

Demonstration in Front of Gush Ezion

Saturday 15th September, Palestinian, Israeli and international activists, joined by a large media contingent, assembled on the roundabout on the Hebron-Jerusalem road which marks the turning to the Gush Ezion compound north of Beit Ommar, a bloc of nine Israeli settlements. A number of occupation soldiers and police were present at the demonstration, which was the first arranged by PSP in this location.

The demonstrators carried banners addressing three main grievances. Firstly, a message was directed at the anti-Islamic film which has sparked protests across the Arab world, refusing to resort to extremism, in spite of the deliberately provocative nature of the film. They added that the film reflects only on the ignorance and prejudice of its makers, not on muslims.

The second message was one of remembrance of the victims of the massacres at Shatila and Sabra, the thirtieth anniversary of which is 16-18th September. The massacre resulted in the deaths of many hundreds of Palestinian refugees at the hands of a Lebanese militia, with both the independent MacBride commission and the Israeli Kahan commission reporting that the Israelis, who controlled the camps, bore responsibility for the atrocities. The protesters also denounced the continued violence and intimidation which Israeli colonists inflict upon Palestinians, such as the molotov cocktail attack on a Palestinian family which took place last month, for which Gush Ezion settlers were responsible. The Palestinians reiterated that this kind of terrorism would not prevent them from accessing the land which is legally theirs.



Child and Youth Arrested During Night Raid

Since the celebration of Eid at the end of August there have been several night raids in Beit Ommar, resulting in the arrest of 8 children and youths, the youngest of them was only 13 years old.

On Monday 24th of September two Beit Ommar residents, Mohammed Abu Hashem (16) and Tarik Abu Maria (18), were arrested in a night raid by the Israeli occupation forces.

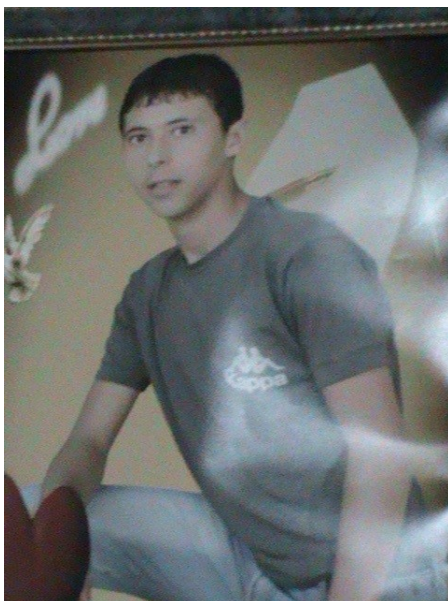
Mohammed's father, Ahmed Abu Hashem, got a call from a neighbour at 02.30 a.m. saying that about fifty soldiers were heading in the direction of Ahmed's house. The force left the military vehicles in a close by street, possibly to make sure none of the family members got away. When the occupation forces came to Ahmed's house they started cutting the fence.

Two high ranked officers supported by a group of soldiers approached the front of Abu Hashem's family home, while the rest of the soldiers surrounded the house. The officers shouted at Ahmed to open the door. Ahmed agreed to do so after he had dressed. The whole family woke up, got dressed and went downstairs. When Ahmed opened the front door the officers said they wanted to talk to him. Ahmed's daughter-in-law passed out due to fear.



The family was ordered to get out of the house while the occupation forces searched it, even though Ahmed complained claiming that the youngest children were afraid. Ahmed pointed out that it is illegal to search the house without letting him observe. He tells PSP that he feared the soldiers would steal from him while searching. The soldiers refused, and Ahmed then asked if he could get some water and medicine for his sick wife. He entered the house and stayed with the soldiers for twenty minutes. The soldiers forbade Ahmed to film or take pictures while they were searching the house. During the search the soldiers caused a lot of disorder and several belongings were damaged.

Hamda Abu Hashem



Mohammed Abu Hashem

After the search Ahmed joined the rest of the family outside and the whole family was ordered to show their IDs. Thaer (24) does not have an ID because he did not get it back last time he was released from prison. At first the officers refused to believe him but they accepted the explanation when Thaer was able to provide papers from his release. The officers also got it confirmed by calling the military office.

The soldiers then turned to Ahmed and asked where Emad (22), the second oldest son, was. Ahmed told them that he is already imprisoned by the occupation forces. The officer confirmed the information by calling the military office. Yousuf (19), next son in line, were in the same situation as Thaer, thus the officers had to call the military office again.

Ahmed's son Mohammed (16) does not have his own ID due to his young age and therefore the officers wanted to separate the boy from the rest of his family. When Mohammed did not agree three soldiers grabbed him by his shoulders and neck and pushed him up against a tree. Mohammed's family reacted by shouting at the soldiers to stop this awful treatment and his mother started crying. As this drew unwanted attention from the neighbourhood the officers agreed to not separate them.

The occupation forces accused Mohammed of using a sling shot and of participating in peaceful demonstrations, therefore they wanted to bring him to Gush Ezion for interrogation. The officers claimed they have pictures of him in both situations. According to Mohammed's lawyer the prosecutor is going to ask for one year in prison for the 16 year old boy.

One and a half hour after storming the family home the occupation forces left with Mohammed. Neighbours threw stones at the soldiers who answered with tear gas and sound grenades. Despite his young age this is Mohammed's third time in prison.

During the same raid Mohammed's cousin and neighbour, Tarik Abu Maria, was arrested. He is 18 years old and this is his second time in prison. The officers told Tarik's family that he will stay in Gush Ezion at least until the court meeting for Mohammed and Tarik which was originally scheduled to 27th of September but later moved to 4th of October.

Monday morning Ahmed got a phone call saying Mohammed was to be transferred from Gush Ezion to Ofer prison outside Ramallah.

Child from Beit Ommar Imprisoned for the Second Time this Year



The Ramzy Al Alamy family. Hossein in the black t-shirt to the right.

During the night raid Monday 24th of September the Israeli occupation forces also raided the house of the Ramzy Al Alamy family in Beit Ommar in search for the 15 year old Hossein Ramzy Al Alamy. He was arrested earlier this year, on March 31st 2012, when he was attending a peaceful demonstration in Beit Ommar. When he was released in August the judge told Hossein that if he was seen at a demonstration the next four years he would be jailed for seven additional months.

The occupation force came to arrest Hossein again. They accused him of participating in peaceful demonstrations next to the colony Karmeit Tsur. The occupation forces did not find Hossein at home, and handed his father, Ramzy, an order for Hossein to meet with the military officers in the Gush Ezion colony.

Hossein and his father went to Gush Ezion around noon Monday 24th. Ramzy returned without his son who now is imprisoned still awaiting a court meeting which was moved to Tuesday 2th of October.

Popular Committees Organized a Protest in Front of Prime Minister's Office



The Popular Resistance High Follow Up Commission in Palestine has called on the government to stop the negligence policy towards the popular resistance which have affected adversely the functioning, continuity and dissemination of the peaceful popular resistance in various locations in Palestine.

This call came during a protest organized this afternoon in front of the Prime Minister's Office Dr. Salam Fayyad with the participation of dozens of coordinators and members of the Popular Committees against the apartheid wall and settlement throughout the West Bank.

The protesters expressed their resentment of the government's policy towards the Popular Resistance, which led to decline, due to the conversion of some committees in the sites to non government organizations based on unclear resources of aid associated with unpatriotic agendas, encouraging some of the Palestinian organizations normalization gatherings, meetings and conferences, absence of clear government development plan to area "C", deliberate negligence to the logistic needs of the popular committees among many other issues.

The protesters demanded the Prime Minister to provide elements of support and steadfastness of the Palestinian citizens especially those who are exposed to daily violations by the Israeli army and settlers and are represented by collective arrests, destruction of houses and the imposition of exorbitant fines and bails where the citizens cannot provide a minimum of them. The protesters pointed out that escalatory step will be organized if the government continued this negligence.

Two Families Receive House Demolition Orders

On the 22. of August, 2012, Israel issued a demolition order to Jawad Awad and his wife Melal for their home and a water pool. Jawad and his family live in area C, witch constitutes more than 60% of the West Bank. Most constructions in area C face the threat of being demolished if it is newly built, expanded or just repaired; anything that Israel can see as an improvement. The possibility of getting a permit from the Israeli Occupation Authorities to build is nearly nonexistent, therefore most Palestinians go ahead and build without permission.



Despite the house being more than fifteen years old, only the top two floors are new, however, the demolition order is for the entire house and a water pool used to store rainwater and water which they buy in the winter when the access is better. This water is crucial for agriculture on their land. According to their lawyer at St. Eve in Bethlehem, the demolition is likely to take place in three months, six months if they are lucky.

This year Jawad's wife, Melal, who works as a teacher, has dealt with late payment and salary cuts in addition to the price increase. Their funds, therefore, do not allow further construction of the house at the moment, but Jawad and his family are going to proceed with the construction and they hope to have their two new floors ready in six months. Melal says they have no other option than to fight for their house. "It's all we've got, we have nowhere else to go" she says, begging for help. The family won't get any compensation if the house and water pool are demolished, and thus they are going to be left with no place to live and drowning in debts.

In addition to the notice of an upcoming house demolition, Jawad and Melal have had both of their sons, aged 16 and 17, arrested this spring. Like all children arrested during spring they were prevented from taking their exams at the end of the semester. The boys were arrested at night, taken out of the house, blindfolded and imprisoned for two months. In addition to two months in prison they got a fine of 1500 Israeli Shekels (\$375).



In the same area we meet the farmer Ibrahim Arar working in his greenhouse. August 22. just like the Awad family he got a note from the Israeli occupation forces ordering demolition of a water pool. As the Israeli occupation forces are limiting Palestinian access to water, Ibrahim built a pool on his own land, allowing him to grow profitable crops. In the pool he, like the Awad family, stores rainwater and, during the winter when the access to water is better, as well as some water from the municipality. Due to the occupation these pools are necessary for Palestinians to secure a stable water supply for farming.

To fund the pool Ibrahim had to get a loan of \$20000, money he will have a hard time to pay back without a stable water source for his farming land. Like Jawad Awad and his family he has been told by his lawyer at St. Eve that the demolition is likely to take place within 6 months.

Both of these families have their destiny written by the occupation forces. Within 6 months their lives will likely be bulldozed by the Israeli occupation forces, and they too will be added to the tragic numbers in statistics summarising Israeli war crimes.