



Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association

Abu Dis Human Rights report

A month in Abu Dis, May 2014

The people of Abu Dis continued to suffer on a daily basis from **the restrictions and violence of the occupation: the huge Separation Wall, the ID system and the checkpoints all round them, the constriction and loss of land to the settlements, and the almost-daily incursions of fully-armed Israeli soldiers**

because of the presence of a military camp right in the middle of town. There were huge amounts of tear gas in Abu Dis this month. Earlier, a local doctor had worried about what was in the tear gas. The gas caused people to feel ill, closed schools and the university. Then during this month, it killed a local doctor.



During May, the anniversary month of the Nakba*, the pressures of the Occupation became even more raw. This report gives part of the picture: people living in Abu Dis were also aware of what was happening more widely across the Palestine, including the killing of two young men in a demonstration on 15th May near Ofer Prison.

A hunger strike of prisoners on administrative detention began in late April, protesting **against the Israelis' rolling on of imprisonment without trial. There were many protests in Abu Dis** during this month and a solidarity tent was set up in the University Street.

Pressure on Palestinians, house demolitions, child arrests and invasions of the Al Aqsa Mosque by Israeli settlers continued in nearby Jerusalem.

See below for campaign about Adam and Johar and a comment on the military courts (*).

4th May Hassan Shuhadeh was arrested from his house.

From Abu Dis today. **"I woke in the night to the sound of live gunfire.** There were tear gas and sound bombs going off somewhere not far from the middle of Abu Dis. This morning **I've heard from neighbours that the Israeli army surrounded a house in University Street,** broke the main door, searched and messed up and destroyed things for three hours inside the house and arrested Hassan Shuhadeh. Apparently the soldiers came with force, broke in and terrified everyone in the house with dogs. His oldest child is four years old."

Hassan has been in prison several times for his political activity and we imagine this will again be imprisonment without trial (administrative detention).



Prisoners under administrative detention have been on hunger strike for the past 12 days in prison in the Negev desert, where many of them are kept, in tents under the hot sun. They are protesting against the new Israeli practice of making administrative detention roll on, one six-month term automatically following the last.

Meanwhile Adam and Johar, the young footballers arrested at the border, returning from three **months' hospital in Jordan after they had been shot** by the Israeli military, continue to be held with no charge in Ofer Prison (see more below*)

7th May WASTE WATER Today's news from Abu Dis - As usual, the Wall, the prisoners, yet again 'clashes' at the boys' school, at the university. More disgusting still, a few days ago the Palestinian water systems, not only in Abu Dis but in the Palestinian villages around Jerusalem (not in the Israeli settlements note) and supplied from Israel, suddenly got filled with sewage-tainted water. Apparently they are now clean but how disgusting that 'accident' - and will anyone be brought to answer for it?

8th May Abdullah Eyad Abu Hilal (aged 18) was released after a year in prison. The family had to pay 2000 shekels as a fine.



12th May A day of tear gas and closed schools in Abu Dis. During this month, the Israelis began to do extra work on the Wall – **As usual, they didn't tell people** in Abu Dis

what was going on and local people thought they were going to raise the section of the Wall near the University to be even higher. In the event, they were building an extra steel defence for the Wall on its west side. The army shot a lot of tear gas around the area of Abu Dis that contains the secondary schools and the University, and these were shut as a result of it today.

14th May Today CADFA volunteers were trapped after work in the Dar Assadaqa community centre. The streets around were full of a really powerful tear gas and of Israeli soldiers. We were told it was so hard to breathe inside the building that one person put his head inside the fridge to try and escape the gas. Imagine all the families with their young kids in the same neighbourhood. And when they tried to leave, they saw in front of them a young boy from the neighbourhood being shot and injured by a rubber bullet in his leg.

CADFA has been working for years now with people in Abu Dis and when we first heard of one of these injuries, we were so shocked. We are shocked now also by the fact that this has become 'normal' to us as it has to the people of Abu Dis. There is no recourse: soldiers shoot with impunity.

Parents struggle to keep their kids indoors while generation after generation of kids there deal with the gas, the soldiers and the risks associated as London kids deal with traffic -

15th May The occupation is raw in the West Bank now; the violence on the street can flare at any time, particularly around a demonstration. Today was the Nakba, a day when people in Palestine remember the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian from their homes in the part of Palestine that became Israel in 1948. In Abu Dis today is also a day full of tear gas AGAIN, a day of closed schools AGAIN (just before the final exams) ... an impossible day AGAIN to get on with a normal life.



Here is a CADFA volunteer's description of

the demonstrations on 15th:

<http://abudisvolunteers.blogspot.co.uk/2014/05/catastrophe-15-05-2014-part-1.html>

Outside Ramallah, outside the prison at Orfa, two boys were shot and killed, it seems from this video in cold blood – adding to the numbers and the increasing pressure on people across the West Bank.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/20/video-indicates-killed-palestinian-youths-no-threat-israeli-forces>

20th May Local people were woken by the huge noise of military invasion of the house of Nader Jaffal. Israeli soldiers used sound bombs, tear gas and live ammunition. Nader was not arrested but the army invaded his house and searched it for hours in the night.



21st May There was a march in commemoration in Abu Dis today of the killing of Haytham Eriqat (aged 16) in 1988. An Israeli sniper killed Haytham by shooting him in the head from a roof in the middle of Abu Dis. This was during a demonstration in the first intifada.

Today, Israeli soldiers shot tear gas at the marchers and also at houses in the middle of Abu Dis.

27th May Respected Abu Dis doctor (Dr Sameeh Wehesh) died today aged 64, having become ill from breathing in the tear gas spread round the town by Israeli soldiers last weekend. He was now retired, having worked as the doctor in charge of the children's section in Jericho hospital. He was well-known in Abu Dis for his activities in support of Palestinian prisoners and his support for the Abu Dis Youth Club.

Dr Sameeh was in his own house in Abu Dis when heavy tear gas filled it on Friday. He lived between the university and the road to the military camp and Israeli soldiers were shooting tear gas all



round. He phoned another local doctor saying that he was having difficulty breathing but he couldn't manage to get out of the house for help because of the tear gas. His situation got worse and on Saturday he managed to get to the health centre where he was found to have a low level of oxygen. He was transferred to intensive care but he did not manage to recover.

We send our deep sympathy to his family and our condolences also to the people of Abu Dis who remember Dr Sameeh as a strong and active member of the community.

<http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=700189>

May 29th People in Abu Dis started a solidarity tent in support of the hunger-striking political prisoners.



May 31st There was a peaceful march in solidarity with the prisoners which was attacked by Israeli soldiers with tear gas.

(* Update on Adam and Johar and a comment on the military courts.

In late January 2014, Adam and Johar, young footballers aged 17 and 19 from Abu Dis, were shot in the legs by Israeli soldiers. After being badly hurt, they were briefly put into Israeli hospital by the Israeli military (and parents not allowed to visit) and then released. They were allowed to leave the country and were taken to Jordan where they spent three months in hospital. Here in London, we collected signatures for giant get well cards for them, which were delivered to them in the middle of March.

**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO
FREE ADAM AND JOHAR**

www.camdenabudis.net

Facebook CADFA (Camden Abu Dis
Friendship Association)

contact@camdenabudis.net

On 28th April, on their way back to the West Bank they were arrested by the Israeli military.

Adam and Johar should be freed now. We are asking for your help.

We knew from their families and friends that Adam and Johar had been playing football at Abu Dis Sports Club before heading home and being shot by soldiers from the Israeli military camp in Abu Dis, mauled by dogs, briefly arrested, beaten and badly injured.

They were then released.



Adam and Johar in hospital following their first release in February 2014

Their story became well known through the efforts of ourselves and others and the fact that they were footballers shot in the leg made the story better known. They are unfortunately not alone on being badly abused by the Israeli army, but they were being asked about.

We suspect it is this high profile which caused the Israelis to make a case against them to try to explain why these two had been shot at in the first place.

Especially because they were released and allowed to leave the country, we do not believe that the army held serious charges against them in January and early February.

But three months later, Israeli army had decided to claim that they had been attacking the Israeli military camp, which why they had been shot.



Adam and Johar in Jordan with get-well cards gathered by CADFA in London.

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We do not believe this.

A military court is not a fair trial:

- It is run by Israeli soldiers on a military base, it is not a civil court
- The system is that they are charged and then kept in prison till their lawyers agree to a sentence. They are not allowed to present their case properly.
- The Israeli military want to prove that the boys did something wrong
- Abu Dis is full of witnesses that the boys had just been playing football when they were shot. The military court does not allow them to bring those witnesses.

Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association, London
Dar Assadaqa, Abu Dis.

