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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate
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Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the
Palestinian
People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The present report contains a summary of articles and reports received during the period from May to August 2001. Articles or reports of an urgent nature are mailed to the members as soon as they are available.

In preparing this summary, the following newspapers have been taken into account: *Ha'aretz* (Hebrew-language daily); *Jerusalem Post* (English-language daily). Reference to reports appearing in other newspapers is made when they contain relevant material not found in these newspapers. The terminology used in the summary for the most part reflects that found in the original version of the reports summarized.

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I. Conditions that are restrictive with respect to Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

A. Restrictions relating to land and housing

1. Land

1. On 14 August, it was reported that the Israel Defence Forces were poised to strike at Beit Jala, but the cabinet held off a ground forces action into the Palestinian Authority town after the White House termed “provocative” a similar operation in Jenin early the previous day in which Israeli tanks had rolled into the West Bank town and taken up positions in the city square and elsewhere in the town and bulldozers demolished a Palestinian police station. The four-hour operation in Jenin was 2 kilometres inside Palestinian territory. IDF troops did not open fire, remaining inside the tanks, but they were fired on by Palestinian militiamen. (*Ha’aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 15 August)

2. On 28 August, Beit Jala, a mostly Christian Palestinian town south of Jerusalem, was almost emptied of its residents the previous night, after IDF had occupied the north-east corner of the town, which faces the settlement of Gilo. Most of the residents went to stay with relatives elsewhere in the West Bank, mostly in Bethlehem, and Israeli security sources reported that Palestinian forces “were flowing to the town”, indicating that fighting could yet intensify in the village. There also were reports that the IDF troops accompanied by bulldozers were moving into the Aida refugee camp abutting Beit Jala. Meanwhile, two key Israeli allies, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, called upon Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian town. In Washington, United States State Department spokesman Richard Boucher called upon Israel to pull its forces out of Beit Jala. “The Israelis need to understand that incursions like this will not solve the security problems. They only make the situation worse”, he said at a briefing. Inside Beit Jala, while troops hunkered down in armoured vehicles and atop Palestinian apartments, Palestinian security forces were lurking only a block or two away on Virgin Mary Street. IDF also took over a Lutheran Church compound that includes an orphanage with 45 children, ages 6 to 16. The children were placed under curfew and took cover from gunfire in a basement. Troops set up a machine gun position on the roof of an adjacent five-story church hostel under construction, witnesses said. “;We

demand that the army immediately withdraw from our church premises”, said Munib Younan, the Lutheran bishop of Jerusalem. The army, which wanted to capture the church hostel because of its strategic location and panoramic view, pledged to ensure the safety of the children. Beit Jala resident Bishara Kharufeh, 56, was one of the few Beit Jala residents to remain in the town. “The Israeli soldiers took over all the houses and asked us to stay in one room, plus the bathroom and the kitchen”, he said. “The soldiers pushed over the furniture and took over the top two floors of the house and put an army post on the roof, surrounded by sandbags.” The army acknowledged it had taken over buildings in strategic locales in the town of narrow, winding streets. But Brigadier General Yitzhak stressed that “it is our intention to conclude the operation without harm to Palestinian civilians, or to the holy sites, to which we are very sensitive.” (*Ha’aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 29 August)

3. On 30 August, IDF pulled out of Beit Jala at dawn, and Palestinian troops moved in to guarantee the ceasefire worked out between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. Palestinians returning to some of the apartments and buildings taken by the army in a 24-hour operation complained of missing possessions and of property deliberately destroyed. As the IDF tanks and paratroopers left the town, Palestinian security forces moved in to shore up their control of the mostly abandoned Christian town. The Palestinians controlling Beit Jala celebrated the IDF departure, and residents handed out candy. Bishara Karoofi surveyed the wreckage after two nights in which Israeli soldiers had taken over his two-storey home, camping on the floor or on the beds and using the bathrooms. Coffee was spilled over the sitting room floor. Army canteens were thrown askew, potted plants overturned, and dining chairs pulled up to sandbagged windows creating a lookout for the soldiers onto the street. William Sha’ar and his family returned home to the building next door to the Orthodox Club and found windows broken and damage in his car garage, apparently used by an IDF armoured personnel carrier. He also said that cash and jewellery he had left behind in a closet as he fled the Israeli troops was missing, but it was the deliberate vandalism of his wedding photo on his desk that seemed to disturb him most. And next door, at the Orthodox Club, where Sha’ar runs a restaurant, there was real vandalism. Doors were broken down, the musical instruments of a dance troupe were destroyed, as was a sound system. Many members of the club are supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and a portrait of the founder, George Habash, was missing. (*Ha’aretz*, 31 August)

2. Housing

4. On 11 June, it was reported, a home in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras el-Amud illegally built on land slated for a new road was demolished. Police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd, then promptly left the area. The Interior Ministry said that the home owner had continued building his house despite repeated warnings that he was doing so illegally and was violating court orders. According to Faraj Mohammed Harbawi, his two-storey, 270-square metre house was inhabited by 15 members of his family. Orient House, the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem, called the demolition “provocative and illegal” and said, in a press statement, that “such actions threaten to further inflame an already unstable situation and are counter to the current initiatives for calming the region”. But Interior Minister Eli Yishai said that Arab residents of Jerusalem must understand that they cannot brazenly thwart the law and build in places not zoned for home construction. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 June)

5. On 9 July, Jerusalem Municipality bulldozers demolished 14 houses built in the Shuafat refugee camp in the northern part of the city. The demolition orders were posted at 25 houses, all in various stages of construction, on Sunday, leaving their owners less than 24 hours to seek legal redress. None of the buildings had received licences for the construction, and all were less than six months old. Activists from the Israel Coalition against House Demolition tried to halt the demolitions by lying down in front of bulldozers, but they were removed by police. The demolitions were watched by representatives from several diplomatic legations, including the United States consulate, whose representative, Lisa Miller, said she was reporting back to Washington on the demolitions, and by the Red Cross. In City Hall, sources said that Mayor Olmert wants any future final status negotiations to include the destruction of the Shuafat refugee camp as an Israeli demand, with the camp’s residents

moving to another part of East Jerusalem. From Olmert's point of view, Shuafat prevents the contiguity of Jewish neighbourhoods in the northern part of the city to the city centre. The other 11 houses in Shuafat slated for demolition will come down in the coming days, say City Hall sources. Knesset member Mussi Raz of Meretz has called for an urgent session of the Knesset Interior Committee to discuss the issue. Raz asked "Why is it that when it comes to refugees' homes City Hall is ready to demolish in less than 24 hours, while in West Jerusalem, it waits for the many illegal buildings to collapse on their own?" (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 10 July)

6. On 11 July, seven Palestinians were wounded as IDF troops destroyed 18 houses and six stores in the Rafah refugee camp in Gaza. IDF claimed the houses were not inhabited and were being used by Palestinians to throw grenades and shoot at Israeli troops. Residents of Rafah denied the claim that the houses were abandoned, saying that the dwellers were afraid to sleep at home in the past months but returned during the day. After the relative quiet of the past week, they said, most of the families begun sleeping at home once again. IDF tanks drove into the refugee camp around midnight on Monday to a spot from which artillery had been fired at the Tarmit military post on the Israel-Egyptian border in the past few days. According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, 11 tanks and four bulldozers rolled into the neighbourhood. Armed Palestinian police and civilians opened fire on the troops. Eyewitnesses said IDF soldiers returned fire. When the tanks began demolishing the houses, the inhabitants fled with their children. A Reuters reporter received an account of at least one case where a sleeping child was accidentally left behind in the panic. When Faiz Abu Taha returned for his son Hussein, he found him bleeding in the corner of the room, where he had been hit in the head by shrapnel. In another incident, Fatmeh Radwan, 42, was tugging at a sack of white flour she had bought a day earlier with what she said was her last \$15. However, the sack was stuck in the rubble, and the flour had already been dirtied by sand. Radwan said she lost a four-room house she shared with her husband and nine children. She said she and her family fled in their pyjamas, under fire. "How can I convince my children not to join clashes while they face a dark future, and our small house has been destroyed?" she said, crying. Palestinian sources claim the Israeli troops invaded territory in Area A, which is under full Palestinian control. The IDF spokesman denied the claim, saying that IDF operated in an area bordering with Egypt, in which the Oslo agreements allow Israeli security operations. A video of the incident taped by on-site television crews, however, seemed to support the Palestinian version. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 11 July)

7. On 15 July, IDF forces raided a house in the village of Umm Safah, north of Ramallah, Palestinian reports said. The village overlooks the main road between the settlements of Neveh Tzuf and Ateret, where numerous terrorist shootings have taken place, Israel Radio reported. (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 July)

8. On 7 August, it was reported that IDF troops backed by police had prevented human rights activists from handing out aid to a group of south Mt. Hebron families the army had evicted from caves in early July. According to Arik Ascherman, from Rabbis for Human Rights, the Palestinian homeless families have since been served new demolition notices for the tents and shacks they put up after their caves were sealed. The activists, members of Rabbis for Human Rights, the Israel Committee against House Demolitions and the Christian Peacemakers Team, brought blankets, tents, material for making tents, and household supplies. Their aim was to protest the "campaign of collective punishment" against the families, who had been living in the caves area for more than 30 years. An IDF source said it had permitted the demonstration, but that as soon as the demonstrators began handing out supplies, the army had forced the demonstrators to stop. Later, the activists visited residents of Hirbat Awayman, near the Sussiya settlement. The residents said that settlers had been systematically vandalizing the caves where the residents lived and harassing them and their flocks. On six occasions the residents had complained to police, and on all six occasions police had written up reports, but the harassment did not stop. The residents were now worrying that the settlers would try to sabotage the harvest to force the Palestinians out of the area. Attorney Shlomo Laquer, who two years earlier had won a High Court order against the Civil Administration after it ordered the cave dwellers to evacuate their homes, was planning to go back to the High Court to put a stop to the administrative steps taken against the cave-dwellers. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 August)

9. On 20 August, it was reported, Jerusalem Municipality bulldozers demolished two Arab homes in the northern neighbourhood of Beit Hanina. Municipality spokesman Hagai Elias stressed that both structures, which were in the midst of construction, were being built illegally. He added that the demolition orders had been issued early the previous Sunday, giving the owners the needed 24 hours to appeal. But Ibrahim Rajulyani, their owner, said that neither he nor any construction worker had seen the demolition notices supposedly posted on the buildings. Knesset member Zehava Galon, chairman of the Meretz Knesset faction, strongly denounced the demolitions and lambasted Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, who she said was again trying “to ignite” the city. “Who better than Olmert knows that there are no building plans for Arabs in east Jerusalem?” she said. Palestinians said it was extremely difficult to obtain building permits in East Jerusalem, while the municipality claimed it was being even-handed in enforcing building codes. One of the buildings razed had a total area of 1,200 square metres, with four floors and eight apartments, while the second, with 400 square metres, had two apartments. There were no incidents reported during the demolition, which brought to nearly 20 the number of illegal Arab structures razed in the city over the previous five weeks. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 August)

10. On 28 August, it was reported that Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert had cancelled a meeting with Minister without Portfolio Salah Tarif, in charge of minority affairs, after the latter called for transferring responsibility for the planning and supervision of Arab neighbourhoods in Jerusalem from the municipality to a new governmental authority. The minister made the recommendation during a tour of illegally constructed houses slated for demolition in the northern Palestinian neighbourhood of Anata, bordering Pisgat Ze’ev. “It cannot be that the municipality just holds on to building plans for Arab neighbourhoods and does not release them,” Tarif said. “Whatever the Arabs build will be considered illegal. Therefore I recommend placing into government hands the authority for building and demolitions in this [part of the] city, which is the most sensitive city on earth.” Nearly 20 illegally built houses owned by Palestinians had been torn down in the city over the previous five weeks. Palestinians said it was extremely difficult to obtain building permits in East Jerusalem, while the municipality claimed it was being even-handed in enforcing building codes in all parts of the city. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 August)

11. On 28 August, IDF demolished 15 homes in the Rafah refugee camp, destroying their contents and leaving around 140 people homeless. Palestinians opened fire as the homes were being bulldozed. A total of 14 people were injured during the demolition and ensuing gun battles. Witnesses say that eight Israeli armoured personnel carriers and a bulldozer entered Block O of the camp, a neighbourhood along the border with Egypt, close to midnight on Monday. Calls to prepare to defend Rafah immediately went out over the loudspeakers of mosques. Witnesses told researchers from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights that Israeli forces travelled 100 metres into the area and deployed approximately 300 metres along the border in nearby territory. The 15 houses were destroyed using heavy artillery and other weapons. Palestinian police officers and activists from the “popular opposition committees” opened fire and hurled grenades at Israeli soldiers and opened fire on other IDF positions along the border. Residents say the gun battles raged until 3.30 a.m. Some residents returned later in the day to search for their belongings among the rubble which had been their homes. Local people from Rafah vehemently denied claims by the IDF that the houses had been abandoned. They said that people would stay elsewhere during particularly heavy exchanges of fire between Israeli and Palestinian forces and return the next morning. This was the fourth time that IDF had destroyed houses close to the border with Egypt. To date, it had demolished a total of 65 houses in Rafah. (*Ha’aretz*, 29 August)

B. Restrictions affecting the movement of Palestinians within, between, and their exit from and re-entry into the occupied territories

1. Identity cards, travel permits

12. On 11 July, it was reported that, beginning on that day, the Israeli defence establishment had decided to allow the entry of hundreds of Palestinian workers into Jewish settlements and industrial

areas in the territories. Work permits would only be provided for workers aged 35 and over who were not related to any victims of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and who received specific permission from the General Security Service (GSS). (*Ha'aretz*, 11 July)

13. On 17 July, Public Security Minister Uzi Landau ordered the Jerusalem police to prevent a memorial service for the late Palestinian leader, Faisal Hussein, in the capital or anywhere else in the State of Israel. The previous night, High Court Justice Miriam Naor had rejected a request submitted by five Arab and three Jewish lawmakers for a temporary injunction to cancel Landau's order. The request had been submitted less than an hour before the ceremony was to take place and Naor ruled that there was not enough time to debate the petition. "Thanks to Minister Uzi Landau for once again placing Jerusalem at the centre of the political debate by banning the memorial gathering for Faisal Hussein", said Albert Arazrian, who had organized the event at Orient House in East Jerusalem. Arazrian noted that it was also Hussein's birthday. Officials at Orient House and Fatah activists in Jerusalem had been planning the memorial ceremony, with the knowledge of the Jerusalem police, for almost a month. The ban order, however, had been relayed to the location's legal adviser, attorney Jawad Bulus, only the previous day morning. Organizers of the ceremony who had invited some 5,000 people to attend the event, including many Israelis, said that even if they had wanted to, they could not cancel the invitations and preparations, which had already been completed. The speaker of the Palestinian Authority parliament, Abu Ala, who was slated to deliver the main address at the ceremony, arrived in the area of Orient House about an hour before the event was scheduled to begin. A large police force in the area prevented him from entering the grounds and Abu Ala left the area. Hundreds of members of the Israeli security services blocked all the streets and neighbourhoods around Orient House and prevented guests from entering the area. (*Ha'aretz*, 18 July)

14. On 3 August, it was reported that, as the General Security Service was preventing a Qalqilya resident from going to Austria for urgent medical treatment, a leading human rights group was demanding that he be provided with free medical care in an Israeli hospital. According to members of his family, Firas Rushdi Obeid, 27, had been hurt in an accident in his home and was in danger of losing the use of his fingers. Doctors in Nablus and Amman recommended that he go to Austria. The family requested a travel permit for Obeid and his brother from the District Coordinating Office in Qalqilya but it was refused. When Physicians for Human Rights intervened on behalf of Obeid, they were told by the Defence Ministry that Obeid's request had been turned down for security reasons. The physicians group has now appealed to the ministers of health and defence to permit the man to be treated at an Israeli hospital free of charge. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 August)

2. Closures

15. On 2 June, it was reported, the security cabinet, meeting in special session, authorized IDF and the security forces to retaliate for the deadly suicide bombing which had occurred a day earlier and left 18 Israeli victims and more than 90 injured. "We will find the way, the method, and the direction, and we will react. No one should delude themselves. Does someone think we have gotten used to what we are going through?" Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said. As a first move, Israel banned all Palestinians from the country and ordered them to immediately return to their homes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. An indefinite closure was imposed on the territories and all of the Palestinian cities in the West Bank were put under military blockade. The army also shut down the international crossings at Allenby and Rafah to Palestinians. The Dehaniya airport in the Gaza Strip was ordered shut, with all take-off and landings of aircraft cancelled. Ben-Eliezer called the blast "one of the most cruel and inhuman terror attacks that we have witnessed in Israel". Besides barring the 20,000 Palestinian labourers, police were ordered to round up all the thousands of Palestinians illegally in the country. The army was also given the green light to re-enter Palestinian-controlled areas for operational purposes. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 June)

16. On 5 June, it was reported, Israel decided to begin lifting some of the sanctions it had imposed on the Palestinian Authority after the Tel Aviv suicide bombing the previous Friday. Defence Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said that the decision to lift the sanctions was "a result of the significant

reduction in the number of terror incidents.” He said the Palestinian Authority still had to take steps to reduce the violence and incitement, but the drop in violence was a step in the right direction.” Beginning immediately, food, agricultural supplies, fuel and natural gas would be allowed back into the Palestinian Authority freely. Palestinian workers would be allowed back to work at the Erez industrial zone. Palestinians in Egypt and Jordan would be allowed back into the Palestinian Authority, through the Rafah and Allenby Bridge border crossings. But other border crossings remained closed to Palestinians leaving for abroad. The ban on Palestinians entering Israel for work remained in force, including the 20,000 Palestinians equipped with valid passes. In related news, it was reported that Israel was preventing complete freedom of movement for top Palestinian officials in the West Bank and Gaza, but while the cabinet considered preventing Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat from using his helicopter, so far, the security forces had not received instructions to prevent Arafat from flying. The crackdown in the West Bank after the Dolphinarium bombing the previous week was the toughest ever, with the territory being divided into eight zones and passage between them contingent on having an IDF pass. The eight zones corresponded to the eight major towns in the West Bank: Jenin, Tulkarm, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. Yesterday, tanks deployed to prevent traffic between Nablus and Jenin, while bulldozers moved earth to stop traffic between Ramallah and Qalqilya and Nablus. Traffic has also been halted between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 6 June)

17. On 15 June, it was reported that Israel would continue to ease its closure of the territories, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement brokered by the director of central intelligence George Tenet. The first steps had been taken the day before, with tanks being pulled back from around a number of Palestinian cities and some roads being reopened to Palestinian traffic. But very few roads were opened in the West Bank, which led to Palestinian charges that Israel was evading its obligations. IDF removed tanks from Ein-Bidan (near Nablus), Qalqilya, Salfit (near Ariel), Surda (north of Ramallah), the Tunnel Road (near Bethlehem), Jebel-Jawar in Hebron, Beit Haggai south of Hebron, and Netzarim and the Kisufim-Gush Katif road in Gaza. In some cases, however, the tanks were pulled back only a short distance, meaning that they could be moved up again quickly. Both of the major north-south arteries in Gaza were reopened. In the West Bank, however, the changes were minor: Public transportation was permitted on some roads around Ramallah and Nablus, and one road was opened in Hebron. Israel also reopened the international border crossing at Rafah in Gaza and increased the flow of goods into Gaza through the Karni checkpoint. The naval blockade on Gaza was also eased. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned the previous day that the closure would not be lifted in areas where the ceasefire was being violated, such as around Ramallah and Rafah. The pacification period that, according to the Tenet document, was supposed to precede confidence-building measures such as a settlement freeze would begin only once the violence had stopped completely. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 June)

18. On 21 June, it was reported that the security forces were preventing medical staff living in the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority from reaching their places of work at hospitals in East Jerusalem. The Civil Authority had issued only 270 entry permits to medical staff during the month, compared to the 500 or so normally issued. A member of the Jerusalem municipality, Meir Margalit, had written to the defence minister's military secretary Amir Neuman earlier in the week, asking him to allow more medics into Jerusalem. “It is almost unnecessary to point out the harm caused to the medical services [provided] in the city's eastern quarter ... the hospitals in East Jerusalem provide medical services not only to the East Jerusalem residents, but also to residents of all the surrounding territories”, Margalit wrote to Neuman. There are four hospitals in East Jerusalem: Makassed, Augusta Victoria, the Saint John General Hospital and the Saint John Eye Hospital. Makassed is a medium-sized hospital, serving residents of East Jerusalem and the territories, which specializes in heart surgery. Some of the medical staff who were not permitted to enter Jerusalem managed to find a way around the IDF blockades and actually stay at the hospital overnight, fearing that if they returned to their homes they would not be allowed back into Jerusalem the following day. Margalit also addressed the Defence Ministry's repeated claims that medical staff would not be hampered by closures and roadblocks and that doctors, nurses, ambulances and patients would not be stopped from entering East Jerusalem.” The fact that entry visas were not issued to around 250 doctors, nurses and

radiologists holds statements made by the defence minister himself to the media up for contempt”, Margalit concluded his letter. In November 2000, the organization Physicians for Human Rights had filed a number of similar complaints with the IDF liaison officer in the territory. (*Ha'aretz*, 21 June)

19. On 24 June, the organization Physicians for Human Rights announced it would not withdraw a petition it had filed at the High Court of Justice against IDF commanders in the territories who had refused entry to Israel to four Palestinian physicians. In the past, the State Attorney's office had informed the High Court that it would allow Palestinian doctors into Israel with certain limitations. However, because of the intifada closure on the territories, the four doctors had been prevented from entering Israel to work. About a year and a half ago, Physicians for Human Rights had requested the court to order IDF to explain why Palestinian doctors were prevented from carrying out their work in Israel on security grounds. On behalf of the group, attorney Andre Rozenhal wrote that, “[the physicians] are not part of the same group of residents of the territories who request permission to enter [Israel] to make a living; these are medical practitioners whose purpose is to assist fellow human beings in time of need.” As a result, permission was granted for two Palestinian doctors to travel from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, through Israel. One of the limitations imposed was that they had to use the “safe-passage” route, connecting the two areas. However, Shai Nitzan, in charge of security affairs at the State Attorney's office, had told Rozenhal the previous week that because of the closure, “passage will be allowed only in exceptional cases”. Nitzan also argued that the petition of the four physicians did not constitute an “exceptional case.” Responding to the State Attorney, Hadas Ziv, in charge of projects for the human rights organization, said that “the Fourth Geneva Convention demands that an occupying force ensure the operations of medical teams, and does not refer to periods of peace and brotherly love since at those times freedom is self-evident and not restricted.” (*Ha'aretz*, 25 June)

20. On 24 June, a resident of a Palestinian village, Sillat a-Daher, which had been under curfew and closure since 20 June, called upon human rights organizations to act to remove the restrictions, citing dwindling supplies of food and milk. Village elder Rahab Diak said that settlers, backed by IDF were continuing to enter the village to vandalize property and fire in the air, and occasionally at homes. IDF responded saying the curfew was continuing because of an attack which had occurred on 20 June 2001, but that it is allowing people to enter and leave the village for humanitarian reasons and was allowing sufficient supplies in. Palestinian media sources said that IDF had tightened the closure around Nablus and extended its action to block Palestinian traffic in the Mount Gerizim area. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 June)

21. On 16 August, a tight siege had been laid on Ramallah due to alerts regarding a possible attack in Jerusalem. Cars heading from Ramallah towards Jerusalem were turned back. Qalqilya saw the siege around it tightened for similar reasons. Palestinian sources said that IDF had also blocked the north-west exit from Bethlehem towards Jerusalem. According to army sources, the fence around the strip as well as the operational deployment of the army around the area was making terrorist efforts difficult, but the risk from the Gaza Strip was considered serious, particularly because terrorist cells from that area tended to use larger, more powerful bombs. A senior security source said the previous night that Israel might consider widening its areas of operations inside Gaza's autonomous Palestinian areas if Palestinian units began using anti-tank rockets. He said that, currently, IDF controlled 300 metres on either side of Gaza roads (the Oslo agreement limited security control to 70 metres) in order to safeguard Israeli settler traffic from shooting and bombings. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 17 August)

3. Checkpoints

22. On 11 June, according to a report by the human rights organization, B' Tselem, IDF continued to detain sick Palestinians on their way to hospitals, some with life-threatening conditions, at roadblocks inside the territories. The report claimed that Israel was continuing to hamper the administration of medical treatment within the territories with its policy of closures. B' Tselem's report contained a list of such incidents recorded by its researchers. In some of the cases documented, patients even died

after being held up at the roadblocks, and those are not isolated incidents, according to the organization. IDF had promised that strict guidelines would be in place to prevent ambulances being held up at roadblocks and checkpoints in times of emergency. However, B'Tselem says that ambulances carrying sick or injured Palestinians continued to be held up unnecessarily. According to the report, IDF was preventing patients from receiving vital medical attention by setting up roadblocks made up of mounds of earth or concrete blocks placed across the road, or with roadblocks manned constantly by IDF soldiers. Palestinians were thus forced to take lengthy and convoluted detours to avoid the roadblocks and reach the medical centres. In those instances where the IDF left one road, under the tight supervision of soldiers, open, the ambulances often lost precious time looking for the chosen road, since it changed often without the residents being informed. In one incident recorded by B'Tselem on 7 June, an IDF soldier manning a roadblock ordered a Palestinian on his way to dialysis treatment to turn back, saying there was no entry. In another case, an 11-year-old girl in need of hospitalization was held up at a roadblock near Nablus for 45 minutes, even though the soldiers saw her vomit and it was obvious that she was in pain. The girl died before she reached the hospital, B'Tselem said. The report stated further that doctors frequently encountered problems and delays on their way to work and that the road closures made it even more difficult to get water to remote areas. There were also problems with regular refuse collection, exposing the residents of the territories to serious health risks, they added. B'Tselem's report called Israel's policy of restricting the movement of Palestinians "collective punishment" and charged it with "directly inflicting suffering on the civilian population which is not involved in acts of violence". The report said that one could only imagine the sorts of problems people who "only" wanted to get from one place to another must encounter, if ambulances and sick people were encountering so many delays and problems. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 June)

23. On 23 July, it was reported that officers had expressed serious concerns about the phenomenon of abusive behaviour of soldiers towards Palestinian civilians, mostly at roadblocks. Among the cases of abuse recently reported were the following: Soldiers had held up Palestinians for hours at roadblocks as part of a punishment they called "hours off". This was a traditional form of punishment used against new army recruits for insubordination: They were held up for several hours before being allowed to go on leave. In other cases, Palestinians were ordered to stay inside their cars with the windows rolled up, without air conditioning, during the hottest parts of the day. The car keys were confiscated. This was the "punishment" used by soldiers against Palestinians who approached them more than once, asking when they would be let through the roadblock. Also, it was reported that in some cases, the soldiers asked for "passage fees" from the Palestinians wishing to cross, in the form of cigarettes and drinks. Palestinians complained of beatings they suffered in some of the roadblocks by the soldiers manning them. Palestinians also reported that soldiers punctured the tires, or confiscated the keys, of vehicles whose drivers attempted to bypass the roadblocks in order to travel between villages under siege. This form of behaviour towards the Palestinian population was reportedly rampant among several infantry battalions belonging to Central Command that were in fixed deployment in the West Bank. However, there were reports and evidence that such abuses were also taking place in reserve units and other battalions of conscripts serving in the territories. In some cases, soldiers were tried for abusing Palestinians and for demanding payment to gain permission to pass through IDF roadblocks. Officers expressed grave concern that the incidents which had so far exposed were the mere "tip of the iceberg" in what was actually a much broader phenomenon. Speaking to *Ha'aretz*, officers serving in the territories said that IDF was finding it very difficult to combat the phenomenon. "Every hour there are dozens of such roadblocks throughout the territories, under the command of a sergeant, or in a good case, a first lieutenant. Despite the strict orders passed down by the more senior officers, and despite the efforts to ensure that activities are carried out as they should be, in practice it's not difficult for a group of soldiers to abuse Palestinians", the officers say. "Only on rare occasions are these cases exposed, when Palestinian residents complain to IDF or to a passing officer who notices that something is amiss. Now that there is fighting on the ground, it is even more difficult to keep an eye on things compared to periods of calm", the officers said. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 July)

4. Settlements

24. On 20 May, the Israeli Peace Now movement revealed in its latest survey monitoring construction in the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza that at least two satellite neighbourhoods of those settlements that had been dismantled under the previous government had been re-established. In its report the movement listed 15 settlements where new neighbourhoods or satellite neighbourhoods had been established nearby the main community, with some located several kilometres away. Not all the new sites were inhabited, and in some there were 22 structures that had been set up on the land. Neveh Erez in Ma'aleh Mikhmas with five structures and Kohav Hashahar's Mitzpe Kramim which has seven structures were both dismantled under the previous Government in a deal struck with the then Prime Minister Ehud Barak and the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Among the communities and their new neighbourhoods appearing in the list are Alon Shvut's Givat Hahish North, where one structure had been set up; Bat Ayin's Bat Ayin North, with four structures; Elazar's Elazar West, with two structures; Einav's Einav West, with 22 structures; Itamar's Hilltop 866, with two structures; Karmeit Tsur's West neighbourhood, with five structures; Kfar Tapuah's West neighbourhood, with four structures; Maon's Hilltop 833, with three structures set up by those evicted from the Maon Farm; Dotan's northern neighbourhood with six structures; Nahliel's Hill 590, with one structure; Ofra's southern neighbourhood, with six structures; Rechalim's western neighbourhood, with six structures; and Yakir's southern neighbourhood, with four structures. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 May)

25. On 22 May, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stressed at a news conference, at which he discussed the Mitchell report's call for a settlement freeze, that his coalition Government's guidelines required providing for the settlements' ongoing needs, "while on the other hand easing our neighbours' fears of the creation of facts that will determine the future of the negotiations". "There is no need to expropriate land for the purpose of settlement construction", he added, saying the settlements already had sufficient land for their needs. However, he added, if bypass roads needed to be paved for security reasons, "we will pave them". In response to a question, Sharon said: "We are not talking about a freeze". But he reiterated that the Government's guidelines forbade the establishment of new settlements. In response to his remarks, the Palestinian Authority issued an official statement that night saying it "regrets this rejection" of the Mitchell report and Sharon's "stubbornness in clinging to his previous views with respect to expansion of the settlements". The Palestinian Authority statement demanded immediate implementation of the entire Mitchell report, "without either side being able to choose the recommendations that suit it". Sharon, it charged, was picking and choosing, "in an effort to justify his continued aggression and his siege of the Palestinian people." (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 May)

26. On 17 June, it was reported that Supreme Court Justice Dalia Dorner had issued an interim injunction two days earlier, requiring the Government, the West Bank Civil Administration and Military Command, and the Union for the Renewal of Jewish Settlement in Hebron to halt construction work at the archaeological site Tel Rumeida, near Hebron. The order had been issued after two Palestinians who owned land near the site petitioned the court, along with Knesset member Mussi Raz (Meretz) and archaeologist Dr. Avi Ofer. They asked the court to prevent the construction of a residential neighbourhood on the important archaeological site. In its response to the petition, the State Prosecutor's Office admitted that the construction had not yet received the approval of the planning and construction committees. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 June)

27. On 21 June, it was reported that more than half — 52 per cent — of the construction tenders the Housing Ministry and the Lands Administration had published the previous month were for apartments in the territories, according to data Knesset member Mussi Raz (Meretz) had brought to light the previous day. According to these data, based on Land Administration reports, May was the first month in 2001 in which the government had issued any tenders in the territories. Tenders in the settlements therefore accounted for only 23 per cent of the total tenders issued so far during the year: for 708 out of 3,047 units. Furthermore, the West Bank tenders had not been very successful. Bids had been submitted for only 49 per cent, or 362, of the 708 units. In contrast, bids had been submitted for 76 per cent of the tenders within the Green Line. May's tenders covered 708 apartments in the West Bank and 661 in the rest of the country. The West Bank tenders, however, were in two towns

only: Ma'aleh Adumim (496 apartments) and Alfei Menashe (212 units). Raz also reported that 222 Government-built apartments had been sold in the territories so far during the year, a decrease of 44 per cent from 396 in the same period the previous year. Sales had risen in some of the big settlements around Jerusalem — Ma'aleh Adumim, Givat Ze'ev and Geva Binyamin — but had fallen in other large settlements, such as Efrat, Ariel and Alfei Menashe, as well as in many smaller ones. The television programme "Erev Hadash" had run a report the previous Tuesday about a number of families who planned to leave the settlements, including 23 from Rimonim and 7 from Mikmas. However, the programme said, 12 new families had moved to Bracha, near Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*, 21 June)

28. On 23 June, dozens of settlers blocked the passage of Palestinian vehicles near the village of Sinjil on the Ramallah-Nablus road, and three were arrested on suspicion of setting fire to a field belonging to Palestinians. In another incident, dozens of settlers also blocked Palestinian traffic near the village of Za'arta, near Halhul. According to Palestinians, the settlers also threw stones at Palestinian cars. IDF troops said that they were responsible for the well-being of the settlers, while the police were responsible for any action they might take against Palestinians and their property. (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 June)

29. On 29 July, it was reported that no fewer than 66 isolated outposts were scattered throughout the West Bank, of which 60 were illegal for a variety of reasons and 24 had been established since the intifada had begun in October 2000, according to IDF and the defence minister's adviser on settlements. Out of those 66, Defence Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer wanted 15 removed for security reasons only. That decision was backed by Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz and his deputy, Moshe Ya'alon. The list of the 15 outposts to be evacuated was being prepared in coordination with the Central Command. Major General Yitzhak Eitan had been instructed by Ben-Eliezer to talk with representatives of the settlement movement with a view to conducting the evacuation. But the instruction stated clearly that if the settlers did not evacuate the outposts, IDF would and the army had strict orders not to allow any more new outposts in the future. All the details of the discussions the army and defence establishment had been conducting on the issue since 31 May had been given to the prime minister. Some of the outposts were on private Palestinian land and the owners were challenging the settlers' presence in court. Others violated previously prepared zoning maps. The legal adviser had determined that 21 of the 66 were absolutely illegal. Another 29 were illegal for planning reasons, while a further 10 were considered semi-legal. The outposts as a phenomenon began in 1997 and were a deliberate attempt to undermine government policy at the time and to prevent any contiguity between parts of the Palestinian Authority. Some of them were nothing more than a mobile home and a generator on a hilltop, others had grown to more than two dozen mobile homes, synagogues, water towers and lighting systems, and had essentially become the mechanism by which settlements expanded beyond the original plans. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 July)

30. On 3 August, it was reported that settlers from Tel Rumeida in Hebron had broken into a nearby Palestinian house, which they claimed was abandoned, saying they planned to have their children sleep there. Over the previous few days, there had been heavy fire on Tel Rumeida, and the settlers said the abandoned house would provide their children with more protection than the caravans in which they lived. They abandoned the house the previous night on orders from the police, but vowed to return. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 August)

31. On 8 August, it was reported that the Jewish settlement community in the occupied territories was continuing to grow, though at a much slower pace than previously, on average, since the settlement movement had begun in earnest in the late 1970s. From an average growth rate of 8 to 12 per cent during the previous decade, the settlement growth rate since the previous fall, when the intifada had broken out, had dropped to some 2 to 5 per cent, a *Ha'aretz* investigation had revealed. According to Interior Ministry figures, the overall settlement population had grown by some 5,000 people in the previous year, representing a six-month growth rate of 2.43 per cent. The figures showed that the Jewish population of the West Bank and Gaza was 203,067 in December and 208,015 in June, an increase of 2.43 per cent. Settlements in the Gaza Strip not only maintained the number of residents,

but grew marginally. Neveh Dekalim had 2,314 residents in December and 2,320 in June, while the isolated Kfar Darom had grown from 250 to 266. Other figures showed that Ma'aleh Adumim had increased from 26,104 to 26,478 and Efrat from 6,556 to 6,606. The population of Ariel had grown from 16,511 to 16,702. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 August)

32. On 9 August, it was reported that, according to statistics released by the Interior Ministry, in the first half of the year, settlement public housing sales had dropped 50 per cent compared to the same period in 2000. Between January and June of the current year 238 apartments had been sold, compared to 466 in the same period the previous year. However, the drop in private home sales had been much less precipitous, from 396 private homes sold in the settlements in the first five months of the previous year to 371 during the current year. Other figures showed that some 30 per cent of the apartment construction tenders issued by the Housing Ministry for the first seven months of 2001 — 2,423 — were for construction in the West Bank: 535 apartments in Ma'ale Adumim, 212 in Alfei Menashe and the rest in Elkana, for a total of 789. But those figures were also much lower than in previous years. During the 18 months of the Barak Administration, 3,575 apartment tenders had been issued, and in 1998, during one year of the Netanyahu Administration, 4,210 tenders had been published. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 August)

33. On 28 August, it was reported that the Council of Jewish Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza was in the midst of absorbing 296 new families in settlements throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as part of a campaign to strengthen settlements by attracting newcomers. Council Chairman Benny Kashriel told reporters at a press conference at the Hyatt Hotel in Jerusalem that despite the intifada and attacks carried out against settlers, the Council had provided a true Zionist response, which could be seen in the increased population. The Council said the settler population had grown by 17,000 in the past year and now stood at 227,000, the result of natural growth and the absorption of new families. Sixteen families had moved to Har Bracha, 10 to Negohot, 21 to Ofra, 100 to Adam, 59 to Beit El, 15 to Otniel, 12 to Sansaneh, 28 to Alon Shvut and 14 to Kidar. In the Gaza Strip, seven families had moved to Morag, six to Kfar Darom and eight to Netzarim. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 August)

C. Aspects of the administration of justice

1. Interrogation procedures

34. On 24 May, it was reported that for the second time in less than three weeks, the High Court of Justice had allowed the General Security Services to continue questioning the administrator of the West Bank's Rafidia hospital without his lawyer being present. Samer Awartani, 34, had taken part in a health seminar in the University of Oxford as a guest of the British Council, representing the Palestinian Health Ministry. He had been arrested as he made his way home on 7 May, at the Allenby Bridge border crossing between Jordan and the West Bank. No one in the public was aware of what Awartani was suspected of, or if his detention was in fact legal. The British daily *The Guardian* had reported the previous day that the Department for International Cooperation, which had organized the Oxford seminar, was deeply concerned for Awartani, and that the British International Development Secretary Clare Short had launched an investigation into what had happened to him following his departure from the seminar in the United Kingdom. The High Court heard a second petition filed by Physicians for Human Rights and the Public Committee against Torture, demanding that Awartani be allowed to meet with his lawyer that Wednesday. Supreme Court President Aharon Barak, along with Justices Tova Strasberg-Cohen and Edmund Levy, ordered attorney Andre Rozenthal, representing the human rights groups, out of the courtroom and held a closed discussion with the GSS representatives. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 May)

35. On 9 August, the Attorney-General's Office ordered an investigation into allegations that GSS interrogators had used illegal methods to extract information from Palestinian human-rights activist Abed al-Ahmed. Ahmed had reportedly been arrested on 24 May on his way from Jerusalem to his home in Bethlehem for failing to have a permit to be in Israel. A week later, he was transferred to the GSS facility in the Russian Compound and his detention was extended by 20 days. On 10 June,

Ahmed complained to his lawyers that GSS had applied the “Shabah”, a method by which he was forced to sit on a small chair with his hands tied behind his back for a prolonged period in order to extract information. This method, among others, had been banned by the High Court of Justice in a landmark decision against torture handed down in September 1999. Israeli authorities had held Ahmed in the past. In May 1988, he had been arrested and detained without trial for two and a half years. Amnesty International had adopted him as a prisoner of conscience. On 26 June, the heads of four organizations — B’Tselem, Moked-Defence of the Individual, the Association of Civil Rights in Israel, and Physicians for Human Rights — had written to Rubinstein to complain about the alleged torture. In a statement released the previous day, the organizations announced that Talia Sasson, the head of the Special Assignments Department of the Justice Ministry, had ordered an investigation following the complaints. (*Ha’aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 9 August)

2. Administrative detention and conditions of detention

36. On 28 July, it was reported that, in an almost unprecedented climb-down, Israel the previous week had freed an administrative detainee who had been held for 51 days, 21 without being allowed to see a lawyer, and more than 2 months before he was due for release. Samer Fawzi Awartani, director of the Rafidiya Hospital, had been arrested on 7 May at the Allenby Bridge as he returned from an international health conference in the United Kingdom, where he had spoken on the difficult health conditions in the territories. Awartani had been freed the previous Tuesday by order of the military commander of Judea and Samaria, Colonel Ariel Peleg, who only two weeks earlier had issued a three-month detention order on him. *The Guardian* newspaper in London had reported Awartani’s arrest in May and had said that the British ambassador to Israel, Francis Cornish, had asked Israel for clarifications about the reasons for his arrest. Cornish had been told that security service officers had found traces of plastique on Awartani when he crossed the Allenby Bridge. Physicians for Human Rights and Moked had campaigned for his release. (*Ha’aretz*, 28 June)

3. Imprisonment and conditions of imprisonment

37. On 22 August, it was reported that the administrations at Israeli prisons were preventing Palestinian lawyers from meeting with their charges. Under new guidelines that had gone into effect some two months earlier, Palestinian lawyers were prohibited from visiting Israeli jails to meet their clients, even if they had the relevant powers of attorney. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the Public Committee against Torture had begun proceedings ahead of petitioning the High Court of Justice on the matter. The Prisons Service, however, claimed: “These are not new guidelines, but rather an arrangement agreed to by the State Prosecutor’s Office in 1988.” Earlier in the month, attorney Khaled Quzmar from the Palestinian branch of the Defence for Children International organization had been prevented from visiting two of his clients, two Palestinian girls, Sanaa Amar and Souad Ghazala, at the Neveh Terse prison in Ramle even though he had presented the relevant documents. The previous month, attorney Hana Khatib from the Public Committee against Torture in Israel had been stopped from visiting security prisoners held in the detention centre at the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. The organization had written to the ministers of public security and justice as well as the attorney general to complain about the policy, pointing out that the majority of Palestinian prisoners and detainees were represented by Palestinian lawyers they knew personally or who had been hired by their families and were deeply trusted. “Preventing a prisoner from meeting with his brief is a gross infringement on the basic right to choose a lawyer”, the letter from the organization read. (*Ha’aretz*, 22 August)

4. Question of the use of force

38. On 3 May, it was reported that a Palestinian boy had been killed and 15 others wounded during an intense exchange of gunfire with soldiers on the outskirts of Rafah early yesterday morning. The fatality was identified as Mahmoud Akel, 17. The soldiers were engaged in an operation during which they demolished a number of structures and levelled the ground in areas from which Palestinians had perpetrated attacks, according to Israeli sources. IDF denied Palestinian claims that the operation had

taken place in an area under sole Palestinian control. A statement issued by the IDF spokesman said the operation was in response to the escalating violence and continued shooting attacks at soldiers operating along the Egyptian border and had occurred after a day in which Palestinians had planted three bombs and thrown over 20 grenades at soldiers in the area. "It should be noted that the engineering activities carried out took place in a 'pink' zone that was stipulated in the Oslo agreement as an area of army facilities in which Israel has full security and civilian control", the statement said. Palestinian witnesses said Palestinians fired anti-tank rockets and shot at the soldiers as army bulldozers levelled agricultural plots and destroyed some hothouses. In related news, it was reported that Tawfiq Tirawi, head of the Palestinian General Intelligence Service in the West Bank, had told Voice of Palestine radio the previous day that the General Intelligence Service knew the identity of the Israelis who had taken part in the beating of a Palestinian worker from Akraba who had been attacked by a Netanya mob after a bombing there two months ago. The Israeli police had so far refrained from making any arrests in the case, said Tirawi, so it was up to the Palestinian security services to hunt down the lynchers and bring them to justice. Salah Dirye had been critically injured in his head by the beating, sending him to hospital for nearly two months. Although those who had taken part had been interviewed by newspapers, police said that so far they had not been able to produce enough evidence to prosecute those who had joined the lynch mob. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 3 May)

39. On 6 May, it was reported that the shelling the previous afternoon of the Palestinian Authority's General Intelligence headquarters in Jericho had been aimed at the intelligence service's West Bank director, Tawfiq Tirawi, senior Israeli sources said. Tirawi's offices had been targeted because he had been organizing terror activity throughout the West Bank, the sources explained. Palestinians reported that IDF missiles had hurt at least eight men, two of them seriously, and caused extensive damage to the Jericho intelligence headquarters. Eight of the 10 mobile trailers in the compound had been battered in the attack, along with four cars. Accusing Israel of using surface-to-surface missiles, Tirawi had drawn a connection between the attack and Ariel Sharon's recent statements about retaining Israeli control in the Jordan valley. In related news, it was reported that IDF soldiers had killed an Islamic Jihad fighter the previous morning at Kfar Artas near Bethlehem, Palestinian eyewitnesses and physicians reported. They said that IDF snipers had shot Ahmed Halil Ismail, 34, firing more than 20 bullets from long range in the morning attack. Ismail was near his brother's restaurant, about 150 metres from his Kfar Artas home, when sniper fire from an opposite hilltop gunned him down; his three-year-old niece was also wounded by the gunfire, the sources said. Kfar Artas residents claimed that a special Israeli commando unit stationed on the nearby hilltop was responsible for the shooting. The site of the attack near Ismail's home was under Palestinian security control. The IDF spokesman denied knowledge of any unusual incident in the area. Also the previous night, a top Hamas operative and three Fatah men were seriously hurt by an explosion in Qabatiya, near Jenin. The Hamas member, Nassar Jerar, had been badly hurt and lost an arm and a leg; the others suffered burns and other injuries. Qabatiya residents charged that IDF artillery fire had caused the explosion; but some Palestinian sources said that an explosive being carried by the men themselves might have unexpectedly gone off. Israeli security forces had been hunting Jerar for some time; a few months earlier, an IDF force had failed to arrest the Hamas suspect in Jenin. Palestinian and Israeli sources reported that IDF had responded that Friday to the Palestinian mortar attack with tank shells aimed at the Palestinian Authority security compound in Beit Hanoun. IDF officers indicated that four tank shells had been fired at the site from which the Kfar Aza mortar attack had emanated. Residents at the Al Arub refugee camp accused IDF soldiers of taking wanton potshots at some seven rooftop water boilers the previous Wednesday and Thursday. IDF claimed that its soldiers had taken aim at sites from which Palestinians had fired first. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 6 May)

40. On 6 May, IDF seized control of areas of Beit Jala for several hours after shots were fired from a number of houses in the Palestinian village at an Israeli military roadblock along the Tunnel Road. During the IDF operation, one Palestinian was killed and around 20 were injured, 3 of them seriously. During the eight-hour operation, the security forces commandeered two ridge-top houses overlooking the road and the eastern slopes of Beit Jala and El Khader. The operation posed a threat to civilians in the area and military sources on the scene said only a "miracle" had prevented more people from

being injured. The IDF activity resulted in the death of Mohammed Abiat, 45, the cousin of Hussein Abiat, who had been assassinated by Israeli security forces in November 2000. Another 20 Palestinians, including a boy who lost his arm, a girl who was blinded in one eye and a 60-year-old woman, were also injured in the operation. With the IDF takeover of the ridge, Palestinians from Beit Jala began firing on Israeli military positions along the slopes of the Gilo neighbourhood of Jerusalem. IDF returned fire. Immediately after the military takeover, the IDF commander in the West Bank, Brigadier General Benny Ganz, said that in the face of a security threat, IDF commanders were not concerned whether the area in question was under Palestinian control or not. "It is very simple: if they shoot, we shoot back", Ganz said. "I am not looking to harm civilians or occupy Area A. I want things to remain calm." The commander said Tanzim, with the help of the Palestinian security forces, had been responsible for the shots fired at the Israeli roadblock. The IDF forces remained on the Talita Kumi ridge for a few hours before withdrawing to Areas B and C. Palestinian sources said that Mohammed Abiat had been a Fatah activist who had joined other armed Palestinians in an effort to block the IDF force as it approached the area under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Two of Abiat's sons were in detention at Megiddo Prison and he was the breadwinner for 10 people, the sources said. Residents of the neighbourhood attacked by IDF told *Ha'aretz* that they had seen the Israeli troops backtrack a number of times in the face of the Palestinian resistance. Sometime after 8 a.m., the residents said, tanks had begun to shell the western neighbourhood of the village, with some 16 shells hitting a number of residences and causing extensive damage. Due to the intense assault on the village, Palestinian rescue and firefighting services had been unable to immediately reach the injured or the houses that had burst into flames. Thick smoke filled the air and residents of the village and nearby Bethlehem shut themselves up in their homes, both during and after the operation, not knowing whether hostilities would break out again. Defence Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, informed of the operation as it was taking place, relayed the message to the ministers at the cabinet meeting, which was under way at the time. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 7 May*)

41. On 7 May, a four-month-old Palestinian baby girl became the youngest person to die in the ongoing hostilities between the Palestinians and Israel, after IDF tanks opened fire on the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. One of the tank shells slammed into the small backyard of the home of Iman Hijo, just off the open market in the refugee camp, killing her instantly. The infant's 39-year-old mother, Samia, her grandmother and three more children from the family were all seriously injured by shrapnel from one of the estimated 30 shells fired by IDF for nearly an hour the previous morning. Eighteen-month-old Mahmoud Hijo was in intensive care with shrapnel wounds, doctors said. Overall, 24 Palestinians, including 10 children, were hurt at the Gaza camp, Palestinian doctors reported. The IDF attack the previous day on the Khan Yunis refugee camp was precipitated by Palestinian militants firing four mortars at two Jewish settlements in Gaza, without causing injuries, according to the Israelis. Palestinian authorities claimed that no mortars had been fired. "It is a terribly tragic event", an army spokeswoman said, explaining that the houses in the area were believed to be empty. "We respond to Palestinian fire. We are committed to protecting the lives of our civilians." Most of the shells targeted a market area that was only a few metres from the Hijo family's home. Also hit was a three-storey apartment house, the top floors of which were totally destroyed. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that shrapnel from the shelling also hit the El Halidiye elementary school, seriously wounding a 12-year-old and traumatizing the rest of the children. Iman Hijo was the youngest person killed by live fire so far in the eight-month-old conflict. Previously, the youngest casualty in the fighting had been 10-month-old Shalhevet Pass, a Jewish infant killed by a Palestinian sniper in Hebron. In related news, it was reported that an officer of the Palestinian General Intelligence Organization had been killed by IDF fire in the village of Samua near Hebron and that 55-year-old Hussein Abu-Tamas had been killed during exchanges in Tulkarm. Palestinian sources said that Murad Fayez al-Haroush, 25, had been killed in exchanges of fire as Palestinians tried to prevent an IDF force from entering the southern outskirts of the village. An IDF spokesman on 7 May rejected claims in the foreign press that IDF had penetrated Area A, as it had done in Beit Jala the previous Sunday. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 8 May*)

42. On 8 May, it was reported, several Palestinians were injured in the West Bank and Gaza by Israeli fire. To protest the killing of 4-month-old Iman Hijo the previous day, students threw stones at an IDF

outpost near the settlement of Kfar Darom. Nine of them were injured when soldiers fired rubber-coated bullets to disperse them. Dozens of students from Bir Zeit University protested Hijo's death by clashing with IDF forces at a roadblock north of Ramallah. Palestinians said the army had fired throughout the night on Monday night at the refugee camps of Aza and Aida, near Bethlehem, causing extensive property damage. Also Monday night, the sources said, IDF forces had entered the village of Husan after residents threw rocks at Israeli cars. At the same time, they said, settlers had gathered near the village and attacked several residents, injuring one. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 9 May*)

43. On 9 May, it was reported, Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz told a group of officers in Gaza that the IDF response to mortar fire by tank shelling the previous week had been excessive, resulting in the death of a Khan Yunis baby. Speaking with the tank regiment that had fired shells at Palestinian Authority targets in response to a mortar attack on Israeli settlements, Mofaz addressed the rules of engagement under which the tank regiment operated. It became apparent the IDF standing order was for any mortar attack on Israeli positions to be answered with tank shelling of pre-selected Palestinian positions — pre-selected as being identified as the origin of the Palestinian fire. Mofaz was told that 25 hollow payload shells had been fired, shrapnel from one of which had killed the baby. He did not criticize the regiment directly but made it clear that, in the context of what had happened, the response was “exaggerated”. (*Ha'aretz, 10 May*)

44. On 11 May, IDF intensified its actions, launching air, sea, and ground attacks against Palestinian targets, including the liquidation of what was described by Israeli sources as a Tanzim cell which had been planning mortar attacks on West Bank settlements, killing at least one Tanzim activist and critically wounding two Palestinian intelligence officers as they sat in a parked car in Jenin. Military sources identified the man killed in Jenin as Mo'tassem al-Sabbah, a Fatah activist and member of a Tanzim unit. According to reports, the first Israeli air force rocket fired at the car he was sitting in missed, and his two companions managed to jump out. Sabbah, however, was slow due to a previous leg injury, and was stuck inside when another rocket struck, killing him. Palestinian reports said that a policeman bystander, identified as Alam Jaloudi, was hit in the head with shrapnel and died later in the hospital. At least 15 bystanders were said to have been treated for injuries, news agencies reported. IDF declined to comment on the operation, but military sources said the three were Tanzim activists who were behind a number of attacks on the settlements of Kadim and Ganim, and had planned to launch mortar attacks soon. The military operations came after IDF declared the Fatah Force 17 and Tanzim organizations to be “hostiles”, and thus targets to be dealt with as enemies. IDF had also adopted a policy of moving into Palestinian-controlled areas in order to “silence” positions firing on IDF forces or Israeli settlements. In related news, it was reported that Hussam Tafesh, 16, had been killed by a bullet to his chest as he demonstrated with other Palestinians near the Karni crossing (Gaza Strip) the previous Friday. According to Israeli sources, soldiers had attempted to disperse demonstrators with rubber bullets and tear gas, and when that failed, had shot at demonstrators' legs. Tafesh died in a local hospital of his wounds, and was buried on 12 May in Gaza, with thousands attending his funeral. That night, shots were fired at an IDF post near Gadid and at an army post on the Israeli-Egyptian border. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 13 May*)

45. On 14 May, five Palestinian policemen manning a post at Beituniya near Ramallah were killed overnight by Israeli soldiers. According to Israeli sources, soldiers near Beituniya shot at Palestinian policemen manning a roadblock after they spotted what they called suspicious movements by armed Palestinians. Palestinians denied that the policemen had shot at soldiers and claimed some were sleeping at the time of the attack. The five dead men all came from the Gaza Strip and were identified as Ahmed Zaqt, 27, from the Nusseirat refugee camp; Salah Abu Amra, 32, of Rafah; Mohammed Khaldi, 18, of El Burej camp; Ahmed Abu Mustafa, 20, from Khan Yunis; and Mohammed Abu Dahood, also from the El Burej camp. In related news, it was reported that Israeli soldiers had killed another Palestinian at the Gush Katif junction after he threw a grenade and shot at them. Palestinians claimed that the driver of one of the cars at the junction had thrown an unidentified object at the soldiers, who responded with gunfire, killing the taxi driver and wounding six passengers in the taxi. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 15 May*)

46. On 15 May, four Palestinians were killed and 110 others were wounded in clashes that erupted throughout the West Bank and Gaza as Palestinians marked Al-Nakba, the “catastrophe” of Israel’s creation, with large-scale demonstrations. Abdel Shawad Shkadeh and Durham Shikhir were killed by Israeli soldiers at the Ayosh junction, north of Ramallah. In Gaza, two bodyguards of Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin were killed as they fired mortars at Kibbutz Kfar Aza, according to Israeli sources. They were identified as Wael Nassar, 33, and Abdel Hakim Maname, 35. Earlier in the day, thousands of Palestinians participated in large-scale demonstrations, carrying Palestinian flags and black mourning flags. They clashed with soldiers, throwing stones and firebombs and shooting. In related news, Chief of General Staff Lieutenant-General Shaul Mofaz was quoted as saying the previous day that the outcome of the IDF operation at Beitunya where five Palestinian policemen had been killed was “not as intended”. Mofaz said that an inquiry of the incident would be conducted, and if mistakes were found, IDF would not be “ashamed to admit them”. He was speaking on 15 May, to members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, where Meretz leader Yossi Sarid said IDF had made a huge mistake that would result in the escalation of violence. (*Ha’aretz, Jerusalem Post, 16 May*)

47. On 20 May, it was reported, the air force staged bombing runs by F-16 fighter jets and attack helicopters in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in retaliation for the suicide bombing in Netanya on Friday, 18 May 2001. It was the first time jets had been used in the territories since the Six Day War in 1967. The attacks drew heavy criticism from the Arab world. Palestinians claimed that 12 had been killed and scores wounded in the attacks on Palestinian security installations in Ramallah, Tulkarm, Nablus, Jenin, and the Gaza Strip over the weekend. Eleven members of the Palestinian Police had been killed in the shelling in Nablus, and another Palestinian was killed in the Ramallah air raid. The Israeli air force struck on Friday afternoon, with F-16s sweeping into Nablus, the West Bank’s largest city, and flattening the prison and security headquarters. According to reports, at least seven prison guards had been killed, and another 30 wounded. The obvious target was likely Hamas bomber mastermind Mahmoud Abu Hannoud, since IDF intelligence had said that he was being held in the jail. Associated Press reported from Nablus that he had been only slightly wounded and had been brought to safety. Also Friday afternoon, Israeli air force helicopters fired rockets at a building belonging to Arafat’s elite Force 17 in Ramallah, where one man was killed. On Friday night, combat helicopters attacked a Force 17 base in Ansar, east of the Jabaliya refugee camp, as well as the naval commando and Force 17 base at Sudaniya, a few hundred metres from Arafat’s office. Saturday afternoon, the air force struck again in Tulkarm and Jenin. In Jenin, the targeted buildings belonged to Force 17 and the General Intelligence, headed by Tawfiq Tirawi. But in Tulkarm, Palestinian reports said rockets aimed at the building housing Palestinian forces also struck a school. Palestinian reports said that 25 people had been wounded, including some pupils. (*Ha’aretz, Jerusalem Post, 20 May*)

48. On 22 May, it was reported, West Bank Preventive Security Chief Jibril Rajoub claimed at a news conference at Bitounia that the recent IDF tank shelling of his home was a deliberate attempt to assassinate him. He described the shelling of his home as part of a sequence of acts undertaken by Israel in recent weeks to “undermine the Palestinian Authority”. The bombing, he said, was not a personal matter, since IDF was currently attacking the Palestinian people as a whole. Asked whether he would take steps to avenge the shelling of his house, Rajoub said that the matter was for the political leadership of the Palestinian Authority to decide. He said that Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat’s leadership was the linchpin guaranteeing the stability of the Middle East, and that “anybody who wants to harm him [Arafat] risks putting the region as a whole on a downward slide”. (*Ha’aretz, 23 May*)

49. On 23 May, it was reported, despite a unilateral, limited ceasefire announced by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon the day before, there were gun battles in Gaza and Jerusalem, as well as an ambush on a West Bank road that killed an Israeli. Some 45 Palestinians, including some 25 children under eight years old, were reported wounded in Gaza during a three-and-a-half-hour firefight at the Rafah refugee camp. Each side blamed the other for starting the firefight. The army said its troops had come under heavy fire and that Palestinians had also fired several anti-tank grenades. Palestinian witnesses said that IDF soldiers had fired at the refugee camp without provocation. Of the 45 injured, three were

in critical condition, including a 14-year-old boy struck by a bullet in the neck, doctors said. At one point, an Israeli tank shell had hit the ground near a group of camp residents, and 10 people were hurt by shrapnel, Palestinians said. Israel insisted that none of its fire had struck the refugee camp; indeed it denied that any tank shells had been fired at all. Palestinian claims that IDF had made several incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas in Gaza the previous day were rebuffed by government spokesmen, including Sharon's adviser, Avi Pazner. He said there had been no military incursions, but that civilian workers, under IDF protection, had in fact done work on the electronic security fence separating Gaza from Israel. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 May*)

50. On 24 May, it was reported, two Palestinian youths were killed by IDF troops at Rafah in the Gaza Strip. Shadi Siyam, 18, of the Shabura refugee neighbourhood, was killed near the Gaza-Egyptian border. 'Ala Al Buji, 15, of the Tel Al Sultan neighbourhood, was killed near the fence between his neighbourhood and the Rafah Yam settlement. Palestinian sources said that an armed group of Palestinians had arrived at about 3 p.m. and began shooting at the soldiers, who returned fire. Siyam, a deaf boy who often hung out near the border fence, was shot in the chest. Neighbours said he had been unaware of the gun battle going on. About two and a half hours later, Buji and another teenager from Tel Al Sultan were walking in the sand dunes between the neighbourhood and Rafah Yam, when shots were fired from a tank stationed near the settlement, killing Buji. Residents said the tank often shot at young people in the dunes. IDF tanks stationed near Netzarim had bombarded the Sheikh Ajlin neighbourhood south-west of Gaza City the previous morning. IDF claimed that Sheikh Ajlin was the source of mortars fired at Netzarim. After the assault, IDF tanks and bulldozers entered the neighbourhood, which was under Palestinian security control, destroyed a vineyard and fences, and closed the coastal road between Gaza City and Deir Al Ballah. Following the murder Wednesday of Asher Iluz, of Modi'in, in a Palestinian ambush near Ariel, IDF tightened restrictions against villages in the area. Palestinian sources said settlers had burned down olive groves in one of the villages. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 May*)

51. On 28 May, it was reported, IDF entered the Gaza Strip near the Karni position, according to Palestinian sources. Two tanks, an armoured vehicle and two bulldozers levelled land and olive farms which Muhammed Daloul said belonged to him. An IDF spokesman said that repairs along the fence separating Israeli and Palestinian areas required that some of the olive trees should be destroyed in order to create better fields of fire for the soldiers manning the positions. In spite of the unilateral Israeli ceasefire, the Palestinians said that Israel was still shooting, and counted 45 incidents in which Palestinians had been fired upon by Israeli troops or settlers. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 29 May*)

52. On 28 May, it was reported, according to a report published the following day by B'Tselem Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, beatings and abuse of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers and border police had risen sharply in the past eight months. Based on interviews of dozens of Palestinians by B'Tselem field workers, the report, entitled "Routine Actions", included detailed accounts of 12 incidents of beatings carried out by Israeli security forces, 5 by Border Police and 7 by IDF soldiers. A total of 23 Palestinians had been beaten, including 11 minors. However, the authors of the report noted that many other such incidents went unreported. Palestinians did not report every incident for various reasons, but mainly because they had no confidence their complaints would be taken seriously by Israeli authorities. IDF and Border Police rejected allegations that complaints were not thoroughly investigated. The Justice Ministry said that the five incidents of violence the report attributed to the Border Police were being investigated. With regard to the seven other reported incidents, IDF said that three cases had been passed to the military police investigation unit and the Central Command was still considering how to proceed with the other four cases. The youngest victim, according to B'Tselem, was a three-year-old from Hawara village. The child's father said soldiers had beaten him while he was holding his son, breaking the baby's arm. The oldest victim, 58, was a taxi driver who said a group of border police had punched and kicked him and one of his passengers for over half an hour near the al-Hader checkpoint, outside Jerusalem. One of the incidents detailed in the report involved M. R., 14, from Jelazoune refugee camp, 5 kilometres from Ramallah. According to the report, on his way home from Ramallah on the afternoon of 17 April, he was called over by several soldiers standing next to a tank. One of them asked him why he was walking and he

responded that he enjoyed walking. Then, according to the teenager, “one of the soldiers slapped me and another one hit me with his rifle butt in my back. The third soldier began to kick me in the legs.” The youth tried to flee, but tripped on a rock and fell. He said the three soldiers “began hitting me all over my body. One of them used a black rubber pipe”. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 May)

53. On 10 June, three Palestinian women were killed by an IDF tank shell in the Gaza Strip and another four were wounded, two seriously. IDF said it was investigating the incident. Officers said it was still not clear how the shell, which was aimed at Palestinian gunmen, had struck the women's tent instead. The three women were Hikhmet Atallah Malalha, 17; Salmiya Amar Malalha, 65; and Nasra Salef Hafez Malalha, 55. The women were killed shortly after midnight Saturday night, when IDF was engaged in a shootout with Palestinian gunmen. According to the army's preliminary investigation, the Palestinians had fired at IDF outposts in the settlement of Netzarim and the Netzarim junction, as well as at a nearby Israeli tank. In response, the tank had fired at two figures, apparently armed, who seemed to be fleeing from the site. However, the three shells missed their target and one hit the tent which housed the Malalhas, a Palestinian Bedouin family. The tent, in a neighbourhood of Gaza City, was more than a kilometre from Netzarim. IDF said that the soldiers had “fired towards the source of the shooting”. Palestinian sources said the shells contained dozens of small iron darts that increased its range, which was confirmed by IDF officers. Israel often used such shells in Lebanon. A Palestinian doctor also charged that IDF had prevented ambulances from reaching the wounded. Opposition leader Knesset member Yossi Sarid (Meretz) demanded explanations of the incident from Defence Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer. “A thousand times we have warned against the blind use of tank shells, which usually result in innocent civilian casualties, and we know that government and defence officials share this opinion”, he said. “Yet despite this, again a shell has been fired, and again women have been killed.” He added that IDF investigations of such incidents were frequently inadequate and that he wanted to see a thorough investigation in the case. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 June)

54. On 11 June, an Islamic Jihad activist was severely injured when his car blew up in Tulkarm. Palestinian sources said the explosion occurred when Imad Abu-Diab, 25, opened the door of his car in order to get in. A Palestinian passer-by was also slightly injured in the blast. Both the Palestinian Authority and Islamic Jihad accused Israel of having planted the bomb in an attempt to assassinate Abu-Diab. The IDF spokesman “refused to comment” on whether or not Israel had been involved. Just a week earlier, another Palestinian, Ashraf Bardawil, had been killed when his car blew up, also near Tulkarm. According to the General Security Service, Bardawil was also a Jihad activist, though the Palestinian Authority said he was a Fatah member. The IDF denied all involvement, saying Bardawil had apparently died as a result of a “work accident”. However, it seemed that IDF was trying to formulate a new policy of deliberate vagueness, in which it refused to confirm or deny responsibility for any such incident. Though IDF had largely halted targeted killings since Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had declared a ceasefire, the kitchen cabinet had given the army permission to carry out such operations if they were necessary to prevent an imminent terror attack. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 June)

55. On 13 June, it was reported that a serious flaw had been discovered in the army's operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during an investigation into the deaths of three Palestinian women when an Israeli tank fired on their tent in Gaza the previous Saturday night, military sources said. The sources flatly declared: “This was a serious, professional mistake which should not have happened.” It was highly likely that disciplinary steps would be taken against the commanding officers involved in the incident, though it might only be junior officers who were punished. Defence Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer and Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz received an initial report on the incident from the head of the Southern Command, Major General Doron Almog during a high-level meeting yesterday afternoon. The three Palestinian women were killed and three others, all from the same family, were wounded shortly after midnight Saturday, when IDF was engaged in a shoot-out with Palestinian gunmen. The army refused to comment on the incident or to take responsibility for it in its immediate aftermath, preferring instead to say that the matter was being looked into. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, however, expressed his sorrow at the death of the three innocent women on Monday. In

related news, it was reported that the IDF spokesman had confirmed Monday's report in *Ha'aretz* that the army was using Flechette rounds in the Gaza Strip. IDF insisted that the use of the Flechette rounds was legal, but a Palestinian officer argued that international conventions forbade their use. IDF had previously used the rounds in the security zone in Lebanon against Hezbollah cells. The round was considered to be most effective in an open area, where its dispersal of hundreds of tiny metal arrows increased the strike radius. However, the use of the Flechette, which scattered the arrows around the target rather than hitting it precisely, was much more problematic in Gaza, a densely populated area. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 June)

56. On the night of 13 June, it was reported, a Palestinian man from Hebron was killed and three others were slightly wounded in a drive-by shooting near Mishor Adumim when their truck was fired upon by unknown assailants. Palestinian officials blamed settlers for carrying out the shooting. The Council of Jewish Settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip issued a statement shortly after the attack, saying: "Murder is murder, and if the act was perpetrated by a Jew, we condemn it and demand that justice be served." (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 June)

57. On 17 June, it was reported that six peace activists would submit complaints to the internal investigation department of the Israel Police, charging the police with brutality during a non-violent joint Israeli-Palestinian demonstration in Kafr al-Khader the previous Friday. The police had allegedly broken the arm of one of the complainants. The demonstration had been organized to protest an unauthorized settlement outpost established on the village's lands. The brutal treatment of the demonstrators was highlighted by the fact that police had been sent to protect settlers who had illegally set up caravans on the land, against whom no action was being taken, according to a Gush Shalom spokesman. The organization reported that the activists intended to charge the police with beating and unnecessary use of tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse a non-violent and legitimate demonstration. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 June)

58. On 17 June, a 12-year-old Palestinian boy was killed by IDF gunfire near Gush Katif in the Gaza Strip. The boy, Murad Ali Abu-Sweish, from the Khan Yunis refugee camp, was hit during the dispersal of a demonstration near the Tufah position between Neveh Dekalim and the camp. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 June)

59. On 20 June, it was reported, in Kiryat Sefer checkpoint in the Modi'in area in the West Bank, a Palestinian was shot dead by an IDF patrol when he reportedly refused to halt as they tried to stop him from crossing the Green Line. IDF said it was investigating the incident. In other incidents in the West Bank and Gaza, it was reported that settlers had rampaged through neighbouring Palestinian villages, vandalizing property and beating passers-by following the killing of a Jewish settler by Palestinians the day before. According to Voice of Palestine radio reports, the settler murder resulted in stepped-up settler vigilante attacks on villages in the Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarm areas, as well as an assault on Silat a-Dahar, where the settler had been killed. Within hours of the murder, houses in the village of Bazariye and Burka were vandalized and pedestrians in the village were beaten by settlers. IDF stated that it knew nothing of the vigilante action, saying it was a police matter. Palestinian sources said the settler vigilantes were protected by army troops. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 21 June)

60. On 24 June, in what appeared to be a resumption of the policy of eliminating major Palestinian activists, a Fatah activist wanted by Israeli forces was killed when a public phone he was using in the West Bank city of Nablus exploded. IDF refused to comment on the incident, and the Prime Minister's Office would neither confirm nor deny the report, saying only that Israel reserved the right of self-defence. Fatah leaders said that the assassination had ended the ceasefire. Osama Jawabreh, 29, died that morning in the explosion in the centre of Nablus, where he lived. Two Palestinian children who were near the phone booth, a brother and sister aged 2 and 4, were wounded by shrapnel and were hospitalized in Nablus. The circumstances of the incident were almost identical to the explosion the previous April that had killed Iyad Hardan, chief of the military faction of the Islamic Jihad in the West Bank. Hardan also had been killed when a bomb went off in a public phone booth.

The incident was considered an assassination, although Israel had not admitted to it. Several other explosives specialists working in Palestinian organizations had also been killed during the past year. According to Palestinian Authority figures, some 30 key figures had been killed since the start of the intifada in September 2000. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 June*)

61. On 1 July, it was reported that at least 13 Palestinians had been injured in incidents in the West Bank and Gaza during the previous weekend. One of the Palestinians was in serious condition. According to Israeli sources, five Palestinians, most of them apparently part of the unit firing the mortars, had been injured when one of the devices exploded while it was being fired. Israel denied Palestinian claims that they had been struck by Israeli tank fire. Several large demonstrations were held in the occupied territories that Friday afternoon. In the Ayosh junction, north of Ramallah, Israeli soldiers fired rubber-coated steel bullets at demonstrators. Eight demonstrators were wounded, one seriously. In related news, it was reported that an Egyptian police officer, Sayed al-Ghareeb Ahmed, had died two days earlier near the Rafah border crossing. Egyptian authorities said he had been killed by stray Israeli gunfire aimed at Palestinian demonstrators, while IDF said soldiers had found the body near the Nitzana crossing and returned it to Egyptian officials. It was reported that Israeli and Egyptian officials were investigating the incident jointly. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 1 July*)

62. On 2 July, it was reported that two Palestinians, one a Hamas activist and the other a policeman, had been killed early the day before during an exchange of gunfire with an IDF Golani unit near Jenin. Israeli Army officials believed the two had been on their way to plant bombs on nearby roads used by soldiers and Israeli civilians. Bassam Abu Sharif, an adviser to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, claimed that the soldiers had ambushed a Palestinian police patrol supervising the area to ensure that Palestinians did not fire on Israeli targets. He accused Israel of purposefully escalating the situation in order to avoid moving ahead with the Mitchell plan. A third Palestinian, a 15-year-old resident of Gaza, had also died the previous day, succumbing to injuries sustained in clashes with IDF forces a few days earlier. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 2 July*)

63. On 3 July, Palestinians vowed to avenge the deaths of three Palestinian activists killed in an Israeli air force helicopter missile attack on their car as they drove near Jenin shortly before midnight on 1 July. The three were Mohammed Besharat, Sameh Abu Hameish and Walid Beshart. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared that Israel had the right to act in self-defence. Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat declared that the incident was a serious violation of the ceasefire and called upon the international community to condemn the incident and deploy international forces to safeguard the Palestinians. Palestinian Authority Cabinet Secretary Abdel Ahmed Rahman called for the immediate convening of a meeting of the United Nations Security Council. Jenin governor Zuher Manasra told Israel Radio that the attack "will have a negative impact on the Palestinian people: all of those killed have friends, family and connections to political organizations who will want to act and avenge their deaths". (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 3 July*)

64. On 4 July, a leading Fatah activist was moderately wounded in Hebron in a shooting which Palestinians claimed was an assassination attempt by Israeli undercover agents. Palestinian witnesses said that Hazem Falah Natche, 27, had been shot in the abdomen when two men dressed in civilian clothes opened fire at him with M-16 assault rifles in one of the alleys near Police Square in central Hebron. IDF said it had no knowledge of the shooting. The attack came after the security cabinet had approved an "active defence" policy towards Palestinian activists in order to foil attacks. Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said Israel would continue in its efforts to foil attacks since the Palestinians were not doing anything to stop terror. He said that military actions were being undertaken to give citizens a sense of security. A senior Palestinian official said that an Israeli cabinet decision to "assassinate" Palestinian activists proved it was not committed to a United States-brokered ceasefire designed to end nine months of violence. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 5 July*)

65. On 5 July, a Palestinian was killed during exchanges of gunfire between the army and Palestinians that erupted near the settlement of Psagot the previous night. Palestinians said 39-year-old Nasser Abed had been shot in the chest as he played soccer near the settlement. Israeli sources claimed that

the violence had broken out after Palestinians shot at soldiers in the settlement and at an IDF jeep nearby. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 6 July)

66. On 8 July, in the Gaza Strip, Israeli troops shot dead 11-year-old Khalil Mughrabi, while in Hebron, it was reported that six Palestinian residents were injured in the clashes, including a 5-year-old boy who suffered light wounds. Israeli troops reportedly arrested a dozen Palestinians and clamped a curfew on Hebron city centre. Palestinians said that in another incident that had occurred two days earlier, IDF undercover soldiers had shot a Fatah activist, seriously wounding him. The man, identified as Sharif Omer, 22, was taken to Alia Hospital in Hebron for treatment. It was the second time that a senior Tanzim activist was shot in mysterious circumstances in Hebron during the previous week. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 8 July)

67. On 8 July, IDF undercover and regular troops arrested a wanted Hamas activist in Palestinian-controlled Hebron, prompting claims by Palestinians that he had been "abducted". Military sources denied there was a new policy to abduct rather than liquidate activists, saying the arrest was part of the general effort to foil attacks. Witnesses said the undercover troops had been travelling in a van with yellow Israeli licence plates that had entered the Palestinian part of the city near the Zechuchit junction and suddenly blocked a car being driven by Hamas member Ayoub Sharawi, 38. The undercover troops, along with soldiers in uniform, had pulled out their weapons, surrounded the vehicle and taken him away, leaving his wife, Sadiyah, and their children. Three men wearing civilian clothes had jumped out of the van, yelling "Get out! Get out!" she told local reporters. She said her husband had grabbed hold of the steering wheel as the men tried to pull him out of the car, and she held onto him while their three children sat in the back seat, screaming. They smashed the front window of his car and pulled him away, she said. IDF had no comment on the incident. But military sources insisted that the arrest, which they confirmed had taken place in Palestinian-controlled Area A, had been aimed at foiling Hamas attacks. They also said that the operation had been carried out by soldiers in uniform. In related news, Palestinians in Rafah buried Khalil Ibrahim al-Mughrabi, 11, who had been shot in the head the previous Saturday near an area containing Palestinian militants and Israeli troops. Since the beginning of the intifada almost 10 months earlier, 510 Palestinians and 121 Israelis had been killed. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 9 July)

68. On 11 July, IDF apologized for the shooting death of a Palestinian woman by IDF soldiers in the southern West Bank. It said that an initial investigation had found that the shooting had been a tragic mistake. The Military Police had begun investigating the incident the previous day. Soldiers involved said they had opened fire on a van carrying eight Palestinian women passengers after it had broken through an IDF roadblock and refused to heed orders to stop. IDF said the initial inquiry had found that the troops had acted according to standing orders. However, the driver, a Bedouin who was apparently taking the women from Dehariya to the Negev to work, said he had never seen either a roadblock or any soldiers. The dead woman, identified as Rasmia Jabarin, 38, was mortally wounded in the head and died before she could receive medical treatment. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 12 July)

69. On 12 July, IDF tanks rumbled into Palestinian territory near Nablus and shelled two police positions, killing one Palestinian policeman, in retaliation for the ambush of a car which had resulted in the wounding of three members of a family from the settlement of Bracha, in the West Bank. In another incident, about two dozen settlers marched on the Hebron market and Zechuchit junction and clashed with Palestinians. Police separated the two sides, but not before over 100 cars were reportedly damaged and Palestinian shops set afire. Palestinians said that nine people had been shot in the clashes, but IDF said it only knew of one shooting incident. The shelling of the police station resulted in the death of Mohammed Abu Fayyad, 22, a member of Palestinian Intelligence. Seven others were reportedly wounded in the tank shelling, including a 12-year-old boy (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 13 July)

70. On 13 July, IDF launched an assault on posts in Hebron operated by Force 17, the Palestinian Presidential Guard. IDF infantry, with supporting fire from tanks and armoured personnel carriers, destroyed five posts belonging to units of Force 17 in the Hebron area. The posts, located a few

hundred metres within Palestinian-controlled territory, were destroyed using anti-tank missiles and tank shells. A Force 17 armoury was destroyed in the IDF raid and three Force 17 members were hurt. The Israeli forces pulled out of the area when the operation was completed. According to Palestinian sources, about 20 Palestinians were injured, 2 seriously, in what they described as the heaviest IDF shelling of Hebron since the outbreak of the intifada the previous autumn. The shelling knocked out several generators, leaving many neighbourhoods without electricity. The Palestinian residents of the old section of Hebron, numbering about 20,000, were placed under curfew. They reported that some of the 400 Jewish settlers in the area had taken advantage of the curfew to vandalize Palestinian cars and houses. In a separate incident, Hamas operative Fawwaz Badran, 27, was killed in central Tulkarm when his car exploded as he stepped in. Palestinian Authority leaders charged that Israel had assassinated Badran, but the IDF spokesman refused to comment on the incident. In another separate incident, near the Nissanit settlement in Gaza, IDF soldiers raced to catch Palestinians reported to be laying mines. One of the three Palestinians in the group hurled a hand grenade at the IDF force as it approached. The IDF troops returned fire, including tank fire, killing one of the Palestinians, A'ataf Tabash. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 15 July)

71. On 15 July, an Israeli military unit snatched an Islamic Jihad activist from Palestinian Authority territory near Bethlehem. The military spokesman declined to comment on the reported operation. Mahmud Juma Hamdan, 44, was seized from the village of A-Rahma, south of Bethlehem, in Area A, under full Palestinian Authority control. The Israeli force, presumably composed of members of the General Security Service and IDF soldiers, arrested Hamdan. Hamdan is not the only Palestinian activist to be apprehended over the past few months. Recent GSS investigations had revealed a number of veteran Fatah members suspected of involvement in hostile activities against Israel; some of those activists had been arrested. The above-mentioned seize-operation was the second of its kind within a week. The first had involved the abduction of a senior member of the Hamas military wing from Palestinian Authority territory in Hebron. In related news, Palestinian sources said that 20 Palestinians had been slightly to moderately injured by IDF gunfire in the area of Hebron. Meanwhile, the Voice of Palestine radio station reported that three of the injured had been shot by Jewish settlers from the Avraham Avinu neighbourhood of the city. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 16 July)

72. On 16 July, IDF tanks fired on the Jenin offices of the Palestinian General Intelligence Service. Earlier in the day, Israeli tanks had entered into the Palestinian sector of Hebron to exchange heavy fire with Palestinian gunmen. It was the deepest incursion since the Israeli withdrawal negotiated by then premier Benjamin Netanyahu. The raid was in retaliation for Palestinian fire on Israeli army posts and a Jewish settlement in Hebron the previous Sunday night. Nine Palestinians were wounded and four Force 17 police posts in Hebron were destroyed. Later in the day, an Israeli tank and four military vehicles entered Palestinian territory on the outskirts of Tulkarm and fired three shells at a deserted Palestinian checkpoint, eyewitnesses reported. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 17 July)

73. On 19 July, three Palestinians, including an infant, were shot and killed on a West Bank road near Hebron. A Jewish extremist group calling itself "the Committee for Road Safety" took responsibility. The three dead, including a two-and-a-half-month-old baby girl, and four wounded were all from the same family. Dead on arrival at Hebron Hospital were Mohammed Salameh Etnizi, 22, Mohammed Hilmy Etnizi, 20, and an infant, 3-year-old Amira Wael Etnizi. The other four were being treated. Among the wounded was a four-month-old girl, Ruwan, her mother Samar, 22, and Najib, 16, who had been married just the previous week to Mohammed Salameh. The Prime Minister's Office that night issued a condemnation of the shooting attack. The shooting took place outside the village of Idna, west of Hebron, on the Tarqumiya road. The victims were all residents of Idna. A witness, Akram Etnizi, a relative of the victims, said the shooters' car had been parked on the side of the road when the Palestinian car passed, and then they shot at the car. According to eyewitnesses, at least one man had approached the car and fired into it. Police sources said the settler car then headed west, speeding past an army checkpoint, apparently in the direction of Kiryat Gat. Police laid a dragnet in the area, but it had not found the car. The group claimed responsibility for puncturing the tires of 40 Palestinian cars and beating up at least four Palestinians, as well as blowing up a Palestinian shop in Hebron with a cooking gas cylinder earlier in the year. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 20 July)

74. On 23 July, it was reported that a 48-year-old Palestinian had been killed shortly after midnight the day before by IDF fire near Netzarim in Gaza. Palestinian sources said that Yihye Subhi Day had been killed either in or near his home in the village of Murarka. IDF sources said that at about 10 p.m. the previous Saturday night, Palestinians had begun firing at an IDF outpost near Netzarim. An IDF tank crew had observed two suspicious figures and had fired machine guns and grenades at them. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 23 July)

75. On 23 July, following the previous Sunday's dramatic capture of a would-be suicide bomber in downtown Haifa, security forces also tracked down the suspect's two accomplices. One was arrested outside Kibbutz Mizra in the Jezreel valley and a third member of the group, Mustafa Yusef Muhammad Yassin, 28, was shot and killed west of Jenin by a Border Police force. The three were allegedly from an Islamic Jihad group based in Jenin. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 24 July)

76. On 26 July, it was reported that a group of Western diplomats travelling from Jerusalem to Ramallah claimed they had seen Israeli troops near Jerusalem firing live ammunition at a group of children throwing stones, even though the children were too far away to pose a risk to the soldiers. The diplomats said that shots were fired even though a long line of civilian cars were travelling past the children at the time. They also thought that one of the children had been injured, because shortly after the shooting the group of children had gathered around one youngster. The diplomatic convoy was slowed near Qalandia refugee camp by an IDF roadblock set up a couple of hundred metres from the entrance to the camp. One of the diplomats told *Ha'aretz* that the children hid behind garbage containers and threw stones at an IDF lookout, at the edge of the nearby Atarot airfield. He said the soldiers were well protected in their high post, but in any case one of the soldiers had shot at the children. The diplomats believed that live fire had been used. The diplomat said that he had seen a second soldier in the observation tower clapping and raising his hands as if in victory after his colleague had fired at the children. In related news, it was reported that earlier in the day, Israel had admitted assassinating a senior Hamas activist in Nablus and that an undercover unit entered Qalqilya and kidnapped two Palestinians who were high on Israel's most-wanted list, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and a member of the Tanzim militia. Palestinian witnesses said that four rockets had struck a red car driven by Salah Darwazi, 37, near the Al-Ayn refugee camp close to Nablus. IDF took responsibility for the attack. Israel had assassinated a number of Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists in recent weeks. The majority of the operations had been carried out against members in their offices in the northern parts of the West Bank, around Nablus and Jenin. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 July)

77. On 28 July, among a number of violent clashes, Israeli helicopters attacked an alleged munitions workshop near Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip and a Palestinian officer was seriously wounded in an exchange of gunfire near Hebron. IDF said that its attack had destroyed a metal workshop where mortars were produced and that the strike had been conducted in retaliation for the firing of three mortar shells the previous Friday night at the nearby Jewish settlement of Gadid. "Air force helicopters attacked a structure used to manufacture weapons", an army statement said. In a separate incident in the West Bank, Major Omar Abd al-Aziz, the commander of Palestinian security forces in the village of Beni Naim, was wounded in the head by an Israeli sniper, according to Palestinian sources. After initial treatment at Alia Hospital in Hebron, he was transferred to Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 29 July)

78. On 28 July, it was reported that the B'Tselem human rights organization had issued a report charging that 12 soldiers from the Shimshon Battalion had abused and humiliated the drivers and passengers of two Palestinian taxis the previous week on the Samoa-Hebron highway. According to B'Tselem, which published the testimony of four of the alleged victims, the soldiers had stopped the taxis, ordered the drivers and passengers out of the car, beat them, vandalized their taxis, stolen money and forced the Palestinians to beat each other up or be killed. The incident had occurred on 23 July at noon, according to B'Tselem. One of the taxi drivers, Khaled Mershed Rawashdeh, 36, said that he was driving past an army jeep when one of the four soldiers standing beside it whistled at him to stop. The soldiers in the jeep, and four others in a second jeep, ordered the passengers out of the

taxi and started to beat up the Palestinian men. According to Rawashdeh, the soldiers ordered him to drive his taxi at full speed over a stone wall in order to damage it. Afterwards, they slashed his tires and seat covers and smashed his windows. In the meantime, the troops stopped a second taxi and four more soldiers joined them. They ordered the men out of the vehicle and started to beat them. Afterwards, they lined up the nine Palestinians and ordered them to beat each other up. "They threatened to shoot anyone who didn't do it, and whoever wanted to be a martyr just had to disobey that order", said Rawashdeh. "So we began to beat each other with our fists in the head and the face. Anyone who tried to beat his partner lightly was beaten by the soldiers until he beat his partner harder. This lasted for 10 minutes. They told one of the men, Abdel Muttaleb Mahareeq, to beat us one by one. He refused, but the soldiers threatened to kill him on the spot. The other men asked him to beat them. With tears falling from his eyes, the young man started to beat us with his fist on our faces and heads. He tried to beat us gently, but one of the soldiers put his gun to his head and told him to beat us more seriously." The abuse of the Palestinians continued for two hours, according to the B'Tselem report. The IDF spokesman confirmed that "the soldiers acted in an aggressive manner" towards the people in the taxis, and admitted to the soldiers' slashing the cab's tires and forcing the passengers to fight with one another. The office added that the army has no knowledge of stolen money from the cabs, nor of the Palestinian driver's claim that he had been forced to damage his car by driving over a wall. After an initial investigation, the army had ordered a military police investigation of the incident, the office said. The results of the investigation were to be submitted to the Judge Advocate-General. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 July; *Jerusalem Post*, 31 July)

79. On 29 July, police stormed the Temple Mount after stones rained down on Jewish worshipers at the Western Wall, exactly 10 months after the fatal clashes that ignited the Al-Aqsa Intifada. This time no one died, but dozens were injured, including 19 policemen. Police arrested about 30 Palestinians suspected of rioting. As in recent years, the Temple Mount Faithful, a fringe group seeking to re-establish a Jewish presence on the mount, had gathered on Tisha B'Av to symbolically lay the cornerstone for the Third Temple. Against the background of the 10-month intifada, this annual ritual by a couple of dozen ageing enthusiasts attracted world attention this year. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 30 July)

80. On 30 July, Israeli attack helicopters fired several missiles at the headquarters of the Palestinian civilian police in Gaza, injuring seven policemen and destroying what security forces described as a workshop for the production of mortar shells. The Palestinian civilian or "blue" police in Gaza were under the command of General Razi Jabali. Palestinians said four helicopters had flown over the area and fired five missiles, of which only three had exploded. Earlier in the day, an explosion had killed six Palestinians, members of Fatah, near Jenin. Israeli sources said the six had been involved in preparing a car bomb in a shed when it exploded. However, Palestinian sources rejected this and blamed Israel for killing the six. Palestinian officials accused Israel of assassinating the men, whom they said were on Israel's most-wanted list. Israeli security sources said three of the Palestinians were members of the military intelligence organization of Musa Arafat and were wanted by Israel for their role in a bomb placed in a Tel Aviv bus the previous year. They were also believed to be involved in two bomb attacks in recent months, the sources said. "An explosion of unclear origin occurred. Six people were killed and two injured", Jenin's acting governor, Haidar Irshid, told reporters. "We are now investigating the cause of the explosion." Earlier, Palestinian security officials said the men had been killed by shells fired from the settlement of Elon Moreh, about 25 kilometres from Jenin. A Reuters television cameraman in Jenin several hours after the blast said there had been no signs of tank shells at the site. Deputy Defence Minister Dalia Rabin-Pelossof told Army Radio that "attackers who are trying to make explosive devices ... have recently been making many mistakes and they pay with their lives for it". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 31 July)

81. On 2 August, it was reported that a 35-year-old Palestinian man had been killed the previous day in Hebron by IDF fire. Mohammed Sharabati was shot after a mock funeral in the town in honour of the eight Palestinians killed on Tuesday in Nablus turned into a violent demonstration. Similar mock funerals were held throughout towns and cities in the territories and in some cases, youths approached IDF outposts and threw stones. Shooting incidents were reported in the Tulkarm area, north of

Ramallah, after hundreds of demonstrators threw stones at an IDF outpost to protest against the closure of the road between Ramallah and villages north of the city. Eight Palestinians were wounded, said the Palestinian news service. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 August)

82. On 3 August, the IDF killed a Palestinian allegedly belonging to a cell that had placed numerous bombs along the road leading up to Mount Ebal settlement, near Nablus. Another six members of the cell were wounded. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 August)

83. On 4 August, it was reported, Israel tried to assassinate a prominent Palestinian activist in Ramallah. Muhanad Dirya (Abu Halaweh), a member of Force 17 and a senior aide to the head of the Tanzim forces in the West Bank, Marwan Barghouti, was slightly injured in the attempted liquidation. Palestinian sources reported that, around 3 p.m. the previous day, two missiles had been fired from the Psagot settlement at a car in which Abu Halaweh, 22, had been travelling. The first missile, the sources said, had missed the car, allowing Abu Halaweh time to escape before the vehicle was destroyed by the second. Barghouti visited Abu Halaweh in his Ramallah hospital bed and accused Israel of making an attempt on his life. Israeli security sources confirmed the action, claiming, however, that the target had been Abu Halaweh, and not Barghouti. In related news, it was reported that a 4-year-old Palestinian boy, Majid Jilad, had been seriously injured the previous Friday night by shots fired from an IDF armoured personnel carrier. The boy had been travelling in a car with his grandfather towards the town of Tulkarm, Palestinian sources reported. The IDF spokesman's office said that soldiers at a surprise roadblock had opened fire at the lower section of the car, which had been travelling at a high speed and was endangering the lives of the troops. The spokesman's office added that the car had failed to heed orders to stop. According to Palestinian sources, however, the boy's grandfather had slowed down, yet the soldiers had opened fire at the car anyway. The boy received initial medical care in the Anabta refugee camp and was then transferred to Tel Hashomer hospital. Also the same day, in Dura, south of Hebron, IDF fired three tank shells at structures belonging to the Palestinian Authority national security forces, in response to continuous shooting at soldiers in the area. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 August)

84. On 6 August, it was reported that the Israeli defence establishment had published a list of seven Palestinian terrorists the Palestinian Authority had refused to arrest, despite Israel's requests. The publication of the list followed the previous day's assassination of Omar Mansour Hassan al-Madiri, a Hamas activist from Tulkarm. The list had been issued as a Defence Ministry press release. Israel had often used the Palestinians' refusal to arrest wanted activists as justification for killing them. Al-Madiri, 26, had been killed when an IDF helicopter fired three missiles at his car at about 4.30 p.m. the previous day. Three Palestinian bystanders were slightly injured in the attack. Hamas, Fatah and the Palestinian Authority all denounced the killing, demanding international intervention to protect the Palestinians and accusing the United States of giving Israel a green light "to commit its crimes". Al-Madiri was Israel's third attempted assassination in the previous week, following the killing of Jamal Mansour and Jamal Salim of Hamas the previous Tuesday and a failed strike at Muhanad Dirya of Force 17 that Saturday. Security sources said that with Al-Madiri's death, Israel had now killed most of Hamas's key military activists in Tulkarm and Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 6 August)

85. On 6 August, it was reported that, according to testimony from various sources, Palestinians in Baka al-Garbiyeh area told a *Ha'aretz* reporter that over the past two months border policemen had been abusing Palestinian workers caught on the seam between Israel and the West Bank, taking them in their jeeps to a grove near Kibbutz Metsar, north of Baka al-Garbiyeh and beating them. The pattern seemed to be that the border policemen would detain a few people and check their ID papers. Most of the detainees were then released, but two or three were put on the jeep and taken through the fields to Metsar. Over the past two months, at least five Palestinians whose names were known to *Ha'aretz* had been beaten in that way. Sometimes, the sources said, the policemen were satisfied with merely annoying them or giving them a punch or two and demanding that they curse Yasser Arafat. Border Police spokeswoman Liat Perl said that the inquiry on the matter raised by *Ha'aretz* had been referred to the Police Investigations Unit of the Justice Ministry. If the charges were found to be true, the necessary measures would be taken. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 August)

86. On 7 August, it was reported that IDF that week had loosened the rules of engagement for soldiers serving in the occupied territories. The new rules allowed a sharper reaction to shooting at IDF forces or Israeli civilians and to a large extent returned the situation to what it had been before the Tenet understandings. IDF said that the decision to loosen the rules had been taken as a result of the sharp increase in the number of violent incidents in the territories, especially in the previous week. Soon after the start of the intifada, new rules of engagement had been handed down which were given the code name Blue Lilac by the Judge Advocate General's Office. The new rules gave field commanders leeway to decide on when to open fire on Palestinians they regarded as a source of danger to Israeli troops or civilians. The rules had been updated a number of times in various sectors, with gradual expansion of the means of engagement available to the troops. However, during the current week the Blue Lilac rules had been reinstated. According to those rules, in some areas in the territories, determined by the commanding generals, it was now permissible to fire on any Palestinians carrying a weapon under circumstances that raised the suspicion that they might be combatants against IDF or belong to a Palestinian force operating against IDF. In response to fire coming from an unidentified source, IDF troops had permission to respond immediately, to deter further Palestinian fire. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 August)

87. On 7 August, it was reported that serious anomalies had become apparent in versions of how Mahdi Abd al-Fatah Mizayed, 25, a resident of the village of Anabta, had been killed the previous Sunday night. According to the IDF version, Mizayed had been shot in the head by soldiers who opened fire against Palestinians laying a bomb on a road junction near the Ramin village, east of Tulkarm in the West Bank. IDF said that another Palestinian had been injured by the gunfire but managed to escape. However, the director of the Tulkarm hospital, Dr. Ahmad Abu Bakar, who examined the body, refuted the claim. He said Mizayed had died because his skull was fractured, not from the gunshot wounds found on the body. A Reuters news agency report quoted eyewitnesses the previous day who said that they had seen four soldiers chasing Mizayed. They said the soldiers had caught Mizayed and beat and kicked him and used their rifle butts to hit his head until he stopped moving. An IDF spokesman rejected that version and said that Mizayed had been struck by a bullet to the head and a military doctor had determined his death at the scene. The spokesman said IDF sappers had confirmed that Mizayed had been planting a bomb in the area. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 August)

88. On 10 August, it was reported, Israeli fighter bombers and tanks pounded Palestinian security forces buildings in retaliation for the previous day's suicide bombing in a restaurant in the centre of Jerusalem that claimed the lives of 15 people and left scores of others injured. No casualties were reported as a result of the Israeli action, primarily due to the fact that the Palestinians had evacuated the buildings immediately after news of the terrorist attack had broken. Also in response to the terror attack, Israeli security forces carried out early-morning raids on Palestinian offices in East Jerusalem, including on the symbol of the Palestinian presence in the city, Orient House. No injuries were reported in the operation, which also spread to the nearby village of Abu Dis. The strikes against the Palestinian security targets began while the cabinet was still deliberating Israel's response to the suicide bombing. According to Palestinian sources, two F-16 fighter-bombers flew over targets in Ramallah for several minutes. The main target of the fighter-bombers was the headquarters of the Palestinian civilian police, which was severely damaged in the attack. Two bombs, each weighing about a ton, were dropped on the target in Ramallah. IDF tanks entered Palestinian-held areas near the Karni junction that Thursday night and destroyed a number of Palestinian security positions. The tanks withdrew after completing their operation. In another incident, two Palestinians, Muhammed Saka, 20, and Maher Afaneh, 27, were killed near the Karni junction in the Gaza Strip when IDF troops opened fire on demonstrators in the area. The two men were injured by the gunfire and later died in hospital. According to Palestinian sources, six other Palestinians were injured during the clashes. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 August)

89. On 12 August, it was reported, a nine-year-old Palestinian girl was killed during separate shooting incidents in Hebron. According to Israeli sources, Palestinians had shot at an IDF position near the city's Jewish community. Soldiers returned fire and killed a nine-year-old girl, who was staying at her home. In another incident in the Gaza Strip, soldiers razed a two-storey Palestinian building located

near the Gush Katif junction. IDF claimed that Palestinians using the building had shot at an Israeli vehicle earlier in the morning near the Kissufim crossing. The army called the action necessary to safeguard Israeli civilians and soldiers travelling on the roads leading to the Jewish communities in the area. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 13 August)

90. On 15 August, undercover units reportedly hiding in a van shot dead a key Fatah Tanzim leader in Hebron, riddling his body with automatic gunfire. The man was identified as Imad Abu Sneineh, 25. Palestinian witnesses said that Abu Sneineh had been shot in the border area between Israeli- and Palestinian-controlled sectors of the city as he was getting out of his car near his home at around 7.40 a.m. They said Israeli security forces were waiting for Abu Sneineh in a parked blue-and-white van. When he appeared there was no attempt to apprehend him and he was simply shot dead by a burst of gunfire. He was reportedly hit in the head, chest, stomach and legs and died on the spot. Security sources said that the operation had been carried out jointly by elite IDF and Israel Police units. They also said there had been no attempt to arrest him. Abu Sneineh was married and the father of three children. Palestinians shut their shops and offices in Hebron in protest following his murder. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 16 August)

91. On 17 August, a Palestinian man was killed and 10 others were injured during an IDF operation inside the Palestinian-controlled area near Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian sources said that three of the injured were badly hurt. In incidents the following day, two Palestinian infants, one three months old and the other six months old, were seriously injured by IDF gunfire. The three-month-old was shot in the head when the car in which he was travelling came under fire near the al-Tufah junction south of Khan Yunis. The second infant was injured near Nablus when IDF soldiers shot at a vehicle trying to bypass a roadblock. Palestinian sources said the child had been critically injured. In another incident, Palestinian sources reported that a Hamas activist, Muhammed Abd al-Rahman Shadid, 25, a resident of the villager of Ilar, north of Tulkarm, had been abducted the previous Friday by Israeli forces from Area A (under full Palestinian Authority control). Israeli military sources refused to comment on the Palestinian claims. In still another incident, Ahmed Bisharat, a senior Fatah activist from the village of Tamun near Jenin, was shot in the shoulder and the leg by what Palestinian sources described as "masked gunmen". Palestinians maintain that this was yet another Israeli attempt to assassinate a Palestinian activist. About six weeks earlier, the Israel air force had attacked and killed another resident of the village, Muhammed Bisharat, an activist involved in Hamas and Islamic Jihad operations. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 19 August)

92. On 22 August, Israel failed in an attempt to assassinate the Hamas organization's alleged leading bomb-maker, Adnan al-Ghoul. The Israeli air force strike against al-Ghoul killed his son, Bilal, 20, and seriously injured another wanted Palestinian, Sa'id al-Arbid. Palestinian sources reported that Israeli helicopters had fired four missiles at two cars travelling in a valley north of the El Bureij refugee camp in the centre of the Gaza Strip. The two cars had hit, but Adnan al-Ghoul had escaped unharmed, the sources said. The two-car convoy had also been carrying a second senior Hamas activist, Mohammed Def, who had also walked away unscathed. In a separate incident, it was reported that an Egoz commando unit lying in ambush on the road to Mt. Eibal overlooking Nablus had killed five Palestinians just after midnight. The Israeli army claimed all five had been planning a bombing on the road, which was mostly used by IDF troops on their way to the base on the top of the mountain. Palestinians said four of the five had been unarmed and had been killed while trying to recover the body of one of three activists who tried to mine the road. In another incident in the same area, a 14-year-old bystander was killed during a firefight that broke out between armed Palestinians and IDF troops near Mt. Grizim. Meanwhile, Israeli troops fired two surface-to-surface missiles at a Palestinian police station near the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, moderately wounding seven policemen, Palestinian police and medical officials said. A police spokesman said that the station belonged to Palestinian civil police. The army said the strike was in response to a mortar attack on Gush Katif settlements, citing two such attacks in the previous day. But Palestinian National Security Forces chief Abdel-Razek al-Majaydeh denied that mortars had been fired recently and branded the Israeli claim "completely false". In another development, in Rafah, a Palestinian policeman was killed when he entered a house that had been taken over by IDF troops a few hours

earlier. The policeman had entered the house to investigate reports of the take over and was shot by the soldiers inside. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 August*)

93. On 23 August, it was reported that four Shimshon Brigade soldiers had been indicted the previous day in the military court of the Southern Command, charged with abusing Palestinian residents of the south Hebron area. The four were accused of beating and humiliating their victims and stoning and vandalizing their cars. The 23 August incident, originally reported by B' Tselem, the human rights organization, involved residents of the village of Samoa, south of Hebron. They reported that the soldiers had arrested them because the drivers of two taxis had driven onto a road forbidden to Palestinians. According to the indictments, the soldiers had made the passengers get out of the taxis near the village of Hirbat Karame, slapped them, used a helmet to hit one of the Palestinians in the face, and beat the passengers with their fists. Then they made the Palestinians stand in front of a wall and hit each other. The soldiers also smashed the windows of the cabs and slashed the tires. The alleged crimes include criminal assault, extortion, deliberate vandalism, causing injury, obstruction of justice, and conduct unbecoming soldiers. The case was the worst brought to court since the start of the Palestinian uprising in September 2000, and was also the first in which IDF had pressed criminal charges against soldiers. Meanwhile, Israel radio reported that a Tel-Sheva Palestinian resident had complained to the police that two Shimshon soldiers had arrested him while he was travelling in his car south of Hebron. According to the complaint, he was beaten, handcuffed, threatened with a weapon and humiliated for several hours. He said the soldiers made him stand in the sun for several hours at the Shema checkpoint without water. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 August*)

94. On 23 August, it was reported, Israel failed in an attempt to assassinate a senior Palestinian activist in the territories. The senior Fatah member in Nablus, Jihad Miseemy, escaped with only light injuries to his legs when IDF helicopters shot at his car. His bodyguard and relative, Sabar Miseemy, who was also in the car, was slightly wounded in his eyes by shrapnel. Miseemy, 43, had been on Israel's most-wanted list for the past four years. He had served as a colonel in the Palestinian civilian police force in Nablus. In another incident, it was reported that a 13-year-old Palestinian boy had been killed by Israeli soldiers in Khan Yunis during a particularly turbulent day in the Gaza Strip. Israeli sources claimed that Mohammed Zurub had been killed by live fire when he and a group of Palestinian youths had thrown stones at an IDF outpost. However, Palestinian sources said Zurub had been killed when he went to check on a Palestinian house the army had taken over and then left a few hours earlier. In another incident, it was reported that seven people, including six police officers, had been wounded when IDF tanks entered Area A (territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority) near the Dir El Balah refugee camp in Gaza, in retaliation for a mortar attack on a nearby settlement. The tanks fired six shells at a Palestinian Authority security outpost, badly damaging it, before withdrawing. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 August*)

95. On 26 August, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) charged that Hisham Abu Jamas, one of the Palestinian gunmen killed while carrying out a deadly raid on an Israeli army outpost in the Gaza Strip, had in fact been captured, interrogated and then murdered by the IDF. DFLP said its spotters outside the outpost, as well as the third gunman who survived the raid and fled, reported that Jamas had been wounded during the fighting. "The Israeli soldiers arrested Jamas after he was hit in the leg. They tried to get information out of him, but I am certain he said nothing. They then shot him several times in the head", said DFLP deputy Abu Leila. (*Jerusalem Post, 27 August*)

96. On 27 August, it was reported that IDF had shot and killed Mohammed Sharaf from Jabalya, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy. Israeli army sources claimed he had tried to cross the perimeter fence around the Gaza Strip and was probably on his way to carry out an attack inside Israel. However, some Palestinian sources in Gaza said the boy and his friends had been trying to cross the border to look for work in Israel, while others said that he was caught near a group of Palestinians getting ready to fire mortars into Israel. In another development, it was reported that a 65-year-old Palestinian man had been critically injured when IDF forces opened fire from an outpost near the settlement of Dugit. Khalan Mohammed Zayed, a fisherman, had gone a few meters into the sea to cast his net. He was shot at around 6.30 a.m. and taken immediately to the Gaza hospital where he was admitted to the

intensive care unit. Also the same day, it was reported that Israel had attacked Palestinian positions in Gaza and the West Bank with both fighter jets and ground forces, killing one Palestinian and wounding 21. Shortly after midnight, IDF ground troops, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers, entered the Gazan town of Rafah, on the Egyptian border, from several directions. The force penetrated more than a kilometre into Palestinian Authority territory and remained there for about two hours, during which time it destroyed two roadblocks north of the town and a command post of the Palestinian Authority's National Security Service. Another IDF force destroyed a National Security Service post in Gaza City. The operations were accompanied by exchanges of fire in which one Palestinian security officer was killed and another 10 were wounded. The dead man is Ala Abu Bakhra, 23, a member of the National Security Service. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 27 August*)

97. On 27 August, two missiles fired from helicopters hovering high above the West Bank killed Mustafa Zabri, the 63-year-old leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), at his office in the Ramallah suburb of El Bireh. Better known as Abu Ali Mustafa, he was the highest-ranking Palestinian leader killed by Israel since the beginning of the intifada nearly 11 months earlier, and one of the highest-ranking Palestinian leaders ever killed in years of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The assassination galvanized the oft-divided Palestinian political spectrum into unity, with wall-to-wall condemnations from the Hamas to the Palestinian Authority spokesmen, and threats by PFLP to avenge the slaying of the man who had replaced PFLP founder George Habash. The missiles had struck precisely in the late hours of the morning, slamming through the windows of Zabri's third-storey apartment and striking him while he was on the phone. The killing took place barely 200 metres from Yasser Arafat's West Bank headquarters in Ramallah. There was much damage to the room, but except for some broken glass, none to the rest of the building, which was mostly populated by Palestinian-American families. Nor were there any other casualties. In an outpouring of anger, Palestinians marched in the streets of West Bank towns in the hours after the killing. In Arrabe, Zabri's home village in the northern West Bank, about 5,000 people marched, led by gunmen firing in the air. Three American-Palestinian families lived in the building, including the al-Quaddumis, who lived directly beneath Zabri's office and had moved to the West Bank three years earlier from Manassas, Virginia. Leana Al Quaddumi, 15, said she had been doing the laundry when the missiles hit. "I heard the whole house shaking under my feet. I was terrified to death. Glass started flying around me. I started screaming, and then I left the house, running outside", she said. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 28 August*)

98. On 29 August, it was reported, a 26-year-old Palestinian resident from Hizmeh village, Khader Jeddua Kanaan, was murdered, apparently by Jewish terrorists. Two members of Kanaan's family riding in the same car were slightly injured in the shooting. A Jewish organization that identified itself as "Elazar" took responsibility for the lethal attack. In related news, it was reported that three Palestinians had been killed and several others wounded, including a doctor and an 8-year-old boy, in separate incidents in the West Bank and Gaza. Two Palestinians, 17-year-old Samar Zuarob and 24-year-old Muhamed al-Hamrani, were killed in Rafah in the early hours of the morning. An IDF unit had taken over a road between Rafah and Khan Yunis in Area A territory and, according to eyewitnesses, set up six new outposts manned by tanks. Rafah residents said tanks had fired at Palestinians on the road heading toward Khan Yunis, forcing the travellers to retreat. Zuarob was killed during the night by IDF fire on Block O, a neighbourhood near the Egyptian border. Al-Hamrani was killed when he joined some armed Palestinians who tried to prevent the tanks from advancing into the area. In another incident, Imad Hazaza, 19, from the village of Paron south of Tulkarm, was killed late the previous Tuesday night. His family said that when the incident occurred they had been in a tent in their fields near a corral where they kept sheep and cattle. In a third incident that day, 20 Palestinians were wounded by IDF fire, including a 56-year-old doctor, an 8-year-old boy, an 18-year-old woman and a 30-year-old man, as well as several children, in a bus caught by crossfire between Israeli troops and Palestinian gunmen. (*Ha'aretz, 30 August*)

99. On 30 August, two Palestinians were killed, including a 47-year-old doctor, and 23 were wounded, including a four-year-old boy, in separate incidents in the West Bank and Gaza. In Hebron, Dr. Mussa Safi Kidmat was killed during intense firefights between Palestinian gunmen and IDF

troops. According to some reports, he was killed while treating one of the wounded. According to other reports, he was a passerby, killed while walking home. Shooting in the city began shortly after 1 p.m., apparently at the same time as the funeral of a 32-year-old man from Force 17, who had been killed the previous Wednesday night in his car far from any known conflicts between IDF and Palestinian fighters. According to Palestinian and army sources, the fighting had been intense but sporadic throughout the day, coming to an end only around 5 p.m. Official Palestinian sources said IDF tanks at one point had entered a Palestinian-controlled area, but other reports said the tanks had only moved in to enter the area and were confronted by armed Palestinians who fired to prevent them from entering. At least 15 Palestinians were wounded in that confrontation, including 8-year-old Nidal al Amsi, who was seriously wounded by a bullet to his chest. In the Nur a-Sham refugee camp near Tulkarm, Palestinian sources claimed, IDF troops disguised as Arabs entered the edges of the camp and fired at Islamic Jihad activist Banwar Alian and another man travelling in Alian's car. Both men were wounded. When word of the presence of the undercover troops in the camp spread, a crowd began chasing after the soldiers' car. A helicopter overhead fired into the crowd to prevent it from stopping the soldiers' car. Five people were wounded in that incident. In Gaza, 4-year-old Omar Saduri of Kuntar was seriously wounded by a bullet to his stomach from IDF fire during an exchange with armed Palestinians. (*Ha'aretz*, 31 August)

5. Proposed law absolving persons of liability to compensate

100. On 24 July, it was reported that the defence establishment had decided not to pay any compensation to the family of the 12-year-old Palestinian boy Muhammed al-Durra, who had been killed in Gaza at the beginning of the intifada and became a symbol of the current uprising, nor to the families of other victims of Israeli actions during the hostilities. The decision was based on Israel's view that the victims were casualties of war and article 5 of the Damages Law explicitly stated that the "State is not responsible for damages as a result of actions taken by IDF during war operations." Attorney Ruth Bar, head of Insurance Claims at the Defence Ministry, said that if Israeli courts nonetheless ruled that Israel had to pay damages to Palestinians injured in the hostilities, the Defence Ministry "will of course abide by the ruling". The State's position was in accordance with international law, she said, noting that international law recognized the State as not culpable for damages caused during war. But she did note that in some cases the Ministry might decide nonetheless to provide humanitarian assistance, "without prejudice" regarding other cases. "So far we haven't been down that channel", she said. The defence establishment decision meant that it was unlikely that Palestinian victims of vigilante attacks would be compensated, either. Asked whether there wasn't any concern that Israel's reputation might be damaged by the decision not to pay the al-Durra family and the families of other children killed during the disturbances, Bar said that "during war, innocents are hurt on both sides. Just as a Palestinian baby was killed, so too was Shalhevet Pass in Hebron, and the Palestinians did not compensate her family." To date, some 450 suits seeking compensation for personal and property damage had been brought by Palestinians, at a rate of some 50 every month. Most came from Gaza, where a human rights group had been established early on in the intifada, urging people to submit claims for damages. The claims so far added up to hundreds of millions of shekels. Asked why the State had compensated victims of Israeli army actions in the first intifada, Bar said that the first intifada "was a civil uprising, and did not involve uniformed members of militias, wearing signs of sovereignty". In a related development, a Haifa District Court judge ruled that a case for NIS 4.5 million in compensation, brought by a man whose property in the village of Beit Jala had been damaged, was likely to be rejected by the court. The plaintiff, Jacob Casey, complained that on 27 October, IDF "negligence" in responding to fire on Gilo from Beit Jala had resulted in the destruction of a three-storey house, the five apartments within it and all they contained. He had asked for NIS 4.5 million in compensation, and asked the court not to charge him court fees. Ruling that he had to pay the fees "if the plaintiff wants to take the risk of pursuing his suit", the judge said: "I doubt the plaintiff will be able to prove that the State owes him the principle of caution under the circumstances described in the plaintiff's suit." (*Ha'aretz*, 24 July)

II. Situation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

101. On 24 June, it was reported that the Housing Ministry had begun to market land for a new settlement in the northern Golan Heights called Metzuk Orvim. The tender was for 100 homes and 200 vacation bungalows. Knesset member Mossy Raz said that it would be the first settlement in the Golan Heights in 10 years. The tender for the land had been published in weekend newspapers. However, a Housing Ministry spokesperson said the land was for a new neighbourhood, an expansion of an existing settlement, and not a new settlement. “The establishment of a new settlement requires a cabinet decision”, he noted. Raz insisted that the tender was for the establishment of a new settlement, which he termed totally superfluous, and liable to only make it more difficult when the time came to reach an agreement with Syria. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 June)

III. Other

102. On 1 May, it was reported that since the signing of the Oslo agreements, the phrase “natural growth of the settlements” had given all Israeli Governments room to manoeuvre regarding the annual number of building starts across the Green Line, in accordance with a given policy and time period. Unlike the term “natural increase”, which was an accepted statistical term involving the number of births minus the number of deaths — the natural increase in the Jewish population of Judea, Samaria and Gaza was 3.4 per cent — the term “natural growth” was far more flexible. According to at least one interpretation, it might also include the market demands for housing in a given area. The late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had used the formulation to build thousands of housing units in the Greater Jerusalem area: Ma’aleh Adumim, Beitar Ilit, Givat Ze’ev and Gush Etzion. Rabin wanted to include the Greater Jerusalem area in the permanent borders of the State of Israel and had worked at increasing the population there. Benjamin Netanyahu had also used the flexibility of the term to increase building starts by 100 per cent in 1998, to 4,210, the highest in recent years, with the exception of Sharon’s stint in the Housing Ministry (1991-1992), when some 14,000 housing units had been built in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Under the sweeping term “natural growth”, many new neighbourhoods had been built in existing neighbourhoods, along with dozens of outposts. Barak, too, had found the “natural growth” concept convenient, especially when he still needed the right-wing National Religious Party in his coalition. In 2000, Barak had started the construction of some 2,500 housing units in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, as in the previous year, credited to Netanyahu. There were no figures yet for Sharon, but two tenders already published promised the construction of 712 housing units in Ma’aleh Ephraim and Ma’aleh Adumim. During Barak’s term as prime minister, tenders for the construction of 3,575 housing units had been published, with 2,600 in the Greater Jerusalem area. There had been an annual growth in construction of about 8 per cent in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, recently dropping to 7 per cent, double the natural increase in population. According to the Peace Now movement, construction in the settlements could be frozen for at least four years, because there were enough units available to meet the demands of natural increase along with the growth needs stemming from market demands. Those demands had dropped sharply since the beginning of the current intifada, a fact not denied by the Council for Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. (*Ha’aretz*, 1 May)

103. On 31 May, it was reported that in its most recent report on human rights in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Amnesty International was scathing in its description of abuses against Israelis, Palestinians and foreigners alike. On Israel, most of the report concentrated on the behaviour of Israeli security forces against Palestinians since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada on 29 September 2000. It accused the security forces of killing at least 300 Palestinians and wounding more than 10,000, most of them demonstrators who were throwing stones and using slingshots. At least 100 of the Palestinians killed were listed as being under 18 years of age. Amnesty accused IDF, the Israeli police, the Border Police and various special units of excessive use of lethal force, namely high-velocity bullets, rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition. The report also included cases where Palestinians had been assassinated without the benefit of trial. The Israeli air force and navy, according to the report, had made extensive use of heavy weapons, including rockets, helicopters and ships, to indiscriminately fire on areas from which armed Palestinians had opened fire. During the same period more than 2,000 people, most of them Palestinians, had been arrested for politically motivated violence. Many of those arrested were under-age and were charged with stone-throwing.

The arrests, according to Amnesty, normally took place during the night, with the use of large units. Some of those arrested complained of being beaten during the arrests. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, who carry Israeli identity cards and have resident status, who were arrested during the intifada had complained of being charged under military ordinance 378, formerly only applied to Palestinians in the territories. The report stated that in many instances, Palestinian prisoners were isolated from the outside world for periods ranging from 20 to 90 days. Many of those imprisoned complained of beatings by Israeli security personnel who, in most cases, had complete immunity. Hundreds of Palestinians were tried in military tribunals, according to the report, without the benefit of a fair trial according to internationally recognized standards. (*Ha'aretz*, 31 May)

104. On 2 July, Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi (National Union) elicited sharp responses after he referred to Palestinians working and living illegally in Israel as "lice" and a "cancer". Speaking on Army Radio, Ze'evi said about 180,000 Palestinians were in Israel illegally. "They arrived here and are trying to become citizens because they want social security and welfare payments", Ze'evi said. "We should get rid of the ones who are not Israeli citizens the same way you get rid of lice. We have to stop this cancer from spreading within us." (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 July)

105. On 2 July, it was reported that representatives of 905 Palestinian children in East Jerusalem had petitioned the High Court of Justice to be accepted into city public schools for the coming school year in September. It was the second appeal filed since mid-May regarding the issue. The most recent petition had involved 26 children who sought to force the city to register them for public schools. The petitioners were 905 of a group of an estimated 1,600 East Jerusalem children who had been placed on waiting lists for public school enrolment, for kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The petition also accused the municipality and the Education Ministry of failing to carry out all the instructions of a court ruling a year earlier that required them to produce a plan for resolving the overcrowding problem in the city's Arab schools. As a result of the ruling, most children who applied for kindergarten or the first grade had been accepted into public schools. But there were thousands more in higher grades who wished to transfer as well. One representative of the petitioners said that the city spent only 7 per cent of its education budget on the Arab sector, although Arabs were 33 per cent of the population. He noted that in Sur Baher there were roughly 11,000 pupils, yet not a single public school for girls. "The shortage of public schools amounts to unjustified discrimination", he said. An estimated 20,000 children in East Jerusalem attended private schools, paying tuition of at least \$1,000 a year per child, many of them due to a shortage in public schools, Bardin said. He said that as many as 15,000 would prefer to register for public schools, but could not due to lack of space. Due to the difficulty in affording such education, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Arab children aged 5 through 18 did not attend school at all, Joseph Alalu, a city councillor from Meretz, said. Municipal spokesman Hagai Elias said "there was no reason to present an additional petition", since a decision had been reached several months earlier to set up a committee to look into accepting more pupils from East Jerusalem into the school system. Elias said the city was processing 1,600 applications from pupils seeking to transfer from private schools. "Widening the official city school system in the eastern part of the city can only be done gradually", Elias added. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 July)

106. On 27 July, it was reported that Reporters without Borders said that 31 journalists had been injured in the West Bank and Gaza since the outbreak of the intifada the previous fall, and the International Press Institute the previous day said there had been 102 press freedom violations since the start of the conflict. Reporters without Borders said that nearly all the casualties had been caused by fire from Israeli security forces. Its report detailed 40 separate occasions in which 21 Palestinian, 7 French and 2 American reporters had been attacked or wounded, some of them more than once. Robert Manard, director of the French-based organization, said it was difficult to determine that the reporters had been shot deliberately, but in most of the cases they had been clearly identifiable as journalists. He refuted claims by the IDF spokesman's office that the reporters had been wounded while among Palestinian demonstrators, saying that in many cases the reporters had been standing apart from the demonstrators when they were shot. Government Press Office director Danny Seaman said he apologized on behalf of the Government to the reporters who had been wounded, irrespective of the circumstances. He said that to improve the situation soldiers had been shown a videotape

explaining the importance of the press, and a special form had been prepared for journalists to complain about inappropriate behaviour by soldiers. The International Press Institute report said that of the 102 violations of press freedom it had recorded, 87 per cent “were perpetrated by Israelis: 76 per cent by the authorities, including IDF, and 10 per cent by Israeli settlers. One additional per cent had been carried out jointly by these two and the remaining 13 per cent were blamed on Palestinians.” The Institute report recorded two deaths of Palestinian newsmen from among the 102 incidents. The report “recommends that the Israeli judiciary conduct investigations into the press freedom violations committed by the Israeli authorities and that the results of the investigations be made public”. It also called upon the Palestinians to end what the Institute calls “arbitrary detention and intimidation of journalists” and to “refrain from closing or censoring media outlets”. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 27 July*)

107. On 3 August it was reported that 30 human rights activists from Israel, Europe and America had moved in with Palestinian families in Beit Jala to act as “human shields” against heavy IDF firing into the village across the wadi from Gilo. IDF said it was trying to find out exactly where the activists were staying for fear that wounding or killing any of them would create an international incident. The group, calling itself “the International Solidarity Movement”, says its mission was to prevent harm to innocent Palestinians in the village when IDF retaliated with artillery and missiles for rifle fire from Palestinian snipers. Several Palestinians and a German doctor had been killed and dozens had been wounded by IDF fire at Beit Jala in response to sniper fire at Gilo. At least two of the 30 were Israeli women and the group said more activists were due to arrive soon. Neta Golan, who had been living in the village for a few weeks, told *Ha'aretz* that the activists were staying with Palestinian families in homes that had already been shelled. “I’m living with a family in which a five-year-old boy lost a hand from Israeli fire a few weeks ago. On Wednesday night, shells hit the building.” Another activist left a house with the family moments before a missile struck it. Golan said the activists “are not deluded into believing” that they can prevent shooting, “but we hope to draw international attention. It’s clear it would be more upsetting to IDF to hit one of us than some ‘innocent Palestinians’”. Golan said she had spotted Palestinians firing from Beit Jala towards Gilo. IDF said it had spotted three women from the group in a house snipers had used as a base in the past. Golan conceded that the women were in the house, but not while there was any firing from it. “We aren’t here to provide cover for Palestinian snipers”, she said, “but for the civilians who are hit by Israeli fire”. She said most Palestinian shooting was ineffectual and called the IDF responses “exaggerated”. She said nobody from IDF had contacted her to find out where she or the group was staying. IDF sources said the army was aware of the existence of the group in Beit Jala and was trying to avoid hitting any of them. They said that attempts to reach an arrangement with Palestinian officers to prevent fire from Beit Jala had failed during the current week following the helicopter attack on the Hamas offices in Nablus. (*Ha'aretz, 3 August*)

108. On 12 August, it was reported that the PLO headquarters in East Jerusalem, Orient House, had been the site of violent confrontations throughout the weekend after Israeli police had taken over and closed the building early that Friday morning. Dozens of Palestinian demonstrators and left-wing activists, mainly from Europe, had been beaten back by police officers as they tried to reach the building. Twelve protesters had been arrested. National Police Commissioner Shlomo Aharonishki said the working assumption of the police was that “Orient House will not reopen”. Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy claimed that Knesset member Mohammed Barakeh (Hadash) and Arab League spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi had come to the site to incite the demonstrators. Levy himself had been filmed punching a female Palestinian demonstrator in the belly and telling her to leave him alone after she grabbed on to his shirt during confrontations between demonstrators and police. The confrontations between police and demonstrators had begun early Friday morning, just hours after police took over the building. Palestinian activists and other demonstrators who tried to storm police barricades were forced back by police with what witnesses described as unnecessary brutality on the part of the officers. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 August*)

109. On 29 August, Palestinians claimed that Israeli troops in Beit Jala had taken control of a house containing a family of 20 people and were using them as a human shield against shooting from the

Ayida refugee camp. The closure enforced in areas of the town occupied by IDF also remained in full force. According to local people, about a dozen IDF soldiers were positioned in the house belonging to Mahmud al Masiyah and his family. The family, consisting of about 20 members, was being held captive in its own house, the refugee camp residents charged. They said that the family members had been forced down into the lowest floor of the structure and that the family was being held hostage and used by IDF as a human shield for protection against Palestinian gunfire. (*Ha'aretz*, 30 April)

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