of Samed Amteer students at the Al Quds University – one of the students at the university who lives in Abu Dis so he can study – and the two young men were taken to the Police Station in Maale Adumim.
- On Thursday 24th January, the Israeli authorities arrested Mohammed Eissa Mohammed Jaafar, the president of the the Al Quds Student Union – he was arrested at the Qalandia military checkpoint, and the soldiers interrogated him and then took him to Muskobia detention centre in Jerusalem and no charge was made against Mohammed by the time this report was written.

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 January 2007, there were 70 prisoners from Abu Dis in Israeli jails. Among them there were 21 children. 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 Tuesday 1st January, a child prisoner, Mohammed Ahmed Atea, aged 14, was released after seven days under investigation.
- On Sunday 13th January, the decision was made to delay the hearings in the cases of Haitham Eriqat and Saif Khalil Abu Hilal until the end of January.
- The family of the prisoner Hassan Eissa Qureya said that their son was moved from the Muskobiya Detention Centre to the Al Jelmah

Interrogation Centre and they are worried for his life because the Israeli Authorities are not allowing his lawyer or the Red Cross to visit him, and the Al Jelmah Centre is one of the hardest torture centres in Israel; the Israeli authorities have not allowed anyone to visit it since it was established.

Abu Dis Boys' School

On Wednesday 2nd January, the head teacher of the Abu Dis Boys' School said that an Israeli military patrol came to the front gate of the school at eight in the morning, and they shouted through a loudspeaker for the head teacher to come and they threatened that if stone throwing continued, they would close the 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.