

**Weekly Focus:**  
**Taxi driver assaulted by Israeli soldiers**  
**29 August – 4 September**

07/09/2011  
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**Background**

Physical assault and provocation by Israeli soldiers manning checkpoints are daily forms of intimidation applied without apparent justification against Palestinians travelling within the West Bank or in areas outside of the Green Line. Last week, Israeli soldiers assaulted six Palestinians at four checkpoints, three in the Ramallah governorate and one in the Bethlehem governorate. Four of the victims required hospital treatment. This is the account of one of those violent attacks.

**The story**

At around 11:00 pm on 1 September, 'Ali Hamed Shalash, a 23-year-old taxi driver from Shuqba (Ramallah governorate), was driving out of the village when he noticed four Israeli soldiers positioned near the western entrance of the village. This was not unusual as soldiers often man a flying checkpoint in that area.

A little further down the road 'Ali was forced to stop when a military jeep, containing more soldiers, skidded to a halt in front of him, blocking the road. The four soldiers 'Ali had seen earlier approached his car from behind and began aggressively hitting the doors with their rifle butts. Two of the soldiers opened the doors and grabbed 'Ali. They beat him with their hands and rifles butts, mainly hitting his head and waist.

After about five minutes the beatings stopped and one of the soldiers sprayed pepper spray at 'Ali's face and onto the back seats of his car. The spray made it difficult for 'Ali to breathe and he felt like he was suffocating. It burned his eyes and made him dizzy.

When the soldiers left the scene, 'Ali got out of his car and lay on the ground unable to move any further. He used his mobile phone to contact his father who came after a short while, and took him to the hospital. 'Ali was in a state of shock with his whole body trembling. The attack left him with considerable bruising and a severe pain in his left ear, which lasted for three days.

'Ali was later informed that two other men from Shuqba had also been violently assaulted by the same soldiers only half an hour before. 'Ali filed a complaint at the Palestinian Coordination Office, but as yet there has been no action on his case. 'Ali is now afraid to leave the village at night, restricting his work as a taxi driver. (See Al-Haq Affidavit 6590/2011).