



Protection Cluster  
Occupied Palestinian Territory

# Protection Cluster Monthly Update

April 2013

## Highlights from the Protection Cluster Working Group

### Protection Concerns

#### West Bank

- Following the killing of an Israeli settler from Yitzhar by a Palestinian civilian near Nablus on 30 April, a high number of attacks by settlers against Palestinians and their property took place across the West Bank. Incidents of settler violence included physical attacks against Palestinians including children, damage to schools, damage to vehicles, including school buses, and destruction of and damage to trees and land. Of particular concern is the failure of the IDF to prevent settler violence and to protect Palestinians and their property from settler attacks, in particular, where the IDF was present and witnessed such attacks.
- In Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, there was a sharp increase in the number of demolitions and in the number of persons displaced as a result. Also of concern is the recurrent temporary displacement of several hundred Palestinians (between 70 to 100 families) in the northern Jordan Valley due to Israeli military trainings. In 2013, OCHA has recorded 18 incidents of temporary displacement due to such trainings.
- Of significant importance is the ongoing trend of the arrest and detention of a high number of children in Hebron, including students on their way to school.

#### Gaza

- Israeli methods of enforcement of the restrictions in the ARA remain an issue of prime concern. These include live-fire shooting without warning, exposing civilians to serious injury. In April, on land, three civilians were shot and injured close to the fence. On 5 April, a 16 year-old boy was injured by Israeli forces in Jabaliya, around 400 metres from the fence. On 15 April, a 32 year-old shepherd was shot and wounded while herding sheep around 400 metres away from the fence, east of al-Bureij refugee camp. On 26 April, a 16 year-old boy was injured within 15 metres of the fence east of the Muslim cemetery in Jabaliya. At sea, Israeli Naval Forces continued to enforce a fishing zone limit of three nautical miles from the Gaza shore. On 27 April, a fishing boat was damaged as result of shooting by the Israeli Naval Forces.
- The threat against civilians, especially children, from ERWs remains widespread. On 16 April, a man had his fingers amputated due to an ERW-related accident. To date in 2013, there have been 20 ERW-related casualties in Gaza. In April, UNMAS finished the second batch training of Gaza EOD Police on "ERW hazard management".

## Updates from Protection Cluster Sub-Groups

### Child Protection Working Group

- The CPWG formally adopted the [Global Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) (2012) as their priority for their work plan for 2013 and will keep them as a regular agenda item. The roll out in Palestine will focus on a contextualisation exercise and a formal launch once the Arabic translation is available, tentatively in September 2013. The

standards are designed to improve the quality and impact of the humanitarian response to children and families vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation (see [background information on the standards](#)).

- TdH presented the mapping of child protection service providers in Gaza. The database of service providers was handed over to the NGO department of MOSA/Gaza, who is responsible for including new partners and updating the 4W information. CPWG partners will work with MOSA to support the development of a system to keep the database updated. YMCA has completed a similar mapping of service providers in the West Bank: the report is now being written and is scheduled to be finalised by October 2013.

### MRM Working Group on Grave Violations against Children

- The inputs for the quarterly Global Horizontal Notes were submitted to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict on 15 April. Overall, the reporting period has seen a deterioration of the situation on the ground. The negative trends of illegal settlement activities, incursions and arrests in Area A and demolitions are particularly concerning. Protests, including over the unresolved issue of Palestinian prisoners or over the killing of children shot at by Israeli Security Forces (ISF), have widened and increasingly resulted in violence affecting children. The total number of incidents documented in the reporting period is 312, affecting 10,591 children. Of significant importance is the ongoing trend of arrest and detention of high number of children in Hebron, including students on their way to school.

### Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Working Group

- In response to the November 2012 escalation of hostilities in Gaza, UNICEF has been supporting partners to scale up the psychosocial mechanism. During the first quarter of 2013, psychosocial services were provided to 20,649 children (10,827 female), 6,247 caregivers (4,600 females) and 200 professionals (123 females).
- In the West Bank, the MHPSS Working Group is drafting evaluation criteria for the CAP, CERF and other humanitarian funding for psychosocial projects. These selection criteria will help to standardise the process between the West Bank and Gaza and will assist Working Group members during the development phase of their projects. On 6 May, the MHPSS Working Group meeting will review and finalize the evaluation criteria. The final document will then be shared and disseminated to stakeholders and the Protection Cluster.

### Legal Task Force

#### West Bank

- The LTF meeting focused on the right to water under domestic and international law, in observance of World Water Day on 22 March. The LTF invited EWASH, WASH, PA officials and the Palestinian Water Authority to participate. During the meeting: 1) EWASH gave a presentation on the situation of access to water in the oPt, with a focus on Area C, and shared the main WASH sector recommendations; 2) Al Haq presented the international law analysis of their recent report on [WATER](#)

for one people only, with a focus on discriminatory access to water in the oPt; 3) NRC presented and officially launched [NRC's report on the Construction and Rehabilitation of Water Sources in Area C](#); an overview of the applicable legal and permit regime; and 4) Diakonia presented the international assistance framework under international law in relation to the planning and permit regime in Area C.

### Displacement Working Group

- To date in 2013, at least 210 structures have been demolished, displacing 379 people (more than half children). Another 541 people have been affected (more than half children). Most of the demolitions (173 structures, 85%) took place in Area C, with the rest in East Jerusalem. In terms of monthly averages, the number of structures demolished on average per month is similar to 2012 (51), but the number of people displaced is considerably higher (95 vs. 73).
- DWG members continued advocacy efforts to prevent and respond to forced displacement, including a field visit to the locations of a demolition with the Humanitarian Coordinator, and an AIDA statements calling for an end to demolitions and displacement, based on DWG data.

### Settler Violence Core Group

- The Settler Violence Core Group discussed how to initiate the pilot phase of the inter-cluster response mechanism to incidents of settler violence that result in damage to property (see March PCWG monthly update). It was agreed that the pilot phase would last for 6 months starting from mid to late April. During the pilot, OHCHR agreed to filter the request for damage assessments made by Core Group members, as well as other cluster/sectors. OCHA field staff committed to undertake initial damage assessments for the non-refugee population, with the support of OHCHR in the central and southern part of the West Bank. During the pilot phase, assessment teams will use the inter-cluster damage assessment form as amended by OHCHR and the Core Group. During the pilot phase, livelihoods responses (mid to long-term) will be provided retroactively to cases of settler violence that resulted in damage to agricultural assets in 2012, through the FAO project.

### Access Restricted Area Core Group

- The Core Group finalized the first draft of a report on Protection Cluster monitoring of access restrictions in the ARA on land. The draft will be shared with ARA core group members, finalized and then circulated to the Protection Cluster, Humanitarian Country Team and donors.

### Legal Advice Group

- The Legal Advice Group met on 15 April to discuss whether the heightened restrictions on the movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip, imposed by Israel since 21 March in response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, constitute collective punishment. The LAG identified the elements of collective punishment under international humanitarian law, and applied the relevant law to the particular facts (*A Salafist group had claimed responsibility for the 21 March rocket fire. An IDF/COGAT statement of 21 March announced that "In response to the rocket fire", the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence had instructed the IDF "to narrow the permitted fishing zone for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip from six to three miles" and to close the Kerem Shalom crossing until further instructions.*).
- The LAG agreed that the imposition of these heightened restrictions amounts to collective punishment in contravention of article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Importantly, members of the LAG reiterated that the imposition of the land, air and sea blockade by Israel on the Gaza Strip since 2007 amounts to collective punishment, and

that the recent punitive measures cannot be seen in isolation, but rather as a continuation of the collective punishment of the Gazan population. The blockade should be lifted in order to remedy this violation of international law. The LAG also recalled that the blockade continues to adversely impact upon the enjoyment of human rights to which all Gazans are entitled under international law, including the right to food, water, housing, health, education, and freedom of movement.

### Advocacy Initiatives

#### Reports, outputs and events by PCWG members

- Alarmed by recently imposed barriers in the Israeli civil court system affecting the ability of Gazan victims of violations during hostilities to claim civil compensation, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights organized a conference in which Palestinian and Israeli human rights organisations and other Protection Cluster members participated. Participants discussed questions about the continued value of engaging with Israeli courts to seek compensation for Gazan victims of Israeli violations, and possible advocacy strategies to respond to the changes. A [joint statement](#) outlining the conclusions of the conference was released.
- Hamoked recently published data supplied by the Israeli Ministry of Interior (MoI) following its submission of a Freedom of Information Act request. In 2012, Israel revoked the residency of 116 East Jerusalem Palestinians, including 64 women and 29 minors. According to the MoI's figures, supplied to HaMoked over the years, between 1967 and 2012, Israel has revoked the status of 14,263 Palestinians from East Jerusalem.
- PCATI held two workshops, in Nablus and Hebron, for Palestinian women released from prison and for prisoners' family members, as part of its project aiming to identify and highlight the vulnerabilities of women in the context of occupation.
- Following PCATI's complaint (and several reminders) to the National Unit for Jailor Investigations, a jailor in Megiddo prison who allegedly attacked a Palestinian prisoner, causing serious injury, was charged with assault and causing grievous bodily harm. While at the initial stage of the proceedings, PCATI welcomes this development, in a worrying context where PCATI has monitored in the last months an increase in the number of physicians condoning and participating in the use of torture in interrogations.

### Inter-Cluster Initiatives & Protection Mainstreaming

- See section on Settler Violence Core Group, above.

### Key Dates for May 2013

#### Gaza:

- PCWG Gaza @ OHCHR Gaza, 22 May
- ARA Core Group @OHCHR Gaza, TBC
- CPWG @ UNICEF, TBC

#### West Bank:

- PCWG West Bank @OHCHR Ramallah, 23 May
- Settler Violence Core Group @ OHCHR Ramallah, 8 May
- LTF @ NRC, 13 May
- DWG @ OCHA, 9 May
- MRM WG @ location TBC, 21 May
- CPWG @ PRCS, 22 May

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