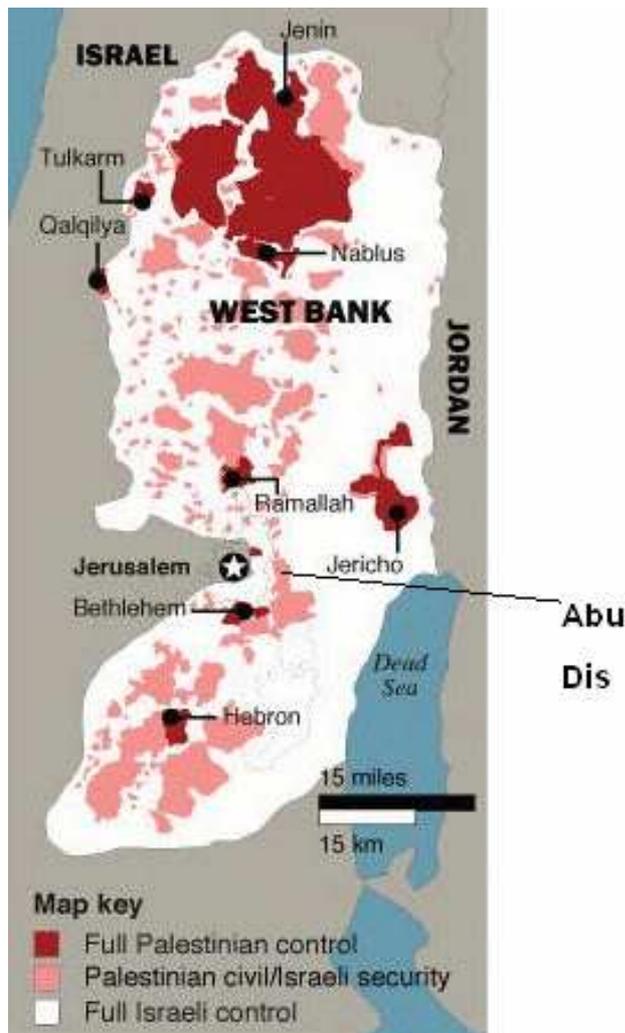


Monthly report on Israeli violations in Abu Dis, February 2009

The Israeli violations against the Palestinian inhabitants in the town of Abu Dis continued in February. The violations centred on the seizure of land and building new housing units in the settlements. At the same time the Israeli procedures and attacks increased attacks on the citizens in Jerusalem through orders of seizing houses and the whole of the Yasmeen neighbourhood in Silwan near to Abu Dis, which has more than 1500 inhabitants. The most important violations during the month are recorded below:



Building the wall and confiscating land:

According to the Al Quds Newspaper, Israel started to put the so-called E1 plan into operation with the aims of dividing Jerusalem from the West Bank on the north and the south and of putting all the main parts of the roads that join the north to the south under the control of Israel.

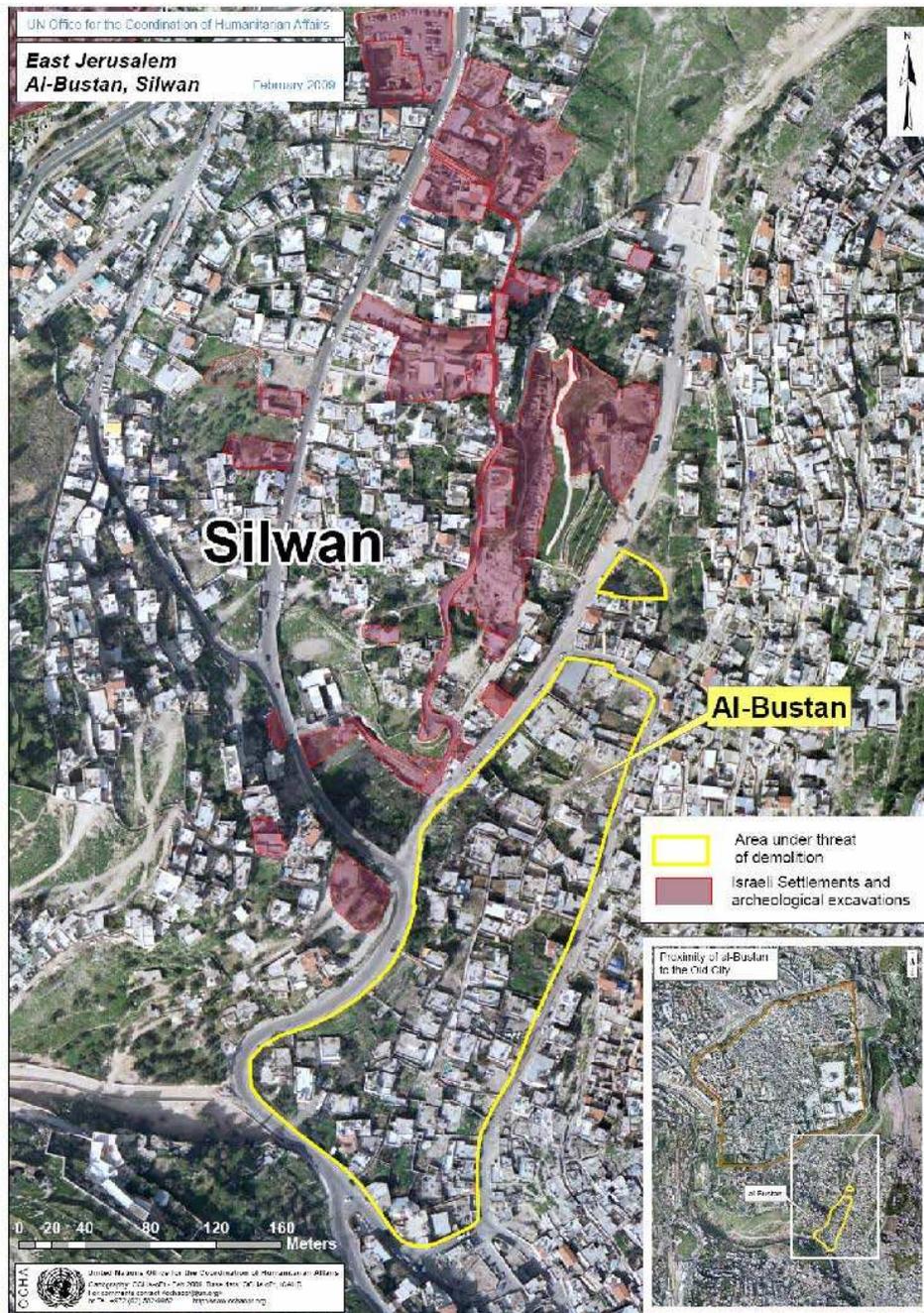
Maps adapted from Gush Shalom This map shows the limited area of Palestinian control in the West Bank. In fact, Gush Shalom is optimistic in labelling any of the areas "full Palestinian control" – these red areas actually refer to Area A where the Palestinian police operate, but the Israeli army demonstrates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

They are dividing the West Bank into two parts and making it impossible to have a continuous Palestinian presence to the

east of Jerusalem and refusing to let the people of the West Bank reach Jerusalem through building alternative roads that take a long route to stay away from the places of Israeli settlement that are on their extending settlement plan which has Maale Adumim as the biggest settlement of them. And the E1 plan is not limited to the units of settlement that they have started to build but they are making an industrial area and ten hotels and a



tourist area. Ha Aratz newspaper said that during the past two years, Israel had invested about 200 million shekels in building the infrastructure and preparing the land for a new settlement of 3500 units as part of the E1 project joining the settlement of Maale Adumim to East Jerusalem and giving it the name Maseerat Adumim.



On Saturday 21st February, the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality gave orders to 134 families to leave their houses: that is 1500 individuals living in 88 buildings in the Al Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan. They said they were planning build a public garden called “King David’s Garden” in place of the houses. This appeared to be an isolated incident but it is a next step in the plan of creating an alternative Jewish centre in Jerusalem to replace the centre of the old city. This will cut the Al Aqsa Mosque from the Palestinian neighbourhoods that have always surrounded it and create a widening border of settlers between the old city and the Aqsa Mosque.

There is more information on the E1 programme at

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.

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 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.

- On Sunday the 1st February, a patrol of Border Police put up a military checkpoint at the Abu Dis youth club, stopped some local people, and began to search people in a provoking way and to line them up by the wall. The checkpoint lasted for four hours.
- On Thursday the 5th February, an Israeli military force closed the road to Maale Adumim and for several hours they stopped vehicular traffic. A military force of border guards made a flying checkpoint at the crossroads leading to the town of Azaria and this held people up for a very long time, specially the passengers going to Ramallah, Jericho and Jerusalem.
- On Sunday the 8th February, the Israeli forces strengthened their difficult violations against the Palestinian people at the Container checkpoint which led to a terrible traffic jam.
- On Thursday 12th February, the Occupation forces stationed at the Container checkpoint arrested Khalid Hassan Obeyat and Mohammed Hassan Hussein Rashayedeh. Both of them work in the Palestinian security and inhabitants of the town of Bethlehem.

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.

- On Thursday 19th February, an occupation force stationed at the Container checkpoint arrested Zeeyad Mohamed Oqab al Nowajeeah an inhabitant of the town of Yatta.

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.

House invasions and arrests

During the past month, the Israelis have continued their policy of invading houses and arresting people: Israeli army with the support of the Israeli intelligence burst into people's houses at night, conducting searches and causing fear.

- On Friday 6th February, Occupation forces destroyed the sheds where four Bedouin families living on the east of Aizarieyeh kept their animals. They held the families in one of the tents they lived in, and the diggers began to make a big deep hole and they threw inside it the rest of the families' tents and their formal papers, clothes and their furniture, and piled a lot of earth on top of it.



- On Thursday 5th February, an Israeli force invaded the town of Abu Dis and entered and searched the house of Mahmoud Ayyad and Ahmed Ayyad, searching for the student Mohamed Doabsheh Badawi who is wanted by the Israeli army. And on the same night, an occupation force entered the house owned by the citizen Tamer Al Kaloti in the area of the town of Abu Dis
- On Thursday 5th February, an occupation force attacked a group of shops and car repair places in Aizariyeh and Abu Dis and set about searched some of them. The Israeli force invaded the town and arrested Khalid Saleem Halabiyeh after invading his house ALKAIN in the town of Abu Dis.
- On Saturday 7th February, a force of Israeli Border Police invaded the Halabiyeh neighbourhood of Abu Dis and entered the building belonging to Mohammed Qasim Khanafseh. The soldiers searched the house which is student accommodation for girl students from the university without giving any reason and without arresting any of them.

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 February 2009, there were 69 prisoners from Abu Dis in Israeli jails. Among them there were 18 children. In addition there are currently more than 75 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

- On Wednesday 4th February, Mohammed Hassan Eriqat aged 17 who was badly wounded by Israeli army shooting in December 2009 was moved from hospital to Al Ramleh jail. His family are very concerned about his health as had had an operation on his back and his wound is still not healed.

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 Headteacher asked for the enquiry to be reopened in the middle of May 2007

We have written a number of other letters in the meantime about other serious incidents in Abu Dis which are listed in the human rights report we wrote for December 2008.

We have been told by organisations such as B'tselem (an Israeli human rights organisation) and the Red Cross that "there is something special about Abu Dis in these cases." Human rights violations are happening all over Palestine but in some cases representations made via Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association appear to have gained people small concessions – rights which they should have in any case.

But there has been little progress on most of them.

Currently we are concerned about the cases of:

- Mohammed Hassan Eriqat aged 17 who was badly wounded by Israeli army shooting in December 2009 and his parents were not allowed by the Israelis to go and see him although he was in a coma. We wrote to our representatives asking them to raise this case, and ask for his parents to be allowed to visit. At least one of our MEPs raised this at European level and maintained an interest in the case. After a month, Mohammed's mother was finally able to go and see him. However he was then taken to Al Ramleh prison and we are concerned, as are his family, about his getting appropriate treatment.
- Hamam Mohsen who was shot in the head by Israeli soldiers in December and was initially in a coma. Although he was in a very serious condition, he has improved a good deal. His family have been concerned of course to look after him, and have not attempted to demand an investigation into the shooting, because of a deep lack of faith in Israeli army investigations – and in particular because this happened at the time of the huge Israeli attack on Gaza, when so many other people were badly injured or killed. CADFA are however taking it up with our representatives the UK, in particular because Hamam is a student at Abu Dis Boys' School which has a strong relation now to Camden and to Hampstead School.
- Mohammed Saleh Mohsen who is still very sick with cancer in prison and whose family have asked for his release after nine years in prison. They are not able even to visit him, and they believe he is at serious risk as he is not receiving the treatment he needs.

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.