



## Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association

### Abu Dis Human Rights report

### A month in Abu Dis, March 2016

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. People are trying to get on with their lives in a normal way but interrupted by movement restrictions, separation from family members, economic and environmental problems that have a connection to the Israeli occupation and the racist restrictions that they suffer.

In the last few months, the violations have become worse – more land confiscations, more movement restrictions, and more military violence of all sorts. The conflict has been deepening across Palestine as a whole and the people of Abu Dis are affected by this both in practice and by hearing constant bad news. Since October 2015, many people



have been killed by the Israeli army or settlers: 209 during this period (47 of them under 18) and 23 just in this month. During March, five people killed were under 18 and two of them were women. Nineteen of them were killed at military checkpoints. One of them (pictured above) was Abdel Fattah Al Sharif, in Hebron. He was wounded and lying in the road when an Israeli soldier decided to shoot him in the head. This was recorded on video and spread internationally – Since then, there has been much discussion about what happened with many Israelis defending the soldier and threats against the man who took the video.

The army has been in evidence in a very forceful way in Jerusalem and across the West Bank. There were many house invasions and woundings. As well as rubber bullets, in March alone, 380 people (including 45 children) were recorded as wounded by live ammunition. Just in March, 647 Palestinians were arrested, among them 128 under 18, and 16 women. In addition to this 1300 Palestinian workers were inside 48/Israel, held for three days and made to pay fines for their release.

In this month, the Israeli government gave authority to the Israeli military courts to arrest Palestinian children under 14 and send them to jail.

In just this month, 159 houses were demolished by the Israeli army. In March, the Israeli authorities decided to take over 4250 donums of Palestinian land, including a big tract south of Jericho, next to the Dead Sea.

Below are some of the more dramatic events that happened in and around Abu Dis itself.



**Thursday 3rd March** An Israeli military court decided to give 8 years and 4 years in jail to the lawyer Shereen Essawi and her brother Medhat, whose brother Samer Essawi famously had a long hunger strike and then was arrested again a year ago to continue a sentence of a life inside jail. Medhat Essawi had already spent over 20 years inside jail. This family from Essawiya has strong relations with people in Abu Dis, which is nearby. Shereen is a lawyer who defends Palestinian prisoners including Abu Dis prisoners, and Medhat also works for the Palestinian Prisoners' Ministry. The charge made by the Israelis is that they are both supporting Palestinian prisoners! Shereen had been arrested before and spent one year in jail last time she was arrested.

**Sunday 6th March** An Israeli military force and intelligence officer invaded the house of Majd Bader in the middle of the night. They searched the house and arrested his son Khaled who is 20 years old.



**Sunday 6th March** The Israeli military court in Ofer Court gave Shukri Al Hanash from Abu Dis (aged 16, a student from Abu Dis Boys School) a sentence of 11 months and a fine of 4000 NIS - they charged him with taking part in demonstrations. A year ago, when he was aged 15, Shukri had tried to take a case against the Israeli army of torturing him (when they arrested him) using electricity cables. His lawyer made



statements in court about what had happened to him, but the judge refused to consider this. There is no other route for Palestinians to bring a case through a military court. This was reported on at that time by the Al Quds newspaper.

**Monday 7th March** A young woman was arrested by the Israeli army at the Container checkpoint south of Abu Dis in the afternoon. The soldier said that she was walking to the checkpoint carrying her handbag, so they thought this might be a threat. They made her lie on the ground and took her bag into the guards' room. They came out, accusing her of carrying a knife inside her bag, and she was taken to jail. The young woman, originally from Jenin, lives in Abu Dis with her husband.

**Monday 7th March.** The Israeli authorities released Abdullah Awad, ten days after he had been arrested – though he had not been given any reason for his arrest and he had not even been questioned (see February report).

**Tuesday 8th March.** Early in the morning, the Israeli army invaded houses in Abu Dis and arrested three young men: Amir Jaffal (31), who is married and has very young children – the brother of Mahmoud Jaffal who is still inside jail – and Ahmed and MahouliGhaliEreqat, brothers of Ali who is also inside jail.

**Tuesday 8th March.**The Israeli army invaded a large building which is young women students' accommodation – They searched the rooms for two hours and then they left without telling people what they were after.

**Friday 11th March.** The Israeli army invaded Abu Dis in the evening – there were clashes and the Israelis shot and injured 17 young people. One of them was seriously hurt on his knee and another on his eye.

**Monday 14th March** The Israeli military court at Ofar Jail gave a sentence of 21 months and a fine of 4000 NIS to Mahmoud Ayman Badr (17 years old, a student from Abu Dis Boys' School) who had already been in jail for 14 months



**Friday 18th March.** There were clashes between youth and the army near the crossroads to the military camp. The army shot live ammunition and two people were wounded. There were complaints from the people who lived in the area about large amounts of tear gas entering their houses. The clashes continued until late in the evening.

**Monday 21st March.** At the end of the school day, three Israeli military jeeps carrying the Israeli intelligence officer made a flying checkpoint on the main street near the government buildings. They entered three shops and the Israelis gave formal papers to ask the owners to meet the intelligence officer. When the children came out of school, the soldiers began to shoot tear gas and rubber bullets.

**Tuesday 22nd March.** There was a demonstration at Kubsah (between Abu Dis and Aizariyeh). Two young people, Mohammed Mohsen from Abu Dis (aged 15) and Ali Faraon from Aizariyeh (also 15) were captured by the army, beaten on the street and taken away to the police station in

MaaleAdumim settlement. Two hours later, their fathers were asked to go to the police station and each to pay 2000 NIS bail with a court date set in July. After this, Mohammed was taken to the health centre, and doctors reported that he had been beaten with metal sticks (perhaps guns) on his head and all over his body. Mohammed reported that the two boys had been put on the floor of the military jeep and beaten repeatedly till they arrived at the police station. They were then forced to stand up with their hands tied and their eyes covered until their families arrived and paid for their release.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.** Early in the morning, the Israeli army invaded the houses of JaberEriqat and Said Eriqat. They arrested Basil, Jaber's son, and Said, after searching the houses. Both of them were taken to MaaleAdumin police station.

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March**The military court in Ofar gave a sentence to 14-year-old AliGhalibAyyad (from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Abu Dis Boys' School) of 6 months in jail and 4000 NIS as a fine. Ali's two brothers are also inside Israeli jails.

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March**– This is Land Day in Palestine, when people remember 30<sup>th</sup> March 1976 when Palestinians inside 48/ Israel were killed by the Israeli army on a demonstration. This was remembered all over Palestine and there were many demonstrations. In Abu Dis and Aizariyeh, the Red Crescent reported that 23 people were wounded by rubber bullets fired by Israeli soldiers.