



Protection Cluster
Occupied Palestinian Territory

Protection Cluster Monthly Update

February 2015

Highlights from the Protection Cluster Working Group

Protection Concerns

Gaza

- On 7 February, a 31 year old man was pronounced dead as a result of wounds sustained from an Israeli airstrike on 3 August 2014 at the entrance of UNRWA Rafah Preparatory School (A) for boys in al-Shaboura refugee camp in Rafah. At the time of the airstrike, the school was being used as a shelter for families displaced by the July-August 2014 hostilities.
- One ERW-related accident was reported in February: three boys sustained serious shrapnel injuries while tampering with an automatic cannon ammunition round which exploded. This brings the total number of victims of ERW since the 2014 ceasefire to 49. As rubble removal and reconstruction efforts intensify, the probability of an ERW accident increases: this highlights the importance of ERW risk education.
- During February, Israeli forces carried out one land-levelling incursion in the ARA and continued to shoot at Palestinians in the ARA both on land and at sea (see the ARA section).
- 26 February marked six months since the ceasefire agreement that put an end to the July-August 2014 escalation of hostilities. Approximately 10,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in 14 UNRWA collective centres. Tens of thousands of others have been forced to live in crowded conditions with host families, in damaged houses, or in pre-fabricated or temporary structures due to their homes being seriously damaged or destroyed. Reconstruction remains extremely slow: with the current rate of construction materials entering Gaza, [Oxfam](#) estimates that it would take 100 years to complete essential building of homes, schools and health facilities.
- Rafah crossing was completely closed throughout February. On 16 February, the Palestinian Civil Affairs Committee announced measures intended to ease Israeli-imposed travel restrictions on Palestinian residents of Gaza via Erez crossing. These included an increase in the number of patients and merchants exiting Gaza daily, an increase in the monthly quota of merchants' permits, an approval of the sale of vegetables from Gaza in Israel. In particular, 50 Gaza students were meant to get permits to study in the West Bank for the first time since 2000: however, two days after the announcement was made, the Coordinator of Israel Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) contacted Gisha claiming there had been a "[clerical error](#)" and stated that no permits would be issued for the 50 students. Despite Israel's declaration of an easing of restrictions for Palestinians exiting Gaza via Erez crossing, current activity at the crossing remains insufficient to meet the needs of the Gaza population, severely impacting upon their enjoyment of a range of human rights.

West Bank

- On 24 February, a 19 year old Palestinian man was killed by Israeli forces during an early morning raid in Ad Duheisha refugee camp in the south West Bank.
- During February, 158 Palestinians, including 30 children and 2 women, were injured by Israeli forces. Of these, 82 (52%) were reported injured during demonstrations and another 36 (23%) injured during military operations.
- OHCHR documented a number of cases of arrest of minors in which there were allegations of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment. These cases continue to be a source of concern, particularly in and around the Hebron area.
- During February, Israeli authorities demolished 13 Palestinian homes and livelihood structures, including four residential

structures, allegedly due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits. 11 structures were located in Area C (including donor-funded structures), and 2 structures were located in East Jerusalem. No displacement was reported.

Updates from Protection Cluster Sub-Groups

Child Protection Working Group

- In February, the CPWG in Gaza continued the preparation of capacity building activities, in particular a training on case management for social workers and case managers in the Ministry of Social Affairs' Child Protection Network and Family Centers (to be held on 15-19 March). The purpose of the training is to make the case management model operational by the end of March, in order to enable a structured, case tailored approach to supporting vulnerable children and families over a period of time. The CPWG also worked on the preparation of a contingency planning workshop for March, which will be integrated into the broader Protection Cluster Contingency Plan.
- The 23 Family Centers in Gaza continued to provide child protection services, psychosocial assessment, ERW risk education and outreach to vulnerable children and their families. Child protection services have been provided to 55,506 children (49,193 girls and 23,933 boys) and 10,507 caregivers (8,347 females and 2,160 males).
- In response to the overflowing of Wadi Gaza, which runs east-west across the Middle Area of the Gaza Strip, and the flooding of large areas on both banks, UNICEF provided children's clothing, blankets, and adult and baby hygiene kits to the affected families within 24 hours, through the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in coordination with the Shelter Cluster and MOSA.

Working Group on Grave Violations against Children

- The WGGV prepared the draft inputs for the Secretary-General's Annual Report to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict for the period of January to December 2014. The inputs were submitted by the UN Resident Coordinator. The latest update on the total number of incidents documented in 2014 was 2,831, affecting 528,687 children. A total of 557 Palestinian children were killed and 4,249 injured. In Gaza, 544 Palestinian children (201 girls and 343 boys) were killed and 3,031 (1,029 girls and 2,002 boys) were injured or maimed. In the West Bank, 13 Palestinian boys, aged between 11 and 17 years, were killed, including two in East Jerusalem. 1,218 Palestinian children (1,167 boys and 51 girls) aged between 17 days and 17 years, were injured in the West Bank. 716 incidents of attacks against schools were documented (543 in Gaza, 173 in the West Bank).
- On 13 February, UNICEF released its [second bulletin](#) on children in Israeli military detention in follow up to the [2013 paper](#) on this issue, which outlined practical measures to improve the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military custody, from the arrest, to court proceedings and outcomes.
- Technical support was provided to EAPPI for the establishment of an information management system to analyse and share data concerning violations documented by EAPPI field workers. The development of the management system was completed and it is now in the testing phase until the end of March 2015 and it will start being implemented in April 2015.

MHPSS Working Group (Gaza)

- The CPWG and MHPSS Working Group have been working through 60 local NGOs to reach a total of 77,101 children with child protection and structured psychosocial support services since July 2014. This includes 13,255 children who benefitted from individual counseling and case management services and

63,846 children who benefited from structured group activities. In addition, 12,082 adults were reached with structured psychosocial activities and counselling, and caregivers of children attending the child friendly spaces and family centres were also targeted through awareness-raising sessions on child protection and ways to support the psychosocial development of their children. Children were also reached through open days, group recreational and psychosocial first aid activities.

Legal Task Force (West Bank)

- In early February, Israeli forces closed the entrance of Al-Ram as punishment for stone throwing in the area: the entrance was reopened later in the month as a result of St Yves' legal intervention. There has been a recent trend of punishing locals in the area by inflicting major delays at checkpoints like Qalandia and Jaba'a as well as mobile checkpoints.
- The State of Israel asked for a 45-day extension to respond to Adv. Shlomo Lecker's petition challenging the consultation process for the Nuweima plan. Pending the response, a planning freeze for Nuweima is in place, which means that the planning process, including the hearing of objections, is at a stand-still at least until 18 March 2015. However, this suspension will not halt pressure on the communities at risk of forcible transfer in Area C through demolitions and/or issuances of eviction, trespassing and demolition orders.
- On 12 January, the Israeli Military Commander issued "Eviction of Trespassers" military orders to 15 Bedouin households residing in the Wadi Qelt Kaabneh community in Jericho, giving them 48 hours to comply. The community's lawyer filed an objection with the Israeli Civil Administration, confirming that the order will not be executed until the objections have been considered. Although the ICA has still not provided its response, on 4 February, the ICA issued 15 stop work orders against the same buildings. It would thus appear that the objections were successful in arguing that the trespass orders were inappropriately used to circumvent the (limited) procedural safeguards for demolitions.
- On 15 February, the Jerusalem District Court held a hearing regarding the ownership cases submitted by the Hammad and Sabbagh families from Sheikh Jarrah against the Nahalat Shimon Company and the Israeli Land Registrar. The judge heard the main arguments raised by both parties, and scheduled another hearing for additional testimonies relevant to the dismissal request. The follow-up session is scheduled for 12 May where the decision whether to dismiss the ownership case could be made.
- The Israeli government issued tenders for the construction of 450 units in West Bank settlements, half of them east of the route of the barrier. In addition, a plan for the construction of 93 housing units in southern Gilo was deposited for public review in East Jerusalem. Most of the units were proposed in bids in the past but were never sold for contractors. The government is now trying again to sell those units and promote their construction.

Access Restricted Areas (ARA) Core Group

- During February, a 21 year old Palestinian man was injured and arrested by Israeli forces in the ARA on land. According to Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, the man was picking lemons from a farm around 300 metres from the fence. Four Palestinians, including one child, were arrested by Israeli forces after crossing the fence into Israel.
- Israeli Naval Forces continued using live fire to restrict access of fishermen to fishing areas beyond the imposed 6NM limit. While no arrests or cases of detention of fishermen were reported during February, shooting resulted in damage and/or loss of fishing nets.

Settler Violence Core Group

- In February, OCHA registered 16 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians: 10 incidents of property damage resulting in the damage of 1,038 Palestinian-owned trees and one

Palestinian-owned vehicle; and 6 incidents resulting in the injury of 7 Palestinians, including one child. Another 27 incidents affecting Israelis were recorded: 25 incidents of property damage resulting in the damage of 15 Israeli-owned vehicles; and 2 incidents resulting in the injury of 2 Israeli settlers.

- At the SVCG meeting on 3 February, Emek Shaveh briefed on its report, "[Tel Shiloh \(Khirbet Seilun\) Archaeological Settlement in the Political Struggle over Samaria](#)", that addresses the use of the archaeological sites to legitimise settlement expansion. Members discussed the next steps and action points related to issues faced by the villages surrounding Shilo settlement: a joint advocacy field visit to Qaryut is planned by PU-AMI, MDM, JLAC, Yesh Din, Emek Shaveh, OCHA and OHCHR in the first half of 2015.

Advocacy Initiatives

Reports, outputs and events by PCWG members

- On 26 February, to mark six months since the ceasefire on 26 August 2014 that ended the escalation of hostilities in Gaza, 30 UN agencies and international NGOs released a joint statement, titled "[We must not fail in Gaza](#)", coordinated through the HCT AWG as part of the Interim Strategy on Gaza. The agencies expressed alarm at the limited progress in rebuilding the lives of those affected and tackling the root causes of the conflict. In addition, OXFAM issued a statement, [Vital building in conflict damaged Gaza to take more than a century at current rate](#); NRC issued a statement, [Reconstruction has yet to begin, despair reigns](#); and the ICRC issued a statement, [Gaza: Six months on, aid and reconstruction efforts struggle to make headway](#).
- Gisha issued a report, [A costly divide: Economic repercussions of separating Gaza and the West Bank](#).
- On 5 February, UNFPA and CFTA launched the GBV Sub-Working Group assessment of the conditions and rights of girls and women displaced during the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in July and August 2014, "[Protection in the Windward](#)".
- The Jahalin Association conducted advocacy activities in Ireland, including attending a photo exhibition featuring photographs of Jahalin Bedouin facing displacement, a briefing for two independent parliamentarians and three local councillors, and media engagement. The films, *Nowhere Left to Go* and *High Hopes* were screened in London. Middle East Eye published an [article](#) about the planned forcible transfer of Bedouins.
- On 24 February, PU-AMI and MDM-France organized a conference titled "Community Eyes Watch: Objectives, Mechanism & Challenges" to present the results of their two-years project focusing on the implementation of a community based early warning system against protection threats. 75 participants from different local and international NGOs, donors, UN agencies, PA and village councils attended.

Key Dates for March 2015

Gaza:

- PCWG – 24 March @ OHCHR Gaza
- CPWG – 23 March @ UNICEF Gaza
- ERW coordination mtg (every 2nd Monday) @ UNMAS Gaza

West Bank:

- PCWG – 25 March @ OHCHR Ramallah
- SVCG – 3 March @ OHCHR Ramallah
- LTF – 16 March @ NRC Jerusalem
- WGGV – 19 March @ OHCHR Ramallah

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