



MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT JANUARY - MARCH 2006 FIELD REPORT

Introduction

This is the first quarterly field report of 2006 by Al-Haq's Monitoring and Documentation Department, covering the period from January to March 2006. Al-Haq's field reports cover human rights abuses which occurred during the reporting period; each report highlights a specific trend.

First-hand documentation by Al-Haq's Monitoring and Documentation Department constitutes the backbone of all other projects and activities undertaken by the organisation. Al-Haq's fieldworkers gather information and affidavits from victims of, and eyewitnesses to, human rights violations throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The field reports do not cover the Gaza Strip, since Al-Haq has no fieldworkers there. The Department continuously documents violations of all sorts, including comprehensive coverage of killings, house demolitions, curfews, and deportations. The information gathered is channelled into Al-Haq's advocacy at the local and international levels, including its interventions, legal research reports and campaigns.

Due to Israel's sustained and illegal occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip – together constituting the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) – since 1967, Al-Haq's monitoring and documentation activities have traditionally been directed towards the violations committed by Israel, the Occupying Power. However, Al-Haq also monitors and documents violations perpetrated by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

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

The human rights violations committed during the reporting period must be analysed in the broader context of the deteriorating general human rights situation since the outbreak of the second *intifada* on 29 September 2000, and the continuous disregard by Israel for international human rights and humanitarian law in the OPT.

According to Al-Haq's documentation, from the outbreak of the second *intifada* until the end of March 2006, 1,600 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, 308 of whom were children, and 88 of whom were women and girl children. It is estimated that 250 Palestinians were killed in targeted assassinations. During the same period, Al-Haq documented the total demolition, on the basis of an Israeli military order, (punitive house demolition) of 443 homes in the West Bank, leading to the displacement of 3,010 people. Israel has also carried out a large number of house demolitions on the pretext that the houses were built without the required license (administrative house demolition). Since 2004, 329 houses have been demolished for lack of license, 154 of which were in East Jerusalem.

Since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, the already limited authority of the PNA in the OPT has been nearly eliminated by the Occupying Power. With the constitution of the new Palestinian Government in March 2006, Israel's withholding of PNA tax revenues, and major donors' subsequent cessation of aid to the PNA, this authority is on the verge of collapse. Nevertheless, the PNA must respect international legal standards. The main problem in this regard remains the inability of the PNA to uphold law and order.

The Human Rights Situation in January–March 2006

Highlighted trend: harassment by soldiers

The month of March marked an escalation in the number and severity of **beatings** by Israeli soldiers throughout the West Bank. In one case, a Palestinian man received blows to previously injured areas and was left bleeding in an Israeli jeep for two and a half hours before being handed over to a Palestinian ambulance (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2843/2006). In another case, an injured boy was kicked in the head and the stomach (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2832/2006). On 3 March, Tamer 'Amr and three of his friends (15-17 years) were having a picnic when Israeli soldiers arrived and inspected them, finding no incriminating items on them. The soldiers then proceeded to severely beat the children.

"We were beaten for 20 minutes without even being asked one question. One of the soldiers handcuffed me with plastic, took my ID card, put it in his pocket and ordered us to follow the soldiers toward the bypass road. One of the soldiers grabbed my right arm and we walked together while the others followed. The land was sloping and wild. Whenever we reached a rock or a hole, the soldier who held my arm would push me so that I would fall down. Sometimes he put his foot in front of me and pushed me. As a result, I fell down twice, getting bruises and suffering severe pain. When we reached the main road, they ordered the four of us to sit on the ground beside the road and they started beating us again. This time they used the butts of their guns. They beat us all over our bodies, even in sensitive areas such as my testicles."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2839/2006

Given by Tamer Yousef 'Amr (resident of Singer Quarter, Hebron City, Hebron Governorate, West Bank)

Israeli soldiers also carried out **house raids** with destruction and sometimes theft of property of the Palestinian residents. On 20 February, Israeli soldiers raided the house of Fathiyya Jum'a Qatawi in the night, forcing the family to wait in the street for two hours while soldiers raided the house. After the search, Fathiyya entered her house, discovering the extent of the damage.

"I headed to the cupboard, specifically, the middle shelf where I had put 4,500 shekels and 550 Jordanian dinars inside a sack among some clothes, but I did not find anything. All the clothes were on the floor. I searched everywhere hoping that the sack fell somewhere when the soldiers threw the clothes about, but to no avail. I was sure that one of the soldiers had stolen the money. I went to the other rooms and discovered that everything was thrown on the floor – the fridge, the washing machine, the TV, the two-by-two metres living room door, and three windows. My husband's hearing aid was partially destroyed. In addition to all the furniture and kitchen utensils, the solar panels were also destroyed."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2807/2006

Given by Fathiyya Jum'a Qatawi (resident of Balata Camp, Nablus Governorate, West Bank)

Israeli occupying forces continued to use specially trained dogs to search houses, a tactic which has led

"I saw a brown dog enter my room. At first, I thought that it belonged to our neighbors, but after looking closely at it, I realized that it belonged to the Israeli soldiers because there was something on its neck. The dog started barking, and I started reciting the name of God and tried to shoo the dog away by a movement with my hand. All of a sudden, it attacked me and seized my right arm. I started shouting and was able to take my right arm from its teeth, but it again attacked my left arm and started to chew the flesh of my arm. I started to shout with my loudest voice while I was bleeding. This continued for about ten minutes."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2782/2006

Given by Salha Shihada al-Deek (resident of Kufr al-Deek village, Salfit Governorate, West Bank)

to several **dog attacks** on Palestinian civilians. In the early morning hours of 13 January, Israeli soldiers came to the house of Salha Shihada al-Deek, a 78-year-old woman. After evacuating her husband and ignoring his warnings that his wife was still inside the house, the soldiers sent in a dog that bit her left arm, tearing her flesh off to the bone.

The Occupying Power

Restrictions on Palestinians' **freedom of movement** remained one of the most widespread forms of human rights violations, and were further increased during the reporting period. Checkpoints and various forms of road blocks prevented Palestinians from moving freely within the West Bank. Movement

"Travelling from Jenin to Nablus and back took me approximately nine hours. That's incredible. It would take any person less time to travel from one to country to another than it would take Palestinians travelling from Jenin to Nablus and back. The Israeli occupying forces have been imposing a tight military hold on the borders of Nablus and Jenin for over one month. In addition, Toulkarem is surrounded by barriers on all sides. This closure has clearly impacted every aspect of citizens' economic lives. For example, my income has dropped due to long hours waiting at checkpoints. The Israeli occupation imposes collective punishment on the Palestinian people and the excuse is that it is necessary for Israeli security. We pay the price for this security with the livelihoods of our children, wives and families. Moreover, the Israeli army has checkpoints spread out over all the entrances and roads leading to Jenin and the surrounding villages."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2818/2006

Given by Ahmad 'Isa al-Ghoul (resident of Jabal Abu-Dheir Quarter, Jenin City, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

restrictions were increased between the northern, central and southern areas of the West Bank. Israel began to require permits for Palestinians to enter the Jordan Valley (which constitutes about one quarter of the land of the West Bank) and to deny access to Palestinians who are not registered residents therein. Movement was similarly denied to residents of certain Palestinian villages located between the Green Line and the Annexation Wall. A total closure of the West Bank was put in place on 11 March in connection with the Jewish holiday of Purim,

and has remained in force ever since. The construction of several checkpoints integrated into the Wall was completed. West Bank Palestinian traffic into East Jerusalem was limited to four crossings in the Wall, thereby increasing the isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the OPT.

Closely linked with movement restrictions is **ill-treatment at checkpoints**. Al-Haq received new reports of delays, harassment and humiliations endured by Palestinians attempting to pass through checkpoints. At al-Kafriyat checkpoint, at the southern entrance of Toulkarem, soldiers applied a systematic policy of photographing all female (not male) Palestinians coming to the checkpoint (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2779/2006). In another case, one man described to Al-Haq how humiliations such as being forced to strip and remain naked for a prolonged period further restrain people from attempting to move around in the West Bank.

"[The soldier] asked me to take off my jacket and I did as he said. Then he asked me to remove the clothes from my upper body and my pants. I did as he said and was left in my underwear. The two soldiers started laughing at me hysterically. Then the same soldier who ordered me to remove my clothes asked me to take off my shoes and turn around. I saw writing in Arabic and Hebrew on the wall of the room. It said, 'Additional Inspection.' Believe me, even if you shouted in your loudest voice, no one would hear you from inside that small room. The soldiers did not find any metal objects on me throughout all the inspection processes I went through. I remained naked for around half an hour ... The people have become afraid to leave their village because they don't want to be subjected to humiliation in those closed rooms when they return to their village."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2777/2006

Given by Mahmoud Ibrahim Qabaha (resident of Barta'a, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

Al-Haq documented numerous incidents of Israeli occupying forces using **excessive force** against Palestinians. On 14 March, Israeli forces besieged and fired upon the PNA's detention centre in Jericho, with the aim of capturing certain detainees. The attack entailed several casualties (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2846/2006). Excessive force was used during Israeli incursions into the northern West Bank. In some cases the victims were unarmed children. On 15 February, a soldier shot and killed a mentally disabled boy in Qabatiya, south of Jenin (Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2820/2006). On 17 March, Kamal 'Izat Zayed was carrying his nine-year-old niece to a medical clinic when Israeli soldiers suddenly appeared and began firing at them, killing the girl.

"As I was trying to carry Akaber from the car, I saw an Israeli soldier, in military uniform, emerging from behind the wall. The soldier was standing to the south of where Akaber and I were located. He was only 50 metres away from us on our right side. This soldier opened fire on us and another soldier joined in too. The firing was very heavy and aimed directly at us. Approximately 40 bullets were fired at us. In addition, bullets were being fired in the air. Even though I felt I had been shot in my right shoulder and my right thigh, I continued to carry Akaber, who had been hit in the back of her head. She was bleeding and was not moving. Carrying Akaber, I got out of the car. I started shouting, "The girl died!" Approximately 30 soldiers approached me and ordered me to put the girl on the ground and to lie down on my stomach on the ground."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2843/2006

Given by Kamal 'Izat Zayed (resident of al-Yamoun village, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

There were continued instances of willful killing of Palestinians by Israeli forces. Wilful killings constitute a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. During the Israeli invasion of Balata Camp in February-March, two unarmed children (16 and 17 years) were killed by sniper fire while drinking tea on a roof. A third boy was shot and wounded while examining the condition of his hit brother.

"I suddenly heard the sound of bullets fired toward us. I saw my brother Ibrahim stand up and then fall down on his left side, while Mohammad said 'Ibrahim, Ibrahim' and fell down on his right side. At that moment, I thought that Mohammad was injured while my brother Ibrahim laid down on the floor of the roof voluntarily to protect himself from the shooting. I got up off the floor, as I was sitting the third to the west, and moved toward Ibrahim with my back bent to the east. I started to check Ibrahim. When I removed his jacket, I saw that a bullet hit him beside the left ear. After seconds, another bullet was shot and hit me in my right leg from the back under the hip. I started yelling and shouting for help."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2804/2006

Given by 'Uthman Ahmad al-Sheikh 'Isa (resident of Balata Camp, Nablus Governorate, West Bank)

Al-Haq documented many house demolitions, including punitive and administrative ones. Palestinian homes in and around the path of the Wall continued to be destroyed to accommodate its construction. In addition, Israeli occupying forces carried out seemingly random and arbitrary demolitions. Such demolitions occurred more frequently in areas subjected to Israeli military incursions and curfews, such as Nablus. In a new trend, after Israeli soldiers conducted an arrest raid, they bulldozed part of the raided house, without the formal authority of an Israeli military order. Al-Haq also documented one case in which a Palestinian obtained a permit from the PNA to build a new house on his land, but before it was finished, Israeli soldiers demolished it, claiming that Israeli building permits were needed in that area (Al-Haq Affidavit 2825/2006).

During the first months of 2006, there was an increase in cases of house occupation throughout the West Bank, including Bani N'eim, Hebron, Jenin and during the Israeli military offensive in Balata refugee camp in Nablus. The house

"[The soldiers] gathered all of us in one room located on the second floor. Three soldiers stood guard at the doorway of the room to watch us. The room was too small to accommodate us (not more than 16 square metres for 23 people). The children were crying and the adults were scared and at a loss as to what was happening. From time to time, we heard shooting coming from our house. It was headed in an unknown direction. In the morning, we asked the soldiers to allow us to go to the kitchen to prepare food and milk for the children. They let us have two meals a day; one at 8:00 am and the other at 6:00 pm. Two women were allowed to go to the kitchen to prepare the food. In the evening, the soldiers intentionally turned off the light in the room."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2799/2006

Given by Jalal Ahmad al-Toukhi (resident of Balata Camp, Nablus Governorate, West Bank)

occupation incidents generally started between midnight and 5:00 am. Israeli soldiers forced their way into houses and confined all family members to a single room for several hours and, in some instances, days. During their detention, residents were not allowed to make any noise and were denied access to other parts of their homes, except the bathroom, and sometimes the kitchen. Prior to their departure, the soldiers consistently destroyed household property such as furniture, windows and floor tiles.

There were numerous cases of conspicuous **property destruction** carried out by Israeli soldiers. On 14 February 2006, Israeli soldiers raided the Karmel chicken incubator factory, destroying equipment and interrupting the incubation process, which led to the loss of 200,000 embryos. The economic loss has been estimated at one million shekels, in addition to the negative effects on professional reputation, clients and contracts.

"The Israeli soldiers opened the doors of the machines. This set off alarms that are programmed to ring when the temperature shifts from the appropriate temperature necessary to sustain the hatching process. The workers begged the soldiers to allow them to re-program the system of the incubators to prevent any damage to the eggs and to prevent the death of the chicks. The workers repeated this request many times but the soldiers completely refused to allow them to re-program the machines."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2795/2006

Given by 'Abd-al-Ghani Jamal Abu-al-Heija (resident of Kharrouba Quarter, Jenin City, Jenin Governorate, West Bank)

Throughout the OPT, Israeli forces continued their policy of **land confiscation** and levelling in order to either expand existing illegal Israeli settlements, build Israeli army infrastructure or construct the Wall. On 14 March 2006, the construction of an Israeli police station began in the E-1 area located between East Jerusalem and the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, with the purpose of creating territorial contiguity between the two. There was also progressive annexation of land located in the "closed areas" between the Green Line and the Wall, where severe movement restrictions increasingly resulted in the inability to farm land. The lands of al-Walaja village southwest of East Jerusalem are about to be reduced to about one ninth of what they were in 1948, as a result of Israeli direct land confiscation, house demolitions, control over wells, land levelling, planting of trees and – soon – construction of the Wall (Al-Haq Affidavit 2788/2006).

"At the hospital, the doctors were still treating Ahmad. I knew that his right hand was broken and he had been injured in his right eye and his head. I stayed by my son's side until he regained consciousness. He told me that the settlers had hit him with two stones, the first hit his head and the second hit his eye. He then fell down from a height of two metres. He could not remember anything else."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2810/2006

Given by Suha 'Abd-al-Rahman Haddad (resident of Tal al-Rumeida, Hebron Governorate, West Bank)

Al-Haq's documentation revealed continued Israeli **settler violence** against, and intimidation of, Palestinians in the West Bank. Settlers carried out a number of attacks against Palestinians, their property and their sources of livelihood, such as their olive trees and livestock. Investigation of such incidents by the occupying authorities remained insufficient to a degree that amounted to a systematic refusal to prevent or punish criminal behaviour, thereby effectively encouraging it.

Occupying forces continued to carry out **mass arrests**, predominantly in Jenin and Nablus. The arrest raids, usually carried out in the middle of the night, caused damage and destruction to the homes of those arrested, and entailed roadblocks, curfews, and power cuts. Moreover, during the 14 March attack on the PNA's detention centre in Jericho, a mass arrest of the detainees was carried out. The Israeli authorities later released a number of convicts who had been lawfully sentenced by Palestinian courts (Al-Haq Affidavit 2846/2006).

Many Palestinians remained in **administrative detention**. Under this common practice, the Israeli authorities detain a person on the basis of "secret evidence," without formal charges or trial, for indefinitely renewable periods of up to six months. One of Al-Haq's fieldworkers, Ziyad Muhammad Shehada Hmeidan, was originally detained at Qalandiya checkpoint in May 2005 and placed under administrative detention in June 2005. In January 2006, Israeli authorities rejected the appeal of the November 2005 renewal of his administrative detention, which was again renewed for four more months in March 2006.

The Palestinian National Authority

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

Al-Haq continued to register widespread acts of **vigilantism**, in which private actors use illegal coercive methods to achieve their own goals. There was insufficient enforcement by the PNA against vigilantes who broke the law, and the overall situation remained in a process of rapid deterioration. On 24 January, early in the morning, Zakiyya Muhammad Hassouna's husband had an argument with some youths about removing the photos of a Palestinian Legislative Council candidate from the wall of their building; the argument degenerated into a shoot-out during which her husband was mortally wounded.

"After five minutes, and while my husband was still on the balcony, the firing stopped. I called out to him and saw that his head was bent forward. I called him many times but he did not answer, so I went to the balcony. When I got there I discovered that he was bleeding. I yelled and shouted until our relatives and neighbours came and carried him to Rafidiya hospital. The hospital is only one kilometre from our home. Less than ten minutes after reaching the hospital, my husband died. All medical efforts had failed to save his life. As for the perpetrators, they ran away, leaving only their crime behind. This is one phenomenon of the security chaos prevailing in Nablus; namely, the killing of innocent people while the criminals go unpunished."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2781/2006

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

Al-Haq fieldworkers received renewed reports of **torture** and other forms of prohibited ill-treatment in places of detention under PNA authority. It remains unclear whether these incidents constitute isolated incidents or are part of a wider trend. On 24 February 2006, Ra'ed Mahmoud Theeb was arrested and taken into custody by some Palestinian policemen. He was then kept in solitary confinement, deprived of sufficient food, beaten and tortured.

"The Palestinian policemen interrogated me daily. In fact, it was not so much interrogation as it was beating and insulting me. For example, my mother is dead and they said bad words about her. They beat me with a very thick club on my back and legs and sometimes on my face. I cannot describe the way they beat me. Look at the marks on my face, back and legs. They threw my food at me as if I were a dog rather than a human being. I was not allowed to communicate with my family during that entire ten day period ... I can not believe the bad treatment and torture I witnessed the prisoners of the Salam prison go through. There are children in that prison. The policemen force them to take out the garbage and clean the prison. They are always beaten. Sometimes, I cannot control myself and my mind. I shout and beat myself and sometimes I beat the people surrounding me. I was not like this before I was detained by the Palestinian police and the intelligence forces. I cannot describe the suffering I went through and I prefer not to remember it."

Extract from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 2858/2006

Given by Ra'ed Mahmoud Theeb (resident of Toulkarem Camp, Toulkarem Governorate, West Bank)



MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT JANUARY - MARCH 2006 STATISTICS

KILLINGS

Total of Killings	25
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Special cases	
Death in custody	-
Targeted assassination	-
Assassination in custody	-
Death at checkpoints	-
Women	2
Children	6

Killings by District

Bethlehem	-
Hebron	2
Jenin	6
Jericho	1
Jerusalem	-
Nablus	11
Ramallah	3
Toulkarem	2

Killings by Age Groups

Less than 12	1
13-17	5
18-25	11
26-35	5
36-50	3
Over 50	-

Killing by Perpetrator

Israeli Occupying Forces	-
- Soldiers	22
- Special undercover units	-
- Snipers	1
Israeli Border Guards	1
Israeli Policemen	-
General Security Services	-
Settlers	-
Armed Israeli civilians	-
Collaborators	-
Others	1

Situation During Killing

Normal/calm	11
Incursion	1
Demonstration and stone-throwing	1
Armed clashes	9
Shelling	-
Closed military area	-
Bystanders killed during attempted assassination	1
Unclear	2
Curfew	-

Methods of Killing

Live bullet	22
Fragmented bullet	2
Rubber-coated metal bullet	-
Explosives and small missiles	1
Shrapnel	-
Mine	-
Tear gas	-
Blunt instrument	-
Sharp instrument	-
Missile	-
Others	-

HOUSE DEMOLITION FOR LACK OF LICENSE BY DISTRICT

Bethlehem	9
Hebron	3
Jenin	6
Jericho	-
Jerusalem	9
Nablus	8
Ramallah	5
Toulkarem	-
Total:	40

CURFEWS BY DISTRICT

District	Hours
Bethlehem	-
Jenin	-
Nablus	96
Toulkarem	-
Jerusalem	-
Ramallah	-
Hebron	13
Jericho	-
Total:	109