



Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association

Abu Dis Human Rights report

A month in Abu Dis, May 2018



This was a terrible month in Abu Dis, a part of Palestine as a whole, of course. The conflict moved to another stage of rawness in all the areas of racist and unequal treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli government and military. All of the huge areas – refugees, land, separation, expulsion, imprisonment, military violence – were horribly evident this

month. The US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem (despite the previous international consensus against) seemed to signal a dramatic upturn in Israeli expulsion of Palestinians and building of Israeli settlements. This was the beginning of Ramadan, when the religious needs of Muslim Palestinians to pray in Al Aqsa mosque on Fridays were subordinated to the Jewish holidays when Israel closed Jerusalem. This was the time of the celebrations by Israel for the 70th anniversary of the founding of their state and a time of commemoration by the Palestinians for the 70th anniversary of the Nakba (demolition of Palestinian villages, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians expelled and not allowed back to their homes). The peaceful demonstrations on the border of Gaza that had begun on the Land Day on March 30th continued into demonstrations on the Gaza border calling for the right to return, and there was appalling slaughter by Israeli snipers aiming at unarmed Palestinians.



Terrible figures were issued by Al Meezan Human Rights Centre, who gather these monthly.

- 83 people in the occupied territories were killed by the Israeli army
- 10 of these were under 16
- 79 of them were killed on the borders of Gaza and 4 in the West Bank

- 23 dead bodies of people who had been killed by Israel (including in previous months) were still withheld by Israel
- 6,800 people were wounded with live ammunition, rubber bullets or tear gas
- 1,800 of them were children under 16
- Huge numbers of amputations of hands, legs, feet were reported particularly in Gaza where hospitals were unable to cope with the numbers of people coming in wounded, particularly around 15th May
- 490 people were arrested by the Israeli military from the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The Israeli government was building the framework for even further systematic oppression of Palestinians, and doing this inside its legal system at the same time as preparing the infrastructure for new settlements across the West Bank. During May, some of the legislation prepared or accepted included

- Cutting tax money due to the Palestinian Authority by a sum that was supposed to equate to the amount that the PA were giving to support the families of prisoners and people who had been killed.
- Trying to prevent the witness videos have been very important in recent years in showing some of the violations that have been happening to Palestinians, by introducing legislation to prevent the photography or videoing of Israeli military actions that could be claimed to affect the confidence of their soldiers or to pose a security threat.
- Preventing Palestinians from the Occupied Territories from going to the Israeli Supreme Court to act against Israeli military decisions.
- Moving forward, as shown below, on expulsion of the Bedouin villages in the E1 settlement area and on building of new settlements.



In Abu Dis, this month:

Tuesday 8th May an Abu Dis house that was under construction in Ras al Aqub was demolished by the Israeli military on the excuse that it was near the Separation Wall. The

family had started to build it but it was not finished' a week before, the military had issued a warning

Wednesday 9th May the Israeli army invaded Abu Dis during the day. There was a lot of shooting and teargas. They entered the house of Khalid Abu Hilal and arrested his son Majd (17) a towjehi student at the Arab Institute, and his friend Mohennad Sa'ed (16) who is in the eleventh grade at Abu Dis Boys' School.

Mohannad has an artificial leg as he lost his leg from his knee down in a car accident some years ago.

The two boys were pulled by the army on to the street and were beaten; Mohannad's leg came off when he was beaten and he needs to see a doctor to have it fixed on again. He was arrested with the other boy and taken away by the army, and at the time of writing (June) he has not been able to see a doctor. The boys were taken to court on the following day and offered bail but on payment of a huge sum (7500 NIS for Mohannad) which the other



At this time, there were final exams in the schools, but the school was interrupted by clashes and army tear gas.



Thursday 10th May Early in the morning, at around 2 or 3 am, the Israeli military invaded three houses on University Street. One of these was accommodation for university students. They made the residents leave their houses and searched them – there were no arrests. |

day 11th May. After the Friday prayer, in the early afternoon, the army came to University Street and set up a checkpoint outside the university mosque. They asked for people's IDs as they came out. Young boys threw some stones, the army threw tear gas around including into the university grounds where this created a fire in the trees. The clashes took over the middle of the ground into the early evening.

Sunday 13th May. Early in the morning, the army invaded the houses of Nasser Johar and Dawod Bader. [they arrested their sons Johar Johar and Mohammed Bader. [Johar is known

to CADFA members from the protests we organised about the shooting and later the arrest of Adam and

Johar (young footballers) in early 2014].

Sunday 13th May. For four hours in the afternoon, the army completely blocked the main road in Aizariyeh where it joins the road linking to the Maale Adumim settlement. This not only blocks access to the north to the people of Aizarieyeh and Abu Dis but cuts the Palestinian main road north-south and divides the West Bank into two. There was no reason given for this major interruption.



Monday 14th May. This will be remembered for two linked reasons. Firstly, this was the day that the United States moved their embassy to Jerusalem- appalling much of the world as it appeared to recognise the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem which had been seen internationally as illegal since 1967. It also seemed to finish the hope of a Palestinian future state, which had been held out as a future possibility.

Secondly, it was the day of a massacre in Gaza: Israeli snipers shooting peaceful Palestinian demonstrators – Over sixty people were killed and over a thousand wounded.

From a CADFA report written early in that day... *“What a desperate day. Already the news is pouring in from Gaza, at least seven civilians, among them a child, shot in cold blood by Israeli snipers, already hundreds wounded. All that grief piled on grief, all that real heroism demonstrating for life with soldiers of death aiming at*



you. Too much to say today, when the whole of Palestine is convulsed with the Americans' decision to

symbolically recognise the claim of Israel on Jerusalem by moving their embassy there (there are huge demos in Gaza and a general strike and demonstrations in the West Bank) - yet more on top of the years and years of pain, agony, separation and injustice that we know the Palestinians have suffered. At least 100 years of injustice since Balfour, 70 years of Nakba, over 50 years of occupation in the West Bank, over 10 years of siege in Gaza. How can this go on? All credit to the people demonstrating in peace for human rights and dignity - no credit to the people using machine guns to mow down crowds”



In Abu Dis, there were demonstrations against the move of the embassy, and (as the day went on in response to the news of a developing massacre in Gaza). The Israeli army shot ‘tutu’ bullets shot by snipers, which are silent. Seven people were wounded in this way in Abu Dis, among them Khaleel al-Khateeb from Aizariyeh, who was shot in the head and seriously wounded.



These pictures taken on that day show the army in the streets and also (as is increasingly familiar in Abu Dis) snipers standing on a rooftop of a tall building, and a boy next to a military jeep, blindfolded and on his knees.



Tuesday 15th May. This was Nakba Day* (the 70th anniversary of the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948)..

There was a general strike across Palestine which was a protest against the massacre that took place on 14th in Gaza and was continuing. There were no schools or offices open, and there were army everywhere and clashes on the streets until the evening.

Friday 18th May Ramadan started on 17th May, so on this, the first Friday in Ramadan, people from the West Bank were keen to go to the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem to pray. Israel has created a situation with the Separation Wall and pass laws that makes it very hard for people in the West Bank to get to Jerusalem. In the past few years, Israel has given a number of special “permissions” for some people who are married and over 40, and for



whom they have no security concerns. However even these do not allow people into Jerusalem on Friday or Saturday. And this first Friday, Israel declared a “closure” for the

Jewish religious holiday, which meant that even for people with “permission,” it was impossible to pass through the Israeli checkpoints in the Separation Wall and get to Jerusalem.

This meant that people eager to pray in the Al Aqsa Mosque sought other ways to get there, such as climbing the Wall. However this is very dangerous, as shown by the picture below (taken in Ar Ram), showing someone who is about to jump from the high Wall about to be captured by Israeli soldiers waiting on the other side.

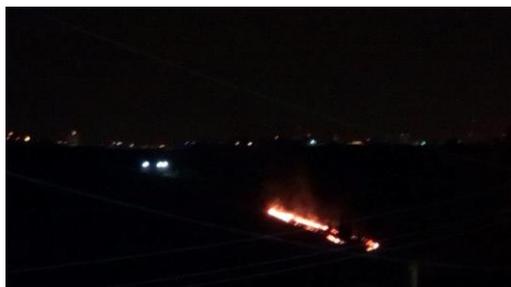
Saturday 19th

May. The Israeli army put up a checkpoint early in the morning next to the main entrance of Al-Quds University. There was a demonstration in the early evening in Kubsa (between Abu Dis and Aizaria) against the massacre in Gaza and the movement of the US Embassy to Jerusalem. The army attacked the protest: they shot tear gas and rubber bullets towards the protestors.

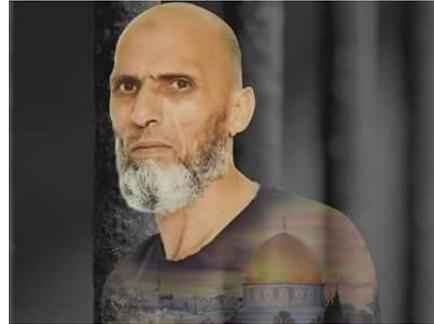


Sunday 20th May. In Khalit Abed, part of Abu Dis now cut off from the main part of town by the Separation Wall, the Israelis caused a fire from military flares shot from the military camp in Abu Dis. This part of town is impossible for Abu Dis fire engines to reach and the land

owners were desperate, having to look at what happened as the fire damaged an acre of olive trees – and not being able to do anything (this is therefore a picture of the fire taken from a distance).



Monday 21st May Aziz Oweisat from Jabal al-Mukabbar (on the Jerusalem side of the Separation Wall), a father of six and grandfather of six, aged in his mid-fifties, died inside Israeli prison. He was arrested in 2014 and recently had been taken into solitary confinement. The Israelis said that he had died of a heart attack, but another prisoner reported that he had met him and that he had told him that he was being tortured..



Wednesday 23rd May. The Israeli army entered Abu Dis early in the morning before school time and put up a check point outside Al Quds University. They stopped students and checked their IDs. After two hours, they left.

Thursday 24th May. The Israeli Supreme Court made a decision allowing the army to evacuate the whole village of Khan al-Ahmar, which would mean evacuating 35 families who had been living in that place since 1953, since they had been pushed out of their previous



homes in the Negev. The people of Khan al-Ahmar were told of this decision and given ten days to find an alternative solution to the one the Israelis have been preparing, which would move them on to other lands taken from Aizaria and Abu Dis. Apparently the Israeli lawyer who was working for the Bedouin villagers told them that this decision relied on the Wadi Araba agreement between Israel and Jordan (made around the time of the Oslo Accords), that Israel would not withdraw from the land that Israel had occupied in 1967, taking over from Jordan, but would pay Jordan compensation and would keep the land and build a “peace street” to connect Jerusalem with Amman (source: Ma’an).



Friday 25th May. Odai Hishmeh (22) from Abu Dis was arrested by the Israelis on the bridge (the border with Jordan) on his return from visiting family in Jordan. His family have not so far been told where he is or what he is charged with (early June) – He had left a week before and they did not know of any reason why he would be arrested.

Saturday 26th May. In the early hours of the morning (2 or 3am) the Israeli army invaded the house of Yousef Oraibeh from Abu Dis. They were looking for his son Suleiman, aged 19 but could not find him. The Israelis arrested the father and took him to the Israeli military camp, informing the family that if the son did not come and give himself up, they would keep his father. The following day, the son went to the police station in Maleh Adumim settlement to give himself up, but was told that he must go to the military camp if he wanted his



family to be released. He refused because the treatment of Palestinians in the military camp is brutal, but the police took him in a jeep to the military camp. Two hours later, the father was released but in the intervening time, he was beaten in front of his father and the father was also beaten.

Sunday 27th May. The army entered Abu Dis early in the morning. There were clashes near the Al Quds University. The Palestinian Red Crescent said that they had to take fifteen students from the area for medical treatment owing to tear gas and rubber bullets.



Monday 28th May. There was heavy gun shooting and tear gas at around 3-4 in the morning, in the area of Jabal Abu Kamel (where the Israelis have put their military camp) in Abu Dis, and in Khalit Abed, south of that hill and on the other side of the Separation Wall.

Wednesday 30th May. The Israeli authorities approved the building of 2,070 settlement building units in the West Bank and Jerusalem. This included an extension of Kfar Adumim settlement to the east of Khan al-Ahmar (see 24th May), showing clearly the Israeli policy of pushing out the Palestinians and replacing them with Israeli settlers.

CADFA.org