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## Israeli army invades Jayyous

By Jayyous EAs, Photos by EA Cindy Zahnd

In the middle of the night of 17–18 February, the Israeli army invaded Jayyous, using many houses as military outposts. Families with children were forced to stay in one room while the soldiers took over the rest of the house. About 80 men were arrested and brought to the school building, blindfolded and handcuffed. There, they were interrogated for several hours. Some were released in the afternoon while others were taken to unknown locations in Israel and the West Bank. Jayyousis think that this operation was held to discourage the weekly Friday protests against the separation barrier. We feel that the inhabitants of Jayyous are exhausted; many of them spend their nights on their roofs looking out for the possible entry of soldiers into the village. When they go to sleep it is with the threat that someone could invade their village and their house, that someone could terrorise their kids. Despite the violence and the fact that several of them were shot in the last demonstrations, they continue their protests. They struggle not only for their village but for the whole of the West Bank, for all the oppressed and the oppressors as well.

When the soldiers entered their house in the middle of the night, Abed tells us that his wife asked them, “Can I offer you some tea or coffee?”

### Inside This Issue

Israeli army invades Jayyous	1
A morning in the Seam Zone	2
Husan village	2
The on-going fight for Al-Bustan	3
Israeli High Court approves demolition of Tana	3
Teachers’ standoff at checkpoint 56	4
Enclosed villages with bleak futures	4
Far’un village	5
Settlers in Yanoun	5
Um Kamel’s struggle continues	5
Stone throwing is dangerous	6
Home demolition in At- Tur	6

### Collected testimonies from some families:

“At 2am, more than 15 soldiers entered our house by force and arrested my son. Since then he is detained in Israel; we do not have any news from him.” – AS

“Nine soldiers carried my husband down the stairs, he was unconscious. One of them beat him in the stomach.” – MS

“They blindfolded and handcuffed my brother and me and brought us to the school building for interrogation. When the captain asked me whether I would work for them I told him that they already shot me in the arm two weeks ago, that they can kill me if they want but I will never help them.” – M

“They occupied my house during the whole night, some of them slept in our bedrooms.” – AK

“When I heard my brother shouting I started shouting at them to stop beating him. A soldier came beside me, pointed a knife in my back, threatening me to kill me if I did not stop shouting.” – EK

“They went up on our roof and hung Israeli flags. They used our house as an outpost from 2am till 7pm the following evening.” – M



Israeli soldiers entering a house in Jayyous.



Soldiers at the school.



The soldiers put up Israeli flags on a house they occupied. Photo: ISM.

## A morning in the seam zone

By Tulkarem EAs

When you see the farmers pass through the agricultural gates in Deir Al Ghusun and Attil to their land in the seam zone each week, you start wondering about the farmers' life and work there. Invited by an English speaking farmer, Hosni, two of us made a successful attempt last Thursday to pass through the gate in Deir Al Ghusun after the farmers, donkeys and tractors had passed. Two white haired women from Switzerland and Sweden – does it not sound peaceful? After spending some time on their phones, the soldiers let us pass.

The road took us over a mountain covered with olive trees, bushes with yellow flowers, small blue iris flowers and pink cyclamen. A farmer was watering his olive trees from a tank he had brought with him in spite of all the rain we have had recently. After a very dry winter there is still not enough rain for the trees to give a harvest of big, fine olives.

Here and there, you could see house ruins. Hosni's father and grandfather had lived here but Hosni told us that in the 1950s the Israeli military had told the Palestinians, "Move away or we kill you." So they moved to Deir Al Ghusun, but continued to grow their olives on this mountain.

Hosni further tells us that in the little valley below us, runs the Green Line between Israel and Palestine, although it has only been marked on maps and never in the nature. Here we had a wide view of the hills and the large plain in the west towards the Mediterranean. We were now among 1948 Palestinians with Israeli citizenship while the



EA Elisabeth accompanying a farmer to his land in the seam zone. Photo: EA Heidi Schüle-Börlin.

villages we saw in the east are inhabited by West Bank Palestinians and the villages to the west by Jewish Israelis.

Many in this village of Al Marja belong to Hosni's family. Spending the morning with them we understood that these Palestinian families feel at home in Tulkarem, have their friends there and go shopping there every week in spite of living in Israel. A great difficulty for them is that since the wall was built in 2003 they have to go through a checkpoint on the other side of Tulkarem. This makes the distance 40km instead of 16km.

*"We were among 1948 Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and looking out over the villages in the east inhabited by West Bank Palestinians and the villages to the west by Jewish Israelis."*



A view of the Seam Zone between the Green Line and the Separation Wall. Photo: EA Heidi Schüle-Börlin.

## Husan village

By Bethlehem EAs

Since Husan village received land confiscation orders from the Israeli Civil Administration in January 2009, the Bethlehem EAs have visited the village to monitor and observe any developments. Since 1982, the village has lost 420 hectares to expanding Israeli settlements and now it may lose more land to the building of the separation wall. We participated in an olive tree planting project organised by the Rabbis for Human Rights. Some 30 people from Australia, Denmark, the US and Israel in addition to 30 villagers planted more than 100 olive trees. We appreciated the opportunity to act together with Muslims, Jews and Christians.



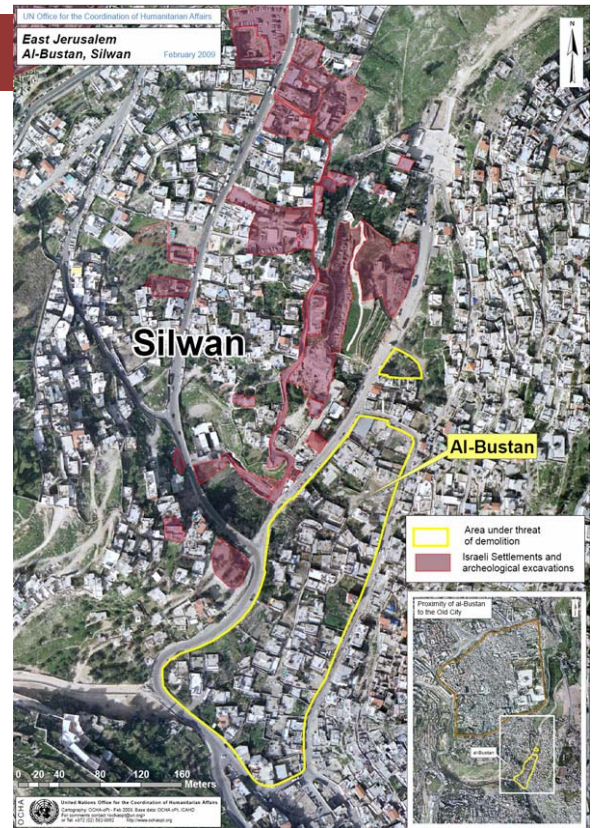
# The ongoing fight for Al-Bustan

By Jerusalem EAs

Since 1967 when the Jerusalem municipality approved a plan to designate Al-Bustan neighbourhood in Silwan, as “green land” and demolish 88 homes in the area, residents have been fighting for their right to keep their homes and land. Old wounds were reopened and the ripple effects felt throughout the West Bank this past week when the Interior Ministry and the Jerusalem Municipality rejected a 2005 proposal made by the residents to abandon the green land plan and continue to make the area residential. Immediately following the rejection the municipality began a comprehensive survey of the area under threat.

It has been difficult to separate rumour from fact in this case. To the best of our knowledge, the residents now must appeal to the Israeli court to stop demolition plans. Irrespective of the facts, the rumours have caused a significant backlash in Jerusalem and beyond. A general strike was called for Saturday Feb 28. Schools were closed, as were most shops. There were clearly far fewer people on the streets as a result of the strike. The imminent demolition of the Al-Bustan neighbourhood has been passed on via word of mouth with many believing that the demolitions have already begun which, to the best of our knowledge, they have not. Reports have been so widely distributed throughout the West

UN OCHA published this map of Al-Bustan, Silwan, in Feb. 2009



Bank that several of the other EAPPI teams heard about it and called the Jerusalem team to inquire as to what was going on.

UNOCHA estimates that the demolitions would affect 88 homes with some 140 families and 1300–1500 people. The team is researching facts on this case and building relationships in the Al-Bustan community. It is clear from the reactions we have seen that this is a very sensitive issue within the wider Palestinian community and one that deserves greater understanding and advocacy.

# Israeli High Court approves demolition of Khirbet Tana

By-Yanoun EAs

On 6 Feb. the Israeli High Court’s approval for the demolition of the village of Khirbet Tana in the Jordan Valley was broadcast on local television. Khirbet Tana has some 200 inhabitants (20 families) who live in caves, tents and corrugated iron roofed dwellings. Many of them have been called to appear in court on 19 March. We have written and shared reports with the UNOCHA and UNRWA and will continue to visit the village on a regular basis. We have also let the villagers know that we will come at any time if the situation escalates and they ask us to be present.

The whole of Khirbet Tana village has received demolition orders.  
Photo: EA Rachel Nassif.



## Teachers' standoff at checkpoint 56

By Hebron EAs

Monday's first school run reflected some of the daily challenges facing local people. It was also a moment of principled non-cooperative action. In the morning we had spent time with Reem, the head teacher of the school, who had explained that teachers have resisted over the years walking through the metal detector of the checkpoint. They have an agreement with the Israeli authorities that they can enter and exit the checkpoint through a side gate. She gave 3 reasons for their stand:

- 1) they are teachers, not a security risk,
- 2) it is humiliating and makes them possibly late for school if they are stopped, and
- 3) it is not healthy to be constantly checked by the metal detector.

*"It was a moment of principled non-cooperative action."*

Just gone midday, the first teachers arrived at the checkpoint to be told that they were not allowed to use the side gate. An exception was made for pregnant teachers, implying that there is some health risk in exiting through the metal detector. By 12.45pm, Reem and the rest of staff (10 women in total) had gathered in front of the checkpoint refusing to go through the metal detector. This standoff lasted until 3pm at which

## Enclosed villages with bleak futures

By Jayyous EAs

East of Qalqiliya there is a long finger of land containing 6 major settlements from Alfe Menashe to Qedumim, a distance of 25 km. UNOCHA maps show the intention to enclose this finger within the separation wall. It is unfortunate for the Palestinian villages within this finger, such as Izbat at Tabib, because their needs are largely disregarded by the Israeli state.

As a so-called concession to the villagers, the separation wall will be re-routed so that the villagers will no longer be cut off from their Palestinian neighbours as at present. However, the villagers are protesting against this concession

time, following many calls to the District Coordination Office (DCO) and the intermediary International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent (ICRC), the teachers were given permission to leave via the side gate.

One could agree with a soldier who talked of their unreasonable provocation, or one could agree with Reem, who insisted that making any concession on that day would lead to a gradual withdrawal of their 'privilege' to pass by the side gate. It was a small victory for dignity and this 'privilege', which has been sustained during the week, but at some emotional cost and inconvenience. A few of the women were clearly becoming agitated as they thought of children back home or responsibilities to fulfill. One teacher was particularly worried about her 6 year old and 4 year old children alone at home. After waiting a long time, the other teachers encouraged her to leave while they stood their ground.



The teachers negotiated with the soldiers for hours to get permission to leave via the side gate. Photo: EA Susanne Baberg.

because they will lose a substantial part of their land.

Another five Palestinian villages south-west of Alfe Menashe settlement are facing similar problems. They are unable to get permits to build and extend or improve their homes. There is a proposed new route for the wall and a new settler road will be constructed along the finger from Israel to Qedumim. A local resident has told us that the villages of Wadi ar Rasha and Ras at Tira will lose 80% of their land. Two days after our visit, we learned that the machines had arrived on site.



## Far'un village

By Tulkarem EAs

Early one morning our friend Abdulkarim picks us up and takes us to the village of Far'un. It is located 5km south of Tulkarem near the Green Line. Abdulkarim wants to show us the different ways in which the villagers are suffering from the occupation. Nearly half of Far'un's land has been confiscated by the Israeli authorities.

Our first stop is at the agricultural gate at 6am. The farmers come by foot or by donkey greeting us with big smiles. However, soon they start explaining how the gate is only open for those with permits, three days a week, three times each day. One of the farmers points out that this has only been the case since September 2008 thanks

## Settlers in Yanoun

By Yanoun EAs

On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> February, we experienced settlers in Yanoun for the first time in our term. Shortly before leaving for Khirbet Tana, we received a phone call from Rashed who sounded tense and frightened.

Nearly all the villagers came outside, staring anxiously at Naseh's house. The settlers, one adult and 10 teenage boys, came around his house, walked up to the terrace and looked in every window.

We made ourselves visible and tried to take photos without being seen. They continued to the well and then walked right across the crops growing in the field. Later on, we saw them standing on the Nabi Nun hill.

This was the first time we experienced why we must be permanently present in Yanoun and felt how tense and frightened all villagers became.



EAs documented the settlers going to the well and walking across the crops growing in the fields.



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to an ICRC project to motivate farmers to continue going to the land, providing them with seeds and helping them to get permits. Israeli authorities subsequently agreed to open the gate. Before the ICRC got involved, the farmers had to take a one-hour detour to get 'illegal' access to their land. After the farmers had passed the gate, Abdulkarim showed us 8 demolished houses and another two with demolition orders. They had applied for building permits, but never received them so they had to build 'illegally'.

On our way to the school, we passed a large empty playground that is now forbidden for children to use because it is too close to the Wall. With this in mind, it makes perfect sense to find all the children in the school yard, starting the day by pledging to the Palestinian flag, shouting "Free Palestine!"

## Um Kamel's struggle continues

By Jerusalem EAs

Ever since the forceful eviction of Um and Abu Kamel from their home in Sheikh Jarrah in Nov. 2008, after which Abu Kamel tragically passed away, Um Kamel has become a symbol of the non-violent resistance to the Israeli occupation. The tent that is now her home is a well known meeting place among supporters of the Palestinian struggle. In her house, Israeli settlers, who claim that the property is theirs, lived until a month ago when they were evicted until a decision has been reached in the Israeli courts about the matter.

New evidence, a document from the land registry in Turkey, has been submitted to the court, allegedly proving that the property was Arab-owned before 1956, and that the land deeds produced by the Jewish settler organisations are forged. The judge will have to decide if he will make a decision in the case or succumb to political pressure and step aside in favour of a judge considered to be more sympathetic to the settlers. The court session was postponed to an undetermined date. Meanwhile, the newest section of Um Kamel's house has been sealed off with bricks and concrete.

*[Ed. note: Two additional families in Sheikh Jarrah recently received eviction orders that came into effect on 15 March. They had not been evicted by the time of publication.]*

## Stone throwing is dangerous

By Hebron EAs

Sad to say, religious rest days are not peaceful in this land of occupation. One Friday, we were walking past the Ibrahimi Mosque where men and boys were streaming homewards after prayers. Unbeknown to us, a group of boys (some say 10, others say 4) started to throw stones at a checkpoint some distance from the mosque. Little is needed to provoke stone throwing in a military controlled area, where it is seen as an act of defiance and vents anger.

A 14-year old boy threw one stone too many and was shot by an Israeli soldier on a rooftop nearby. The shooting was fatal and the boy was buried before sunset. An international observer commented that he had photographed the soldier taking aim and that live ammunition must have been used. Israeli military procedures in civilian areas require the use of rubber-coated bullets and shooting at the lower part of the body, but both procedures were clearly violated that Friday afternoon.

The Sabbath saw further stone throwing, but this time it was aimed at EAs. Passage to the home we intended to visit would have been difficult had not a soldier, observing the stone throwing by

children on a ridge above us, demanded that they move on.

We entered the home of the family living below the ridge and the father commented that he had chosen not to leave his family alone that day as he was concerned there may be unrest from the

settlers' houses above. Hashem Al-Azzeh is a well-known resident in the Tel Rumeida area of H2. His family and that of his next door brother encounter regular harassment and destruction of their property, but they refuse to leave or to make way for settler expansion. We admire their courage and resilience. The support of peace activist groups, particularly Israeli groups, and internationals is evidently appreciated. An exchange in Arabic occurred between the father and daughter, which Hashem interpreted as his daughter's wish to get us some flowers. We thought nothing more of it until she returned from the local shop. It was Valentine's Day and she presented us each with a red carnation!



Hashem's children always enjoy the EAs' visits. Photo: EA Shari Brown.

## Home demolition in At-Tur

By Jerusalem EAs

At noon on Saturday 7 Feb. the Sayad family was told that their house was to be demolished the next day at 7am. A relative and member of Jerusalem Peace Makers alerted the Jerusalem EAs and asked for our presence the next morning. The family had previously demolished parts of their own house after receiving partial demolition orders.

A large number of police cars and a bulldozer arrived at 8:30am. The 50 police officers were dressed in black, some with face masks and heavily armed. The family's lawyer was in court attempting to freeze the demolition. However, at 8:45am the demolition began and EAS contacted ICAHD, UNOCHA, B'Tselem and some journalists. About one hour later, we heard a loud sharp noise. The bulldozer had had one of its wheels entangled in a metal fence and the damage was so severe that it could not continue its work. The house was half demolished by then.



Some of the policemen were masked at the demolition in At-Tur. Photo: EA Linn Aarvik, 08.02.09.

When the onlookers realised what had happened, they started cheering and a Palestinian flag was brought to the scene and waved in front of the soldiers. The older women were especially vocal and several men had to go in between the shouting women and the police. The police finally left at 10am. We stayed for a while trying to comfort the family who now sat in the rubble of their home. Two adults and five children between the age of 3 and 17 years had become homeless.