



## Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association

### Abu Dis Human Rights report

### A month in Abu Dis, January 2018



It is terrible to say that the human rights violations against people in Abu Dis and Palestine continued in a way that has become routine. People are trying to get on with their lives in a normal way but their lives are systematically interrupted by movement restrictions, separation from family members, economic and environmental problems. People are becoming accustomed to violence from the Israeli army that every month leaves a number of boys (usually) injured,

families including those with babies suffering from tear gas, and sees a number of people violently arrested or returned home suffering from their time in jail and their families suffering from fines of thousands of shekels. People in Abu Dis are living with people around them who are suffering from gunshot wounds or have returned from prison; they see the occupation not only in the visits of soldiers (see this picture) but in the monuments to the actions of the soldiers – like the Separation Wall and this destroyed house.

They are strongly affected by the turbulent and often violent context across the West Bank more widely: and here what happened in January was both routine and more severe. During this month the effects of Trump's statement on 7/12/17 that he would recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital were still being played out – and then tension again built with the visit of the US vice president Mike Pence. In Jerusalem, there were frequent invasions of the Al Aqsa mosque compound by Israeli settlers, extremely provocative. At one point the village of Essawiya (next to Jerusalem) was closed by the Israeli army completely for six days. The issue of the E1 area settlement expansion was live and during this month the

Israeli ruling Likud party took a decision in their conference that they aimed to annexe the whole of the West Bank.

The famous arrest of Ahd Tamimi (in December) was only one of many arrests and the issues of their treatment – and the huge fines they have to pay even when no charges are held against them – is on-going. Across Palestine in the first month of the year, eight people were killed by the Israeli army, 596 people were arrested.

### **In Abu Dis, this month:**

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January** The first day of the year began with a demonstration against Trump's declaration that he would move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. Demonstrators gathered at Abu Dis youth club and marched



through the town. Near the crossroads with the military camp, the Israeli army began to shoot tear gas and rubber bullets and also live ammunition in the air. According to a report from the Red Crescent around 7 people were injured with rubber bullets but dealt with locally – they were not taken to hospital. The shooting continued until late at night, with the army shooting tear gas towards the areas of Ar Ras and the crossroads to the military camp.

**Tuesday 2nd January** The Israeli army put up a checkpoint early in the morning near the Abu Dis Council building, near the boys' schools, before they started. They stopped cars including public transport, taking IDs – they appeared to be searching for someone. The parents of the boys



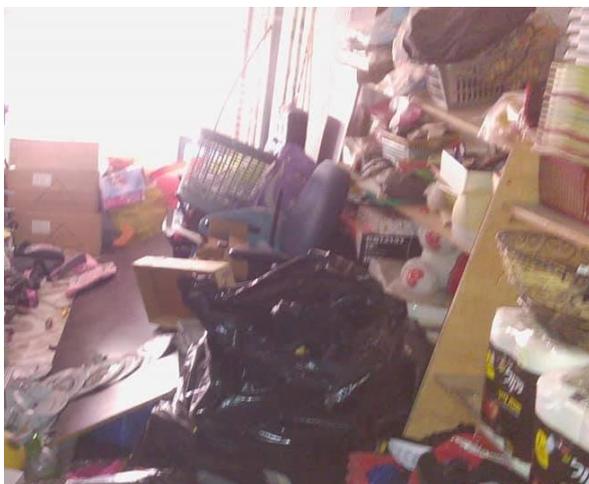
who went to the nearby schools alerted each other and came to try to protect their sons and ensure they had a school day. The army shot near the university, apparently for no

reason other than to provoke young people. The checkpoint remained until 9am and the army left.

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.** Again, there was a night demo near Kobsah and the army began to shoot tear gas from the other side of the Wall which affected Azariyeh and the north side of Abu Dis. The demo continued to the evening.

On **3<sup>rd</sup> January** also, the student prisoner Iyad Nabil Jaffal (in the first year at Al Quds University) was given a sentence of 10 months in prison and a fine of 2000 shekels. He had been imprisoned in April 2017. It is important to note that Iyad is just one of hundreds of prisoners and his experience is shared by many fellow students and young people in Palestine – an experience going back years. Here we would like to pick up the issue of the fines, which amount to many thousands of shekels in Abu Dis alone each year and must be a huge amount across Palestine as a whole.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January.** Young boys from Abu Dis and Aizariya made a hole in the Separation Wall which was the fourth time in the past two years. They also destroyed the cameras on the Wall in that area. Note that the Wall is not only cause of huge problems to the lives of families in the area, but has been judged to be illegal by the International Court of Justice (July 2004). The Israelis began shooting these boys and two of them were taken to hospitals in the West Bank.



**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January** At 3am, the army invaded an area near the Palestine Bank on the west side of Abu Dis. They entered and searched three houses, gave no reasons for their invasion and arrested no one. Clashes started and the army shot tear gas around the area.

On the evening of that day, there was a demonstration in Kubsah and once again the

army shot tear gas in the same area. The Red Crescent reported that one young man had an injured by live ammunition in the lower part of his body.

### **Wednesday 10th January**

The army imposed a complete closure on Abu Dis and Aizariyeh by blocking the road out near the settlement at Maale Adumim.

Further north– west, they blocked the main road at Jabaa Checkpoint.

This was in the afternoon. Many

Abu Dis people did not manage to return from their work in Ramallah and had to stay overnight. The Israelis also put a military checkpoint on the Wad al–Zeitoun road between Aizariyeh and Abu Dis in the evening.



**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January** There was a demonstration in the evening in Kubsah between Abu Dis and Aizariyeh. The army entered the area and sent tear gas across the whole area. Clashes continued until the evening.

On the **11<sup>th</sup> January**, the prisoner Israa Ja'abees from Jabal al–Mukkaber (West Sawahreh, the other side of the Wall from Abu Dis) lost an appeal at the Israeli High Court. Israa had been given 11 years' sentence, saying that she



had wanted to attack the army with her car at the checkpoint, but she says she was not doing that. She said that she had been arrested in October 2015 near to the Azzayem checkpoint not far from Abu Dis in a horrible accident which became a disaster. She was able to talk publicly at the appeal court for the first time. She said that at that time she had been driving with her young son to go home and the Israelis shot towards the car; the air bag in the car unfolded and somehow a fire started in the car in which she was extremely badly burned – this now shows on her face and she lost all her fingers. She says that she

was imprisoned by Israel, not allowed to see her family or even her little son and not given any proper health treatment.

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January.** After the Friday prayer, Israeli undercover agents (dressed as Palestinians) entered Abu Dis in a private car and the soldiers attacked boys who were about to start a demonstration and arrested three of them, two from Aizariyeh and Mohammad Talal Eriqat from Abu Dis. One boy was injured in his stomach with a rubber bullet and was taken directly to hospital. Clashes followed and continued till late in the evening.



Note: pictures are not all they seem. Well-edited, high-definition photos and video footage that appeared on Friday 12th January showing military activity in the town. They spread rapidly across social media as if they were photos by Palestinians, but the places the photos were taken from (close to soldiers/ from cameras in the air) show that the film and photos must have been made and released into social media by Israel (presumably to show their power and buoy up the Israeli settlers?)

**Wednesday 17th January.** This is a report from Dar Assadaqa, which is in the middle of Abu Dis:

“Thirty young people enjoying themselves and working seriously as part of the Dar Assadaqa Winter Camp (a mid-year holiday project) -and out of the blue, an interaction with the Israeli army that left three of the young people hurt – one hit by a jeep, one hurt his leg running away, and a girl with asthma who was affected by tear gas.



In the middle of this morning, four Israeli army jeeps appeared in the middle of Abu Dis, and

one stopped by the front door of Dar Assadaqa while the others went to the nearby Abu Dis Youth Club. There was no obvious reason, and they didn't stay long - they threw many tear gas cans, including one to the shop next to Dar Assadaqa which affected the young people there, who scattered from Dar Assadaqa (and one was hit by one of the jeeps). The soldiers pointed their guns at local people and then went away.



“The first picture here is one of today's groups working on some drama. The second picture taken after the incident with the army happened, because when they came, there was panic (no time for photos). In the distance, there is tear gas and the army jeeps are heading back to the military camp, but they have given everyone the message: they come into town whenever they want to.”

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January.** The US Vice President Mike Pence was visiting Jerusalem, and the Israelis imposed a general closure on the city. They shut all the checkpoints around the city that are used by West Bankers to go to work in Jerusalem and did not accept the military “permissions” that had been issued.

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January.** There was a general strike across the West Bank, protesting against the visit by Mike Pence and the US decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital. All the shops, the schools and the University in Abu Dis were closed. There was another peaceful demonstration in Abu Dis which ended with clashes near the Israeli military camp.

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January.** There was again a demonstration after the Friday prayer. It began peacefully but ended with Israeli shooting. According to the Red Crescent, three young people were wounded with live ammunition and taken to hospital, as well as seven with rubber bullets who were treated locally. The army continued to throw tear gas into the area until late at night that day.

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January.** The Israeli army invaded the town during the night and gave these



posters to the families of the men in the picture, dropped them in the streets and put them on the walls. The poster has pictures of some fathers and the names of their sons who – say the Israelis – are “involved in terror action against innocent Israeli citizens”. Note that young people in Abu Dis are confined by the Wall, checkpoints and land taken by settlements which they cannot enter – they do not come across Israeli civilians. The poster is threatening the fathers, who they say are responsible for their sons’ actions, and the whole population of Abu Dis, warning that bad things will

happen to the boys if they do not stop their activities.

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January.** The Israeli army came into the University Street in Abu Dis early in the morning and invaded a number of houses that were accommodation for university students. They took out dozens of students into the cold night and searched the houses before they left without arresting anybody and leaving the houses in a horrible mess.