

MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT APRIL – JUNE 2007 FIELD REPORT

Introduction

This is the second quarterly field report of 2007 by Al-Haq's Monitoring and Documentation Department, covering the period from April to June 2007. Al-Haq's field reports cover human rights abuses committed by the Israeli Occupying Power and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Each field report highlights a particularly important and disturbing trend observed by the Monitoring and Documentation Department during the reporting period.

8 June 2007 marked forty years of Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, together constituting the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), despite binding United Nations Security Council resolutions ordering it to withdraw. Consequently, Al-Haq's monitoring and documentation activities have traditionally been directed towards the human rights violations committed by Israel, the Occupying Power. However, following the creation of the PNA in 1994, Al-Haq also monitors and documents violations perpetrated by the PNA.

The field reports are based on first-hand information gathered by Al-Haq's Monitoring and Documentation Department, covering a broad range of human rights abuses, including comprehensive coverage of killings, house demolitions and curfews. Al-Haq's specially trained fieldworkers visit sites of alleged human rights violations, draw maps, draft reports and take sworn witness statements (affidavits) from victims and eyewitnesses. The affidavits excerpted or referenced in field reports are available on Al-Haq's web site www.alhaq.org, as samples of those gathered during the reporting period. The field reports do not currently cover the Gaza Strip.

The Human Rights Situation since the Outbreak of the Second *Intifada*

The human rights violations committed during the reporting period must be analysed in the broader context of the deteriorating general human rights situation since the outbreak of the second *intifada* on 29 September 2000, and Israel's persistent failure to apply international human rights and humanitarian law in the OPT.

According to Al-Haq's documentation, from the outbreak of the second *intifada* until the end of June 2007, Israeli forces killed 1,772 Palestinians in the West Bank, 338 of whom were children, and 71 of whom were women. It is estimated that 292 Palestinians were killed in the course of targeted assassination operations. During the same period, Al-Haq documented the demolition, for punitive reasons, of 528 homes in the West Bank (whereof 488 were totally demolished and 40 were partially demolished), leading to the displacement of 3,209 people. Israel has also carried out a large number of administrative house demolitions on the pretext that the houses were built without the required licence. Since the beginning of 2004, 484 houses have been demolished for lack of licence, 211 of which were in East Jerusalem.

Since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, the Occupying Power has almost completely eliminated the already limited authority of the PNA in the OPT. Israel's destruction of ministerial buildings, arrests of PNA officials and unlawful withholding of PNA tax revenues, have rendered the PNA unable to pay the full salaries of its civil servants and carry out its basic functions. These factors have exacerbated the PNA's inability to uphold law and order in the OPT.

The Human Rights Situation from April to June 2007

Highlighted Trend: Wilful Killings

Al-Haq's fieldworkers documented numerous incidents of wilful killings of Palestinians by Israeli occupying forces during the reporting period, particularly in the northern West Bank. While a number of the killings occurred during exchanges of gunfire between Israeli occupying forces and Palestinian gunmen, most instances of wilful killing occurred in the total absence of armed clashes. In one incident, Israeli occupying forces opened fire on a group of unarmed Palestinian youths who were catching birds near their village of Taffouh in Hebron Governorate, killing a 17-year-old child in the process (see Al-Haq Affidavits 3606/2007 and 3614/2007).

"Two soldiers pointed their rifles at the taxi and shouted in Arabic, "Stop. Nobody move. Lift your hands." I saw three civilians in the taxi. The distance between the Israeli soldiers and the taxi was only five metres. Then, I saw the taxi driver open the door and step out of the taxi, lifting his hands in the air. He got out of the taxi slowly without making any sudden or suspicious movements. The Israeli soldiers shouted at the driver to lie down on the ground. As soon as he had lain down on the ground, and without prior notice, the Israeli soldiers opened fire on him."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3503/2007

Given by Khaled 'Izat Nazzal (resident of al-Shuhada village, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

A large number of killings, including targeted assassinations, were carried out by Israeli undercover units (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3607/2007). In one particularly disturbing incident, on 17 April 2007, an unarmed 25-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by an Israeli undercover unit that stopped the car he was driving. According to eye-witnesses, as soon as the man had got out of the car and lain down on the ground as ordered, members of the undercover unit, without any warning or justification, opened fire on him from close range (see Al-Haq Affidavits 3503/2007, 3504/2007 and 3505/2007). In another incident, on 21 April 2007, three Palestinian men were shot dead in Jenin city, when an Israeli undercover unit opened fire at the car they were travelling in. The members of the undercover unit made no attempt to arrest and detain the men, but instead opened fire on their vehicle without providing any warning (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3510/2007).

"Suddenly, at exactly this moment, and without any warning, people sitting inside the two parked cars started shooting intensively at the small white car. This happened very quickly, and there was heavy shooting for at least three to five minutes. Then, I saw several people – I was unable to determine their exact number, but they were more than five – get out of the two parked cars while still shooting at the small white car. They were carrying guns and were wearing black shirts, blue jeans, and hats."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3510/2007

Given by Fatima Ibrahim Hindawi (resident of Jabal Abu-Thuheir village, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

There were continued instances of Palestinians being killed by Israeli occupying forces in the course of search and arrest raids. On 6 June 2007, an unarmed 72-year-old Palestinian man was shot dead in his home by an Israeli soldier while attempting to protect his son, who was being physically assaulted by soldiers (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3600/2007). On 21 April 2007, a 17-year-old Palestinian girl, Bushra Naji Barjis, was shot in the head and killed by an Israeli sniper while studying for exams in her house. The Israeli forces called upon the family members to leave their house only after Bushra had been shot (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3511/2007).

The Occupying Power

"At this moment, I saw my father approaching us and I heard him asking what was going on. He took hold of one of the soldiers and dragged him away from me. As a result, the soldier turned towards my father. He put his gun a few centimetres away from my father's head and then shot him, after which my father fell to the ground. I screamed and tried to get up, but I was surrounded by four soldiers. A few seconds later, my mother came out of the house. I heard her screaming very loudly, but the soldiers who were beating me shot at her and she also fell to the ground."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3600/2007

Given by Rajeh Yihiya al-Ja'bari (resident of Hebron city, Hebron Governorate, West Bank)

Movement restrictions, in the form of checkpoints and various types of roadblocks, remained one of the most widespread forms of human rights violation. Palestinian access to the Jordan Valley, which constitutes about one quarter of the land area of the West Bank, continued to be controlled through four Israeli checkpoints – Tayasir, Hamra, Ma'ale Efraim and Yitav. At two of the checkpoints, Ma'ale Efraim and Yitav, only Palestinians who possessed special permits to work inside Israeli settlements in the

“When I tried to prevent the soldier from beating my husband, he hit me in the stomach with the butt of his gun. I was very scared of being hit because of my pregnancy. Then, a female soldier came and took me away, while the other soldier continued beating my husband who collapsed. I was screaming, but the female soldier prevented me from reaching him. My son was also screaming; he was very scared and turned pale.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3524/2007

Given by Hiba Muhammad Abu-Ra'iyya (resident of Hebron city, Hebron Governorate, West Bank)

Jordan Valley could pass. In late April, the Occupying Power announced that non-residents of the Jordan Valley no longer required special permits in order to pass through Tayasir and Hamra checkpoints. According to the new regulations, however, non-residents would not be permitted to enter the Jordan Valley in Palestinian licenced private vehicles; rather, they would only be able to do so by means of public transportation. Despite the formal easing of restrictions, access to the Jordan Valley through Tayasir and Hamra checkpoints

continued to be denied to Palestinians who are not registered residents therein. Movement restrictions were also particularly severe in the northern West Bank, as well as in and around East Jerusalem, which is cut off from the rest of the West Bank. These restrictions greatly hindered Palestinians' access to family, education, health, places of employment or worship, agricultural lands and markets.

The manned checkpoints located throughout the West Bank not only prevent Palestinians from moving

“I spoke to them in Hebrew and said, “I want to go to Kufr Ra'i in order to transfer a sick child to the hospital.” I showed them my personal ID as well as my work ID, which states that I am a paramedic. This had no effect on the soldiers, who shouted, “No one is allowed to pass through here!” The soldiers then started to swear at me. All of the conversation with the soldiers was in Hebrew. Afterwards, one of the soldiers opened the door on my side of the ambulance, grabbed my left hand and started to drag me out of the ambulance. At the same time, another soldier began beating me with the butt of his gun.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3449 /2007

Given by Firas Mustafa Ahmad (resident of 'Arraba village, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

freely, but they also constitute a recurrent setting for **ill-treatment**. Al-Haq received new reports of Palestinians being subjected to delays, abuse and humiliating treatment by Israeli forces at checkpoints. At the Ibrahim checkpoint in Hebron city, a Palestinian man escorting his wife to hospital was viciously attacked for no apparent reason by Israeli soldiers manning the checkpoint (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3524/2007). There were also a number of cases of ambulances being delayed at checkpoints, and of

ambulance personnel being verbally and physically abused by soldiers (see Al-Haq Affidavits 3449/2007, 3450/2007 and 3492/2007).

Harassment, humiliation and beatings

continued to be endured by Palestinians at the hands of Israeli forces. The motivation behind many of these incidents was generally hard to identify, with most of them appearing to be purely gratuitous (see Al-Haq Affidavits 3534/2007 and 3558/2007). In May, Israeli forces conducted a number of training exercises in Salfit Governorate, which involved occupying private Palestinian homes for several hours (see Al-Haq Affidavits 3575/2007 and 3598/2007).

“At approximately 11:00 am, the soldiers returned the identity cards to all the drivers except for me. When the other drivers had left the area, the two soldiers started punching and kicking me. One of them grabbed my head and hit it against the military jeep. I felt dizzy and collapsed on the ground, but the soldiers continued beating me. One of them grabbed my clothes, pulled me up and hit me. Then, a third soldier who was in the jeep joined in the beating.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3558/2007

Given by Mousa 'Abed Jaradat (resident of Sa'ir village, Hebron Governorate, West Bank)

There were continued incidents of Israeli **settler**

violence against Palestinians, including children and the elderly, in the West Bank, particularly in Hebron Governorate. In many cases, Palestinian farmers working on their land in the vicinity of settlements were attacked and beaten by settlers, or prevented from accessing their land. A large number of incidents involved deliberate damage of Palestinian property, including homes, vehicles, livestock and crops (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3647/2007). Despite Israel's obligation to protect the life, property and rights of the occupied Palestinian population, Israeli forces continually turned a blind eye to settler violence. On 9 June 2007, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy was attacked and injured by a group of Israeli settlers in Hebron city. When an ambulance belonging to the Palestine Red Crescent Society attempted to reach the boy, it too was attacked by the settlers, despite the presence of Israeli forces nearby (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3623/2007). Investigation of such incidents by the Occupying Power remained insufficient to a degree that amounted to systematic refusal to prevent or punish criminal behaviour, thereby effectively encouraging it.

"These residents informed me that a number of settlers were burning my wheat harvest. I immediately told my children what I had heard and we went to our land. 200 to 300 metres before reaching our land, I sat down on the ground and watched our harvest being burned, having asked my children not to approach our land in order to avoid being attacked by settlers. We stayed there for 20 minutes and watched all of our harvest being burned without being able to do anything. From our location, we were also able to see the settlers withdrawing from our land and heading south towards the settlement that was established on the mountain."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3647/2007

Given by Rasmiyya Fares Shtayya (resident of Tel village, Nablus Governorate, West Bank)

House demolitions continued to be carried out throughout the West Bank, either on the pretext of being built without permits (administrative house demolitions), or as part of Israeli raids. In a number of cases, buildings in which "wanted" Palestinians were believed to be present were demolished when the persons in question did not heed requests to exit the building and turn themselves in (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3553/2007). In many cases punitive house demolitions failed to fulfil the principles of necessity and proportionality, and often amounted to collective punishment, which under international law, is prohibited at all times.

Israeli forces raided a number of charitable organisations, as well as local television and radio stations, throughout the West Bank, often confiscating computers and/or files in the process. In some cases, these raids were accompanied by **property destruction** and/or the forced closure of the organisation. There were also numerous raids on residential houses involving destruction of property (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3567/2007). During an Israeli military operation in Nablus, on 2 June 2007, Israeli forces damaged dozens of homes and shops, the electricity grid, the water network and the sewage system.

Throughout the West Bank, there was continued **land confiscation and/or destruction** in order either to expand or enclose existing illegal Israeli settlements or build Israeli infrastructure, most notably the illegal Annexation Wall. When completed, the length of the Wall (722 km) will be more than twice the length of the Green Line (315 km) – the 1949 Armistice Line separating Israel and the West Bank – as it cuts deep into the West Bank in several locations. There was also creeping confiscation of land in the areas between the Green Line and the Wall, where severe movement restrictions continued to result in the inability of Palestinian land owners to farm their land (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3578/2007).

"[The Israeli Captain] claimed that if Nidal did not turn himself in, they would come to our house every week and cause much more substantial damage. The soldiers withdrew at 2:30 am. When we went outside, we found that the soldiers had demolished the garden's wall, which was two metres high and five metres long. The shooting had also started a fire in our garden. When I went into the house, I saw that all the glass was broken from the shooting, that the furniture had been destroyed and that the doors were broken. I also found traces of missiles and bullets. The damage to our property is estimated at 50,000 NIS."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3567/2007

Given by Munther 'Oda Malash (resident of al-Doha village, Bethlehem Governorate, West Bank)

Israeli occupying forces continued to carry out **mass arrests**, usually at night, throughout the West Bank, particularly in Nablus, Jenin and Hebron Governorates. During the reporting period, an average of over 80 Palestinians were arrested every week. Regularly, those arrested were subjected to psychological and/or physical ill-treatment, in some cases amounting to **torture** (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3603/2007).

The severe reduction in the PNA's financial resources, caused by Israel's withholding of more than half a billion USD in tax revenues and the cessation of aid to the PNA by major international donors, severely limited Palestinians' access to **food, health and education**. Although all basic food commodities were available in the West Bank, people were increasingly obliged to purchase food on credit and in smaller quantities. In response to the non-payment of their salaries, health care workers in the West Bank continued their comprehensive strike; this latest strike was suspended on 29 May 2007. During the strike, public primary health care centres were closed and hospitals only treated emergency life-threatening cases. Due to widespread poverty, patients were increasingly unable to pay for laboratory tests or prescribed medications. Schools were affected by the continued industrial action in the public education sector, while university students suspended their studies as a result of being unable to pay their fees.

Al-Haq's work, like that of other human rights organisations working in and on the OPT, has suffered from restrictions placed on **human rights defenders**. Since October 2006, the Israeli authorities have refused to grant Al-Haq's General Director, Shawan Jabarin, permission to travel abroad. This has severely hindered his right to freedom of movement, and disrupted his professional duties and activities for Al-Haq. On 20 June 2007, the Israeli High Court of Justice upheld Mr. Jabarin's travel ban on the basis of secret evidence, thereby preventing him from attending an international conference on peace and justice, in Germany. Such restrictions severely impede the work of human rights defenders and jeopardise their ability to satisfactorily carry out their mission of defending human rights in the OPT.

"I heard steps in the room and immediately I was punched and kicked all over my body, including my abdomen, head, back and sexual organs. Every part of my body hurt and when I felt that I was about to faint, I heard the interrogator telling me to take a pen. He held my hand and said that if I signed this paper I would be able to go home. Then, the interrogator and the other person started beating my whole body again, using different techniques. When I started feeling very dizzy and could not tolerate any more beatings or insults, I signed the paper that they had previously asked me to sign."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3603/2007

Given by 'Abdallah 'Umar 'Leiyyan (resident of Abu-Dis, Jerusalem Governorate, West Bank)

The Palestinian National Authority¹

Al-Haq also monitors the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) respect for international human rights standards in the OPT. To the extent that the PNA exercises some control over parts of the OPT, it is responsible for enforcing the law through effective and lawful measures.

Over the reporting period, there were numerous cases of injuries or **killings** (see Al-Haq Affidavit 3619/2007). The problems were most acute during June, and in many cases appear to have been the result of clashes between Fateh and Hamas supporters throughout the West Bank. Overall the situation was worst in Nablus, where armed militants, often from the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, opened fire on Palestinians on several occasions. On 26 May 2007, a 25-year-old Palestinian man, Maher Salim Jouri, was abducted in Nablus city by Palestinian militants who claimed that he was a collaborator with the Occupying Power. He was held until 16 June 2007, when a number of Palestinian militants brought him to the main square in Nablus city, where they shot him in the legs several times before leaving him. Maher was then transferred by ambulance to hospital, where he was treated and brought for an X-ray. While he was in the X-ray room, masked men broke into the room and shot him numerous times, killing him. In another incident, at 10:00 pm, on 14 June 2007, Anis al-Sal'ous was kidnapped by a number of armed members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades after leaving a mosque in the al-Masakin al-Sha'biyya neighbourhood in Nablus city. Approximately 15 minutes later, his bullet-ridden corpse was discovered a few hundred metres away from where he had been kidnapped. The killing was allegedly carried out in response to the killing of Sami al-Madhoun, a senior member of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, by Hamas supporters in the Gaza Strip.

There were numerous cases of **property destruction** against both public and private property, especially in the northern West Bank. In several instances, gunmen opened fire towards private residences, public buildings, police stations and government offices. On 12 June 2007, PNA security forces in Ramallah raided a Hamas-affiliated TV station, confiscating broadcasting equipment in the process. On 16 June 2007, armed Fateh supporters stormed the Palestinian Parliament building in Ramallah, and ransacked the Ministry of Education. A joint report by Al-Haq and Al-Mezan detailing attacks by Palestinian groups on civil society and charitable organisations in the West Bank can be accessed at www.alhaq.org.

During June 2007, PNA security forces arrested over 200 Palestinians throughout the West Bank, most of whom were reportedly affiliated with Hamas. A number of those arrested complained of being subjected to ill-treatment while in detention. In addition, there were a large number of incidents involving the **kidnapping** of Palestinians. On 12 June 2007, gunmen kidnapped the deputy Minister of Transportation, Faidi Shabana, from his office at the Ministry building in Ramallah.

Following the declaration of a state of emergency in the OPT on 14 June 2007, President Mahmoud Abbas issued a string of presidential decrees, a number of which amounted to an unlawful erosion of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to the Palestinian population by both domestic and international law.

"The PNA security forces stood directly in front of us, less than seven metres away, and pointed their guns at our jeep. I started to scream, "They will kill us now," and waved my hands, asking them not to shoot us. I felt that we were facing extreme danger and therefore opened the door and got out of the jeep with my hands raised towards the members of the PNA security forces. Again I told them not to shoot at us. Then, Muhammad got out of the jeep carrying the hand-made bomb, and threatened to throw it at the security forces if they approached him or his brother. Ra'ed asked his brother Muhammad to ready the bomb. Muhammad moved towards Rae'd, who had also stepped out of the jeep. When Muhammad came over to Ra'ed, and without warning, the security forces started to shoot directly at the jeep and both brothers."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3619/2007

Given by Muhammad Mahmoud Daraghma (resident of Toubas, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

¹ Due to the reluctance of many Palestinians to provide affidavits relating to intra-Palestinian violence, the information in this section of the Monitoring and Documentation Report is primarily based on reports drafted by Al-Haq's specially trained fieldworkers.



**MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT
APRIL – JUNE 2007
STATISTICS**

KILLINGS BY THE OCCUPYING POWER

Total number of killings	28
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Special Types of Killings

Death in custody	9
Targeted assassination	6
Assassination in custody	3
Death at checkpoints	3

Special Types of Victims

Women	-
Children	3

Killings by District

Bethlehem	-
Hebron	3
Jenin	13
Jericho	1
Jerusalem	2
Nablus	4
Ramallah	2
Toulkarem	2
Israel	1

Killings by Age Group

Under 13	-
13-17	3
18-25	15
26-35	8
36-50	1
Over 50	1

Killing by Perpetrator

Israeli Occupying Forces	
- Soldiers	18
- Special undercover units	7
- Snipers	-
Israeli Border Guards	1
Israeli Policemen	-
General Security Services	-
Settlers	-
Armed Israeli civilians	-
Collaborators	-
Others	2

Situation During Killing

Normal/calm	11
Incursion	-
Demonstration and stone-throwing	-
Armed clashes	5
Shelling	-
Closed military area	-
Bystanders killed during attempted assassination	-
Unclear	-
Curfew	-
Raid	12

Methods of Killing

Live bullet	16
Fragmented bullet	11
Rubber-coated metal bullet	-
Explosives and small missiles	-
Shrapnel	-
Mine	-
Tear gas	-
Blunt instrument	-
Sharp instrument	-
Missile	-
Medical Obstruction	-
Others	1

HOUSE DEMOLITIONS BY DISTRICT

Punitive House Demolitions

Bethlehem	2
Hebron	-
Jenin	-
Jericho	-
Jerusalem	-
Nablus	-
Ramallah	-
Toulkarem	3

House Demolitions for Lack of Licence

Bethlehem	-
Hebron	8
Jenin	-
Jericho	-
Jerusalem	14
Nablus	-
Ramallah	-
Toulkarem	-

CURFEWS BY DISTRICT

District	Hours
Bethlehem	-
Jenin	1
Nablus	51
Toulkarem	-
Jerusalem	-
Ramallah	-
Hebron	-
Jericho	-