

Monthly report on Israeli violations in Abu Dis, October and November 2008

The Israeli violations on the people in Abu Dis continued during October and November. The Israeli authorities increased the number of flying checkpoints on the main and side roads in Abu Dis and specially in the evenings and the soldiers provoked young people and on several occasions beat young people in the streets of the town. The Israeli authorities arrested six young people from Al Quds University and Abu Dis Boys' School. Another man was arrested by the Israeli Special Forces after they invaded his house late in the night.

This report deals with the Israeli violations against Abu Dis land: work started on the extension of the rubbish dump based on Abu Dis' land which causes great damage to people and the environment. The following report tells the main Israeli violations during these two months.



Building the Wall & confiscating land

On Wednesday 15th October, the Israeli Jerusalem municipality started work to extend the rubbish dump on the land of Abu Dis. Occupation diggers started digging and removing land in the place called Raghabneh, which is on Abu Dis land, to extend it by about 60 meters to the south and more than 300 east on the two sides of the present dump. They have been talking for a long time about moving the rubbish dump and closing it.

And the rubbish dump is not far from the Jahaleen Bedouin. The Israeli authorities have been moving the Bedouin from the places where they have been living, on the hills of al- Mrussuss which has now been taken over for the settlement of Maale Adumim which is extending over 60 000 donums of land in the south which has been taken for the settlement of Qidar on the land of Sawahreh.

And the Bedouin people and the towns of Aizariyeh and Abu Dis suffered from what this rubbish dump caused – from bad smells and problems for their health. And insects and rats are there and liquid that comes out of the rubbish.



- *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 Adumim, they have put a checkpoint that can only be used by people with Jerusalem passes.

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.



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.



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

During October the Israeli army increased the number of flying checkpoints on the main and side roads of the town. Eyewitnesses said that the Israeli army stopped dozens of young people in the evenings for a long time and humiliated them and treated them in a bad way. Many of these people were seriously injured after the soldiers beat them. These checkpoints were erected near the Abu Dis Youth Club and at the crossroads leading to the Al Quds University.

- On Wednesday 1st October, the first day of Eid al-Fitr, the Israeli authorities blocked the checkpoints going into the town of Jerusalem, and would not allow citizens to go into even if they had permits to enter. At this point people wanted to go in to celebrate the Eid prayer or to visit their families in the occupied city.
- On Monday 3rd November, the Israeli authorities decided, giving no reason, to stop the Palestinian doctors – who had permission to enter Jerusalem – from entering the city except from Qalandya checkpoint. And Doctor Farouq Abd al-Raheem– the head of the Muqassed Hospital in Jerusalem – said at the Land Research Centre in in the Arabic Study Society in Jerusalem – that they had dozens of doctors and nurses who did not have Jerusalem IDs who needed to have permission to enter the city each day. And this decision from the Israeli police, which stopped them from passing through the checkpoints around the city, apart from Qalandya, had two particularly bad effects on their work. On one side it was a violation against the right of movement, specially to prevent doctors from carrying out humanitarian work; on the other hand the checkpoint at Qalandya is one of the biggest terminals and thousands of people converge upon it which slows our movement as doctors. In this way it is not possible for us to get to hospital before 10 o'clock in the morning. Will the patients or the emergency cases wait for a doctor to arrive to arrive at 10 in the morning?
- A group of doctors and nurses who work in Al Muqassed and Augusta Victoria Hospital and other health centres and hospitals made a demonstration near Anata checkpoint against this decision which is intended to make the life of the Palestinians harder. This time the victims of the decision are the doctors and the nurses.
- On Wednesday the 12th November, the occupation forces closed the Jubaa checkpoint on the road to Ramallah, which made a huge traffic tailback and held up hundreds of cars going to Ramallah from the areas around East Jerusalem.



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- On Sunday 16th November, the occupation forces closed the Container checkpoint on the way to the Wad al-Nar, the communication corridor between the north and the south of the West Bank, and refused to let people through and held up many many cars.
- On Monday 17th November, the occupation forces at the Container checkpoint arrested Mohammed Mousa Zreik who was on the way to Abu Dis from the town of Bethlehem. They took him to an unknown destination.
- On Sunday 23rd November, the occupation forces made a military checkpoint near the corner of the military camp in Abu Dis. The soldiers held up dozens of young people and them moved them into the military camp. One of the young men, Ali Abu Hilal, said that the soldiers started to beat them and then made them sit on the ground for a long time in the military camp without telling them the reason.

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.

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 20th October, an Israeli military force invaded the house of Mohammed Shukri al-Hanesh in the Al Ras neighbourhood in Abu Dis, searched the house and arrested Mohammed who is 25 years old and took him to the Atzion military camp and held him there for eight days. Mohammed said that during this period, he was under interrogation, and the Israeli intelligence officer made pressure on him to make him work with the intelligence as a spy, and he was threatened with being sent to administrative detention if he did not agree.
- On Tuesday the 11th of November, an Israeli military force arrested the journalist Abd al-Bassat al-Razim, after invading his house in Abu Dis after midnight. His wife said that the Israeli soldiers took his computer and some of his personal files. She added that Abd al-Bassat is sick and is meant to have his medicine on time, but they did not allow him to take any of his medicine with him.
- On Sunday 16th November, the headteacher of Abu Dis Boys' School said that the soldiers from the Israeli Border Police came to the main gate of the school and threatened to invade the school because students had been throwing stones early in the morning. Eye witnesses said that the soldiers had chased one of the students and arrested him while he was on his way to school. The soldiers took that student to the military camp and beat him.
- On Monday 17th November, an Israeli military force together with the Israeli intelligence officer invaded the house of Ali Ahmed Mohsen at a late hour of the night and arrested his son Mohammed who is a towjehi [like sixth form] student at Abu Dis Boys' School. Note that this is not the first time that Mohammed has been arrested, and he was arrested for fourteen months the previous time.
- On the same night, Rami Mohammed Bader, also a student in Abu Dis Boys' School was arrested from his house. He was released after spending eight days under interrogation in Atzion military camp.
- On Tuesday 18th November, an Israeli military force entered the town of Abu Dis and invaded the houses of the following students at Al Quds University and arrested them: Naif Jaffal, Said Abd al-Kareem Jaffal, Mohammed Jamal Mohsen, Amjad Abu Assab.



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 November 2008, there were 71 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.

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 Monday 20th October, Mohammed Shukri al-Hanesh was released after eight days without any charge.
- On Monday 24th November, Rami Mohammed Bader was released after eight days without any charge.
- Mohammed Saleh Mohsen is still inside and suffering from cancer. His family are asking people from the international community to join their call for his immediate release.

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.

We written a number of other letters in the meantime about other serious incidents in Abu Dis but had no response to date and will review the progress of all of these in our report in December 08.

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.
