



MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT APRIL – JUNE 2006 FIELD REPORT

Introduction

This is the second quarterly field report of 2006 by Al-Haq's Monitoring and Documentation Department, covering the period from April to June 2006. 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.

Israel has occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, together constituting the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), since June 1967, 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 violations committed by the Occupying Power. However, following the creation of the PNA in 1994, Al-Haq also monitors and documents human rights 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, curfews, and deportations. 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. All affidavits excerpted or referenced in field reports can be found on Al-Haq's web site. The field reports do not cover the Gaza Strip, since Al-Haq has no fieldworkers there.

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 2006, 1,635 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, 313 of whom were children, and 90 of whom were women and female children. It is estimated that 257 Palestinians were killed in targeted assassinations. During the same period, Al-Haq documented the demolition, for punitive reasons, of 470 homes in the West Bank (whereof 444 were totally demolished and 26 were partially demolished), leading to the displacement of 3,330 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 2004, 369 houses have been demolished for lack of licence, 163 of which were in East Jerusalem.

Since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, the Occupying Power has nearly eliminated the already limited authority of the PNA in the OPT. After the establishment of the new Palestinian government in March 2006, Israel's withholding of PNA tax revenues, arrests and revocations of ID of PNA officials and destruction of ministerial buildings, as well as major international donors' cessation of aid to the PNA, have rendered the Authority unable to pay the salaries of its civil servants and carry out its basic functions. These factors have aggravated the PNA's inability to uphold law and order in the OPT.

The Human Rights Situation from April to June 2006

Highlighted trend: diminishing access to food, medicine and healthcare

The severe reduction in the PNA's financial resources, caused by Israel's withholding of PNA tax revenues and the cessation of aid by major international donors, has further limited the access of the Palestinian population to health services, medicine and sufficient food, among other things. Although the Gaza Strip suffers the most from this new trend, the effects have also been strongly felt in the West Bank.

"I have not received a salary for three months and I do not have an alternative or any other means of living. Since I stopped receiving my salary, we have been living on bread and oil. Fruit and meat are not to be found in our home. I begin to cry when one of my children asks me for a shekel to buy something and I cannot even afford that shekel. The little children start to shout and I do not blame them because they do not know that I do not have that shekel."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3007/2006

Given by Zuhdi Rashed Mousa (resident of Marda village, Salfit Governorate, West Bank)

The grave economic situation has increased unemployment and poverty levels, decreased financial assistance to destitute families, and made it hard for some people to afford **food** of sufficient quality and quantity, particularly those relying on income from the PNA. Zuhdi Rashed Mousa, a civil servant, struggles to provide enough food for his family.

Stocks of **medicine** have been depleted and a number of essential drugs have become unavailable. Amani Muhammad Mahmoud's children suffer from haemophilia and the PNA is no longer able to provide the necessary medicine, which led to her son Ahmad becoming disabled.

"My son Ahmad received a blow on his left ankle several days ago. I took him to the hospital as usual and asked the doctor to give him an injection to stop the internal bleeding in the location of the injury. To my surprise, the doctor told me that the medicine was not available in the hospital. Because my son did not receive the medicine, the cartilage in his ankle was damaged and he is now disabled."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2951/2006

Given by Amani Muhammad Mahmoud (resident of Toulkarem, Toulkarem Governorate, West Bank)

Public hospitals and **health** clinics suffer from a lack of funds, medicine and equipment maintenance, as well as from growing absenteeism. Staff not receiving their salaries are unable to pay for the commute to work and are obliged, to the extent possible, to provide for themselves and their families through other means. As a result, hospitals and health clinics work below full capacity and are cutting

down on their services. Moreover, many people are no longer benefiting from health insurance and/or are forced to rely on pharmacies being willing and able to extend credit. 'Ali Ahmad Hijawi, who suffers from multiple sclerosis, is now obliged to buy the medicine he needs on credit from a pharmacy.

"The pharmaceutical companies have stopped supplying the Palestinian Authority with medicines because of the debts it has accumulated. The situation has been complicated by the financial siege imposed on the government – and on the Palestinian people – by the United States and the European Union because of Hamas winning the second legislative elections on 25 January 2006. This siege has deeply affected me, as it has many other patients and sick people. Since March 2006, I have been buying medicine on credit from the pharmacy which I go to. I am 40,000 shekels in debt so far. I cannot stop taking the medication and it costs me US\$1,200 a month."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2958/2006

Given by 'Ali Ahmad Hijawi (resident of Nablus, Nablus Governorate, West Bank)

The Occupying Power

Movement restrictions on Palestinians remained widespread. Checkpoints and various forms of road blocks prevented Palestinians from moving freely within the West Bank. Movement restrictions were particularly severe in and out of the northern West Bank, Jordan Valley and the areas located between

“Since 5 April 2006, after the completion of 90% of the Wall in North Jerusalem and the opening of the so-called “Atarot crossing,” reaching my school has become very complicated. I cannot go through the 'Atarot crossing, as it is only for people who hold permits, so I can only go from Ramallah to Bir Nabala through the new Rafat road. From there, I sneak through 'Atarot buildings near Bir Nabala village. Whether or not this route works depends on what presence the Israeli army has there on a given day. Between 5 April 2006 and 6 May 2006, I have been absent from school six days. On each of these days, I came from Bir Nabala and reached the beginning of 'Atarot but because there was such heavy Israeli army presence there, I returned home.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2955/2006

Given by Mahmoud Khdeir al-Froukh (resident of Ramallah, Ramallah Governorate, West Bank)

the Green Line and the Annexation Wall (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3010/2006). The total closure of the West Bank in effect since 11 March was lifted on 8 May. In the southern West Bank, a one-metre high wall has been built along a previous planned route of the Wall.

Israel, which controls all access to the occupied West Bank, has begun to implement a new *de facto* policy of **denial of entry into the West Bank** of foreign passport holders, in particular Palestinian citizens of other states and foreign women married to Palestinians or working for Palestinian organisations. Al-Haq is aware of approximately 70-80 such cases. There could be many more,

as Israel has revoked the residency rights of thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank on the pretext of their having lived abroad for prolonged periods. These individuals now find themselves separated from their families and livelihoods. Previously, they had to leave, and return to, the West Bank at least every three months in order to renew their tourist visas. Today, a number of them are trapped in Jordan after repeated failed attempts to return to their homes in the West Bank (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3028/2006).

Closely linked with movement restrictions is **ill-treatment at checkpoints and gates in the Wall**. Delays, harassment and humiliation continued to be endured by Palestinians attempting to pass through checkpoints. The problems are illustrated by the case of al-Nu'man village, which is located south-east of Jerusalem, partially surrounded by the Annexation Wall, in an area that Israel has illegally annexed. Yet, the inhabitants of the village continue to hold West Bank ID. The only functioning road to the village is blocked by a checkpoint through which only registered residents of al-Nu'man are allowed to enter. Villagers attempting to bring gas canisters and food into the village have been repeatedly harassed at the checkpoint. Garbage trucks have also sometimes been denied entrance.

“I was returning [to al-Nu'man village] from Bethlehem in my own car in which I was carrying vegetables, fruit and a 60 kilogram sack of flour. As I arrived at the village gate, the soldiers who were positioned at the gate asked me to open the car boot. I did. The soldiers took all the vegetables and fruit and put them down on the ground and when I protested about what they were doing, they said they were doing it for security reasons. Then one of the soldiers poked his gun barrel in the flour sack in many places which resulted in the flour being scattered. This act aggravated me because I felt it was unnecessary for security as I was merely moving from one West Bank village to another. Moreover, entering al-Nu'man village did not mean in any way that I could reach Israel.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3010/2006

Given by Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Sitta al-Dir'awi (resident of al-Nu'man village, Bethlehem Governorate, West Bank)

There were several disturbing incidents of **beatings by soldiers**. A disabled man was forced out of his wheelchair, which was blown up; he was then forced to take off his clothes and beaten (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2998/2006). Another man was severely beaten for driving his car on a dirt road (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3024/2006). Tareq Badawi Ghneimat was detained, with other Palestinians, by Israeli soldiers while picking crops and beaten intermittently during almost twelve hours of detention to the point of repeatedly losing consciousness (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3082/2006).

There were new incidents of Israeli occupying forces using **excessive force** against Palestinians. On 24 May 2006, an Israeli arrest raid in central Ramallah resulted in the death of four and injury of over 30 Palestinians when Israeli military reinforcements opened fire on stone-throwing protesters. Many of the casualties occurred prior to the arrival of Palestinian gunmen (Al-Haq Affidavit 2967/2006).

In at least two particularly shocking cases of **wilful killing**, Israeli soldiers or members of Israeli special forces shot at short range, and immediately killed, wounded Palestinians who lay on the ground and did not constitute any threat. Wilful killings constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Such serious violations also constitute war crimes.

“Isma’il was injured and bleeding but still alive and was making sounds indicating that he was in pain. He was not armed and his only concern had been to rescue his brother. I saw the driver of the jeep, an ordinary army vehicle, get out and aim his pistol at Isma’il. The soldier was medium-sized, blonde, and wore a helmet on his head and a full military uniform. I was shocked when I saw the soldier start shooting at Isma’il from a distance of no more than five metres. He was shooting while walking toward Isma’il. He shot at least three bullets.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2985/2006

Given by Zahira Bilal Abu-al-Rub (resident of Qabatiya, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

There were new cases of **house demolitions**, some under the pretext of the absence of a building licence, others as part of military operations. Unlike traditional punitive house demolitions, these are not

“We have lost what we saved for over ten years. I used to deprive my children and myself of basic needs in order to save money and build that house. With the demolition of the house, the Israeli army destroyed all our dreams of living in our own house. The Israeli bulldozers killed all the sacrifices and hopes in less than half an hour as they levelled the house.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 3023/2006

Given by Radiyya ‘Abdallah Kifaya (resident of Tora al-Gharbiyya, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

carried out on the basis of military orders. Typically, if a wanted Palestinian is believed to be present inside a house, and does not heed requests to turn himself in, bulldozers begin to demolish the building. However, there have been cases in which demolition took place even after the wanted individuals turned themselves in. Finally, structures continued to be destroyed in or near the route of the Wall. Radiyya ‘Abdallah Kifaya’s family spent ten years building a house on their land, which is situated 200 metres from the Wall. When the house was almost finished, the Israeli army demolished it.

There were new cases of house occupations and **property destruction** carried out by Israeli soldiers. In

a typical example, Israeli soldiers fired at, raided and finally threw gas bombs inside Isma’il Yousef Tarayra’s house. When the worst smell of gas subsided, the family returned to find their house heavily damaged by bullets and 4,000 shekels missing from a cupboard (Al-Haq Affidavit 3001/2006).

Throughout the OPT, Israeli forces continued their policy of **land confiscation** and levelling in order to either expand existing illegal Israeli settlements, build Israeli army infrastructure or construct the Wall. There was also progressive confiscation of land in the areas between the Green Line and the Wall, where severe movement restrictions increasingly resulted in the inability to farm land. Ever since construction of the Wall was completed in the northern West Bank, Taysir Sa’id Khalil and his family have been unable to reach and cultivate their land on the other side of the Wall.

“After construction of the Wall was completed, I found that my land was located two kilometres west of the Wall. The Wall has swallowed two kilometres from the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 and was not constructed along the Green Line. At this point, my real suffering started. I became unable to reach my land just like many other ‘Anin citizens whose land was now located west of the Wall. I applied to obtain a permit that would allow me to pass through an iron gate (Gate No. 3), which the occupation army installed on the Separation Wall nearby ‘Anin, but the Israeli forces denied me a permit. They claimed that the denial was for security reasons without being more specific. I tried to obtain that permit several times so I could reach my land and take care of it, but to no avail. Since then, neither I nor my family members have once been able to reach our land.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2905/2006

Given by Taysir Sa’id Khalil (resident of ‘Anin village, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

There were further incidents of Israeli **settler violence** against, and intimidation of, Palestinians in the West Bank, particularly in the Nablus and Hebron areas. Settlers carried out violent attacks against Palestinians, and destruction or attempted confiscation of their property and sources of livelihood, such as olive trees and livestock. Settlers in Hebron attempted to prevent children from going to school by

“The security men of the settlement assaulted us and we started yelling and shouting. Meanwhile, an Israeli police car passed by and stopped near to where this was happening. Four policemen got out and stopped the assault. We told the policemen what had happened and, besides, they had witnessed part of the attack against us. But the settlement’s security men and the settlement’s gate watchman reported that we were going to steal the settlement’s mesh. Accordingly, my son Fadi (16 years old) and I were arrested and taken to the police premises. We gave our testimony and the settlement security men gave their testimony. As a result, my son and I were put in custody until each one of us paid 500 shekels. I refused to pay the fine required from me and from my son because I refused to be accused of something I had not done. But in the end, at 9:00 pm, I paid 1000 shekels that my wife borrowed from our neighbours and friends, and so my son and I were released.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2999/2006

Given by ‘Abd-al-Rahman Fayyad Khalil Hirbawi (resident of Hebron, Hebron Governorate, West Bank)

physically attacking them and setting up private checkpoints. Investigation of such incidents by the occupying authorities remained insufficient to a degree that amounted to systemic refusal to prevent or punish criminal behaviour, thereby effectively encouraging it.

Occupying forces carried out a series of **arbitrary arrests** of Palestinian officials. In the early hours of 29 June 2006, over 60 Palestinian parliamentarians, ministers and mayors affiliated with the governing Hamas party were arrested. According to statements by Israeli officials, a number of the Palestinian officials were arrested on the mere basis of their membership of Hamas. On 30 June, four of these officials had their East Jerusalem residence permits (ID) revoked.

Approximately 700 Palestinians remained in **administrative detention**. Under this common practice, the Israeli authorities

detain a person on the basis of “secret evidence,” without formal charges or trial, for indefinitely renewable periods of up to six months. One of Al-Haq’s fieldworkers, Ziyad Hmeidan, was originally detained at Qalandiya checkpoint in May 2005 and placed under administrative detention in June 2005. He has now spent more than a year in administrative detention, without knowing the reasons for his detention nor being able to defend himself against unspecified accusations.

In addition to Ziyad Hmeidan’s case, Al-Haq’s work, like that of other human rights organisations working in and on the OPT, has recently suffered from restrictions placed on several of its **human rights defenders**. Maureen Murphy, an American citizen, was deported on 29 May and verbally informed that it was on immigration grounds. However, she was also given an official document in Hebrew, which on the contrary stated that her deportation was for “security” reasons. Al-Haq attests that Maureen Murphy’s work for Al-Haq does not constitute a security threat to Israel. On 26 March, Israeli occupying forces confiscated Al-Haq General Director Shawan Jabarin’s ID. Without a valid ID, Palestinians cannot travel outside of their home area without being exposed to the risk of arrest and detention by occupying forces. Repeated requests for the return of the ID have gone ignored by the Israeli occupying authorities. Al-Haq fieldworker Zahi Jaradat remains, for reasons unknown to him, prevented from travelling abroad. The arbitrary detention, deportation and extraordinary movement restrictions imposed on Al-Haq’s human rights defenders severely impede its work and jeopardises its ability to satisfactorily carry out its mission of defending human rights in the OPT.

The Palestinian National Authority

Al-Haq also monitors the respect by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) 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.

There were many new acts of **vigilantism**, in which private actors use illegal coercive methods to achieve their own goals. There was insufficient enforcement by the PNA against vigilantes who broke the law, and the overall situation continued to deteriorate. Much of the violence was linked to rivalries between people affiliated with the governing Hamas party and people linked to the opposition Fatah party.

Nablus witnessed a particularly high degree of lawlessness caused by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, affiliated with the opposition Fatah party. On 1 April, around 20 armed individuals from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades stormed the local offices of the Ministry of Interior in Nablus, demanding permits for themselves or relatives to drive taxis in Nablus. After approximately half an hour, the vigilantes left, threatening to take further action if their demands were not met. On 23 April 2006, as a protest against a speech delivered by Khaled Mesh'al, head of Hamas in Syria, a group of armed individuals from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades surrounded the Nablus city hall and attempted to intimidate the employees into leaving the premises by firing in the air. The vigilantes withdrew after one hour of negotiations with the mayor of Nablus.

In May and June, members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in Nablus carried out **extra-judicial executions** of four people, including two women, claiming that they were collaborators with Israel. The four people killed were Jaffal Abu Srour (25 years old, male, killed on 30 May 2006), Widad Abu-Mustafa (30 years old, female, killed on 30 May 2006), Nada Um Il-Asad (56 years old, female, killed on 9 June 2006) and Baha' Hashash (26 years old, male, killed on 11 June 2006). While Al-Haq remains opposed to execution under any circumstances, extra-judicial executions are a particularly serious breach of due process and the right to life of the victims.

“On 17 July 2001, I was arrested by the Palestinian Preventive Security. I was accused of collaborating with the Israelis. I spent 67 days in interrogation. During this period, I was also subjected to torture, physical and psychological pressure and continuous harassment. During the investigation, I denied all the charges against me because I had not cooperated with the Israeli intelligence. On 25 March 2002, I was released, but I was prevented from resuming my job in the police system even though I had not received an official letter saying that I was fired. Nevertheless, I have not received any salary or end of service compensation since then. I have a family of 13 people and I am unemployed.”

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2781/2006

Given by Zakiyya Muhammad Hassouna (resident of Rafidiya Quarter, Nablus City, Nablus Governorate, West Bank)



MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT APRIL - JUNE 2006 STATISTICS

KILLINGS

Total number of killings	35
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Special Types of Killings

Death in custody	2
Targeted assassination	9
Assassination in custody	1
Death at checkpoints	1

Special Types of Victims

Women	2
Children	4

Killings by District

Bethlehem	3
Hebron	1
Jenin	10
Jericho	-
Jerusalem	3
Nablus	12
Ramallah	5
Toulkarem	1

Killings by Age Group

Less than 12	1
13-17	3
18-25	20
26-35	6
36-50	4
Over 50	1

Killing by Perpetrator

Israeli Occupying Forces	-
- Soldiers	28
- Special undercover units	4
- Snipers	-
Israeli Border Guards	-
Israeli Policemen	-
General Security Services	-
Settlers	-
Armed Israeli civilians	-
Collaborators	-
Others	3

Situation During Killing

Normal/calm	16
Incursion	-
Demonstration and stone-throwing	7
Armed clashes	5
Shelling	-
Closed military area	-
Bystanders killed during attempted assassination	-
Unclear	-
Curfew	-
Raid	7

Methods of Killing

Live bullet	32
Fragmented bullet	-
Rubber-coated metal bullet	-
Explosives and small missiles	1
Shrapnel	-
Mine	-
Tear gas	-
Blunt instrument	-
Sharp instrument	-
Missile	-
Medical Obstruction	2

HOUSE DEMOLITIONS BY DISTRICT

Punitive House Demolitions

Bethlehem	-
Hebron	-
Jenin	2
Jericho	-
Jerusalem	-
Nablus	-
Ramallah	-
Toulkarem	1

House Demolitions for Lack of Licence

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

CURFEWS BY DISTRICT

District	Hours
Bethlehem	-
Jenin	-
Nablus	120
Toulkarem	14
Jerusalem	-
Ramallah	-
Hebron	-
Jericho	-
Total:	134