

## Monthly report on Israeli violations in Abu Dis, September 2008

### Maryam Ayyad, killed by Israel soldiers in Abu Dis on September 20<sup>th</sup> 2008



The Israeli violations continued in September against the people of Abu Dis, which was this year the month of Ramadan. This month Maryam Ayyad was killed in the town of Abu Dis during an invasion of her house by Israeli soldiers. This was followed by a complete strike in Abu Dis and the villages around in protest at her killing, on Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup>, the day of the killing.

### Dramatic figures of human rights violations during the past eight years

It is eight years since the beginning of the second Intifada – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2000. The Department of International Relations in the PLO has published a report about the Palestinian casualties caused by Israeli violations in the Occupied Territories during this time: figures below:

Number of people killed 2000-09	5526 (includes 1010 under the age of 18, 664 school students and 340 women)
Injuries and disabilities	33,000 injured by live ammunition, 15,000 beaten by soldiers or affected by tear gas, 7500 with disabilities (includes 3600 with life-long disabilities)
House demolitions	The Israeli authorities destroyed 8300 houses, 900 of them in Jerusalem (Israel said they did not have licences)
Prisoners	Israelis imprisoned 65000 Palestinians of whom 11000 are still in prison. 76 prisoners died inside jail during this period.
Settlements and land expropriation	The first buildings of 177 new settlements were constructed and 14972 settlement units were built. Israeli occupation authorities took 617569 donums of land, levelled 215160 donums with bulldozers and destroyed 1141720 trees.
Checkpoints and military points	760 military checkpoints were constructed together with hundreds of road blocks. Numbers of roads were closed and Palestinians forbidden to use them.

### Building the Wall & confiscating land

After pressure from the Israeli Supreme Court, the Israeli Defence Ministry announced at the end of August that they would change the direction of the

Wall on the east side of Jerusalem and they would return to its owners 4000 donums (1 donum is 1000 sq metres) from the lands of Abu Dis and Aizariyeh. The local councils of Abu Dis and Aizariyeh, together with an Israeli organisation called the Council for Peace and Security, put a case to the Israeli Supreme Court, saying that this Wall was stopping movement in all directions, and it took their lands. The Council for Peace and Security, in their testimony to the court, said that they believed that Israel did not consider the Palestinian needs or their basic rights when it started to build this Wall. They said that the Wall had changed Abu Dis and Aizariyeh into a small ghetto, surrounded from three sides and cut from Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. The Israeli authorities claimed that this Wall was built to stop terrorists from entering Jerusalem.

Still by the end of September, the Israeli Defence Ministry had not given any maps to show the new direction for the Wall or the lands they were intending to return to the Palestinians.



- *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&section\\_id=1&format=html](http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaysection&section_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"<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

The UN Civil Affairs Office published a report on 19<sup>th</sup> September talking about 630 Israeli checkpoints dividing the West Bank and stopping movement, crippling the economy. The report added that still the Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are not allowed to travel in the Palestinian territories while the situation is getting harder.

There was a report in Al Quds newspaper, published by an Israeli weekly paper "Yerushalaim," talking about the crowded traffic between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim settlement, According to the report, the Israeli police gave different suggestions to the Israeli government to make a special road for the settlers to pass to Jerusalem, avoiding al-Zayyem checkpoint and to put special stickers on the settlers' cars to show that they are Israeli cars, and to put a checkpoint in Aizariyeh and another one near Abu George crossroads and to close them in the morning to allow the settlers' cars to pass easily.

- During September and the month of Ramadan, the Israeli authorities increased the closure of the city of Jerusalem and shut off the entrances to the city. Men under the age of 45 were not allowed to enter the city during Ramadan, and men between 45 and 50 were not allowed without permission to pray on Fridays, while men over 50 were allowed without permits. Women under the age of 35 were not allowed to enter, and women from 35-45 needed permission to enter. Over the age of 45, women were allowed to enter on Fridays only, without permits.
- On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September, in the middle of the day the Israeli authorities closed Container checkpoint, stopping the traffic from entering Abu Dis. This closure remained for four hours which caused a

big queue of traffic, and stopped people coming from Bethlehem to the north of the West Bank.

- On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the Israeli authorities increased its procedures in Jabaa checkpoint which held up thousands of people, travelling in both directions between Ramallah and East Jerusalem, for hours.
- On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September, the Israeli authorities closed Container checkpoint in both directions and stopped a young man, Fadi Abdul Kareem Awdeh (24) from Bethlehem. The soldiers beat him in front of people and then took him to an unknown destination.
- On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September, the Israeli authorities closed Container checkpoint in both directions. They stopped a Ford Transit and arrested nine Palestinian Authority employees.
- On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September, soldiers at the Container checkpoint arrested Idris Munther Subbeh (21) from Hebron while he was travelling from Bethlehem to Abu Dis.
- On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, the Israeli authorities closed Container checkpoint in both directions and forced people travelling to leave their cars and to wait for hours under the sun (while they were fasting)



- On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September, the Israeli authorities announced a closure on the Palestinian Occupied Territories because of their own Jewish New Year. This closure remained until the morning of the following Wednesday. The closure came on the same day as the Eid al-Fitr (the end of Ramadan) and it stopped Palestinians from travelling to visit their friends and relatives in different cities in the West Bank.

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

## **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 Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September, a force of Israeli Border Police invaded the house of Awath Abu Sneineh, near the military camp in Abu Dis at a late hour in the night. They searched the house, and left, without giving any reason or arresting anybody.
- On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September, Maryam Ayyad, 58 years old, was beaten by Israeli border police, when dozens of them invaded her house which is on the University Street in Abu Dis. The soldiers came to her house at about 10 in the evening, saying that there were wanted people in her house. This came after they had closed the University Street with two checkpoints.

Hiba Ayyad, Maryam's youngest daughter, was with her when she was killed. She said, "My mother was killed by the occupation. The soldiers who killed her in cold blood did not even allow the ambulance to reach her."

She reported: "Dozens of soldiers came to the house to arrest a student from Al Quds University who lives in a room in our building. When the soldiers tried to go upstairs in the building, where my brother

Nasser lives with his wife and children, my mother tried to stop them and told them that there were children in this house, and they were asleep. None of the soldiers listened, and one of them pushed my mother on to the ground. Another soldier went directly to her and checked and said that she was still alive.

“Right away I tried to go out to the street, shouting to the neighbours, asking them to bring an ambulance to save my mother. One of the soldiers pointed his gun at me and forced me to return back inside the house.

“Our neighbours called the ambulance, but at the same time, the soldiers told me that my mother was dead. I did not believe it, because everything happened quickly.”

Hiba added that her sister Fedaa, who lives in Jordan, did not manage to come from Jordan to see her mother before she was buried, because she was buried at 1.30 in the morning.

“Thousands of people from Abu Dis, Aizariyeh and Sawahreh came to the funeral. Till now we are still with her.”

Hiba said that during the previous months, the Israeli army had invaded the house many times and had arrested some students from the Al Quds University.

- On the early morning of Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, at a demonstration that took place following the funeral of Maryam Ayyad, Israeli soldiers shot and wounded a young man called Moataz Bader and then arrested him together with another young man.

### **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 September 2008, there were 67 prisoners from Abu Dis in Israeli jails. Among them there were 16 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 Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September, the Israeli authorities released Ahmed Husni (17) a student from Abu Dis Boys' School, after he had spent nine months inside Israeli jails/

### **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 14<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and the follow-up to this are available on the CADFA website [www.camdenabudis.net](http://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.