



**Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling  
(WCLAC)**

**Israeli settler violence  
in the  
West Bank and East Jerusalem**

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**Submission**

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**Date: 16 September 2013**

**Submitted to:**

- UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

**Copied to:**

- The UN independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 On 31 January 2013, a report (the UN Report) investigating the impact of Israeli settlements on the rights of Palestinians living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem was released by an independent fact finding mission (the Mission) appointed by the UN.<sup>1</sup> In preparing the UN Report, the Mission consulted widely with all interested parties and made five requests for cooperation to the Israeli Government. The Government of Israel did not respond to these requests.
- 1.2 The purpose of this submission is to provide a six-monthly update on the situation on the ground following the publication of the UN Report. The submission also provides a sample of evidence collected since January that highlights the impact of settler violence and property destruction on women. The submission concludes with a general assessment as to whether conditions on the ground have improved or deteriorated since the publication of the UN Report.

## **2. Background**

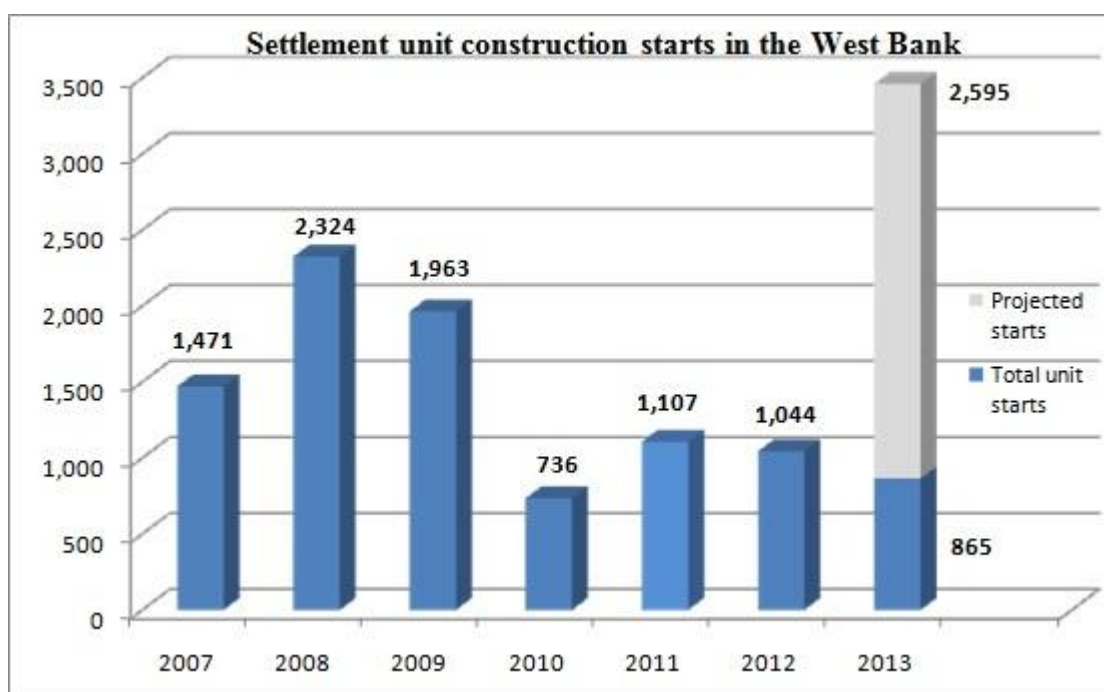
- 2.1 The UN Report identified the applicable legal principles which can be briefly summarised as follows:
- (i) The West Bank and East Jerusalem are under Israeli military occupation;
  - (ii) Occupying powers are not permitted to allow their citizens to live in occupied territory;
  - (iii) All Israeli settlements, settlement blocks and outposts in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal under international law; and
  - (iv) All legal obligations undertaken by the Government of Israel apply equally, and without discrimination, to all persons under its control, including Palestinians living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- 2.2 After reviewing the relevant legal framework, the UN Report provided a brief history of Israel's settlement project since 1967. The UN Report found that at the time of publication there were around 250 settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem with a population of 520,000. The Report makes it clear that this mass illegal influx of Israeli citizens into occupied territory has been sanctioned by the Israeli State, through planning, construction, encouragement and financial incentives. This was confirmed by a US

Congressional report that estimated that in 2005, the Israeli Government invested \$795 million in the settlements.

- 2.3 The UN Report found that the establishment of the settlements has fragmented the West Bank placing at risk the possibility of a Palestinian State, and by implication, a viable two state solution. Whilst the fenced areas of the settlements cover three percent of the West Bank, in total 43 percent of the territory is allocated to settlement local and regional councils.
- 2.4 The UN Report noted that distinct legal systems exist in the West Bank and are applied separately to Israeli settlers and Palestinians. Broadly, Israeli settlers are subject to Israeli civilian law, with all the rights and protections this entails, whereas Palestinians are frequently prosecuted in military courts, which fail to comply with international fair trial standards.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.5 The UN Report highlighted violence between settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank and expressed the view that the intention behind settler attacks is to pressure Palestinians to leave the land. Numerous testimonies received by the Mission referred to the presence of the Israeli police and army during attacks suggesting an element of coordination and complicity by the State. Complaints by Palestinians against settlers have a 91 percent chance of being dismissed without effective action, whereas in cases involving settler complaints against Palestinians, up to 95 percent of cases proceed to court. The UN Report concluded that women alone in their homes are easy targets for settler violence, creating a sense of insecurity amongst the wider Palestinian society.
- 2.6 On 14 August 2013, US-sponsored peace talks resumed between Israel and Palestine with the stated purpose of implementing a two state solution.

### **3. Six-monthly update**

- 3.1 ***Settlement construction:-*** In late May, the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics released data that indicates that housing unit construction starts in the settlements for the first quarter of 2013 have reached a seven year high.<sup>3</sup> Work began on 865 new housing units in the West Bank, a 355 percent increase over the previous quarter.<sup>4</sup> This figure also represents a 176 percent increase over the same period last year.<sup>5</sup>

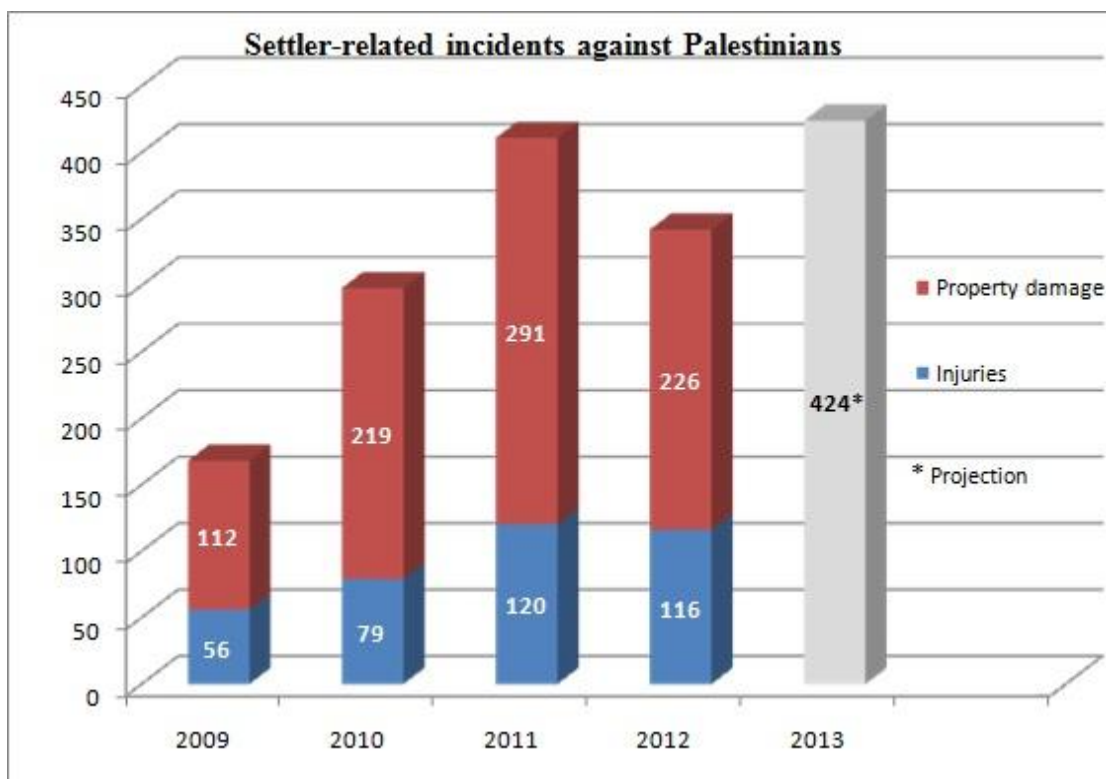


3.2 **Settler violence:-** According to figures compiled by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in the first half of 2013, there were 212 settler-related incidents causing personal injury or property damage to Palestinians. These incidents include both direct attacks by settlers, and situations where the Israeli army has intervened resulting in injury to Palestinians.

Nature of incident <sup>6</sup>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Settler-related incidents causing personal injury	7	8	11	17	9	5	<b>57</b>
Settler-related incidents causing property damage	17	19	14	34	43	28	<b>155</b>
<b>Total</b>							<b>212</b>

3.3 Settler-related incidents resulting in injury to Palestinians are up 5.5 percent over the same period in 2012, whilst incidents involving property damage have risen by 41 percent over the same period.<sup>7</sup> Many of these property damage incidents involve the destruction of olive trees, which are an important source of income and sustenance for many Palestinian communities. According to UN sources, as of 22 July, 7,130 olive trees have been damaged by settlers in 2013, or an average of 1,019 trees per month. This represents a 42 percent increase compared with 2012.<sup>8</sup> When reviewing these figures it is

important to note that it can take more than five years for damaged trees to produce fruit again, devastating families who rely on this harvest as a source of income.<sup>9</sup>

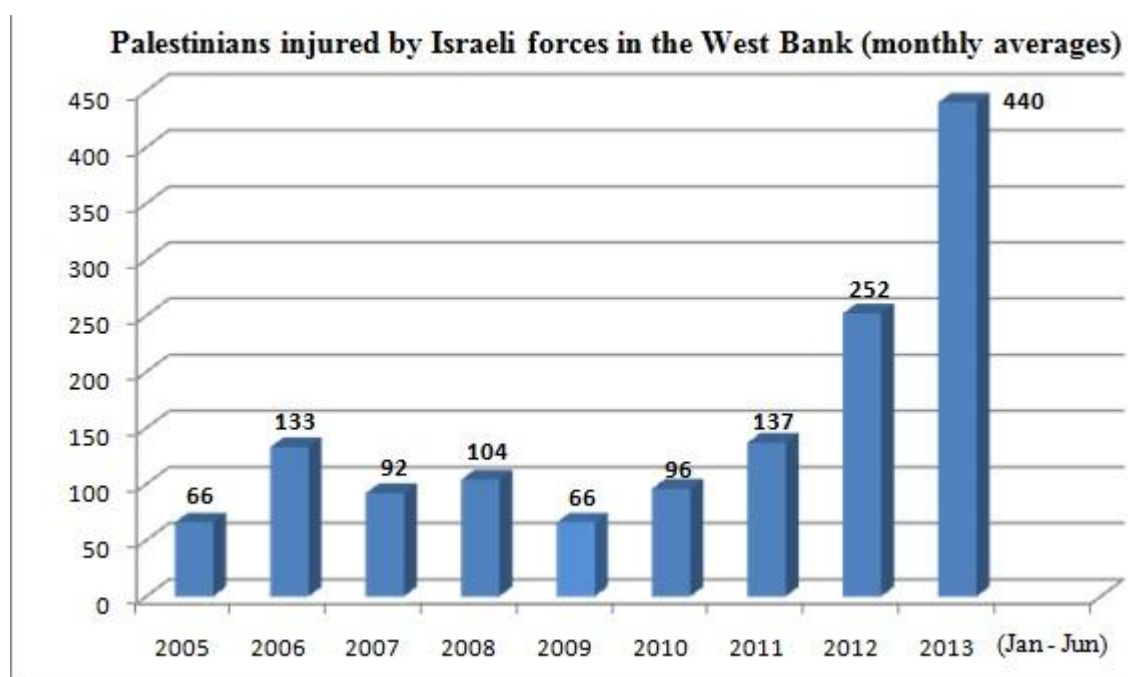


- 3.4 As has been pointed out on many occasions in the past, the general lack of accountability for settler attacks is a major factor in their continuance. Despite Israel's obligations under international law to protect the civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, settler violence persists largely due to the lack of adequate law enforcement by the Israeli authorities.<sup>10</sup> Many soldiers appear to see their protective role as only applying to settlers, and not Palestinians.<sup>11</sup> In many cases, the authorities do not intervene against settlers despite attacks being committed in plain sight.<sup>12</sup> They effectively endorse the activity through their inaction. Occasionally, authorities even go a step further and join in the aggression themselves.<sup>13</sup> Since 2005, statistics have consistently shown that only about 8.5 percent of complaints filed by Palestinians against Israeli citizens in the West Bank result in an indictment.<sup>14</sup>

[20 April 2013] – *"I was in the seat behind the driver and one of the settlers hurled a stone the size of an orange at the window next to me. The window was shattered and glass got into my eyes. I was in severe pain and feared that I was blinded because I couldn't see."*

Dina (13 years) –  
Near Suseya settlement, West Bank

- 3.5 Although many settler attacks originate from settlement outposts, which are illegal under both international and Israeli domestic law, the authorities continue to show a marked reluctance to remove these structures.<sup>15</sup> Further, in many cases there is tacit complicity by the authorities evidenced by the fact that these outposts are provided with infrastructure, including roads, water and electricity.<sup>16</sup>
- 3.6 The presence of settlements close to Palestinian population centres raises tensions. In recent years the number of weekly protests across the West Bank against the settlements has increased, resulting in an aggressive response by Israeli forces.<sup>17</sup> The result has been eight fatalities (compared with nine for the whole of 2012) and a 75 percent increase in injuries in 2013.<sup>18</sup> So far in 2013, 2,640 Palestinian civilians have been injured, bringing the monthly average to 440, the highest level since OCHA began collecting data in 2005.



#### **4. Evidence**

- 4.1 As part of WCLAC's ongoing programme to monitor human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, fieldworkers for the organization systematically document cases involving attacks by settlers on Palestinians and their property, with a particular focus on women. The following table provides a brief summary of these cases documented by WCLAC since January 2013. It should be noted that this information does not constitute an exhaustive list of all settler attacks during this time frame.

#	Name	Date	Location	Details	Annex
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1	Fatima	2 Feb	Burin	A mob of 30-40 settlers from Yitzhar settlement attack a village. Israeli soldiers fired tear gas at villagers when they try to defend themselves.	A
2	Rahmeh	2 Feb	Burin	A mob of 30-40 settlers from Yitzhar settlement attack a village. Israeli soldiers fired tear gas at villagers when they try to defend themselves. A 70 year old woman is taken to hospital after inhaling tear gas fired into her house.	B
3	Salam	2 Feb	Burin	A mob of 30-40 settlers from Yitzhar and Bracha settlements attack a village. Salam lost consciousness when Israeli soldiers fired tear gas into her house.	C
4	Fatima	23 Feb	Qusra	A Palestinian family are shot at by a group of settlers whilst they planted olive trees on their land. Israeli soldiers fail to fulfill their protective obligation.	D
5	Nada	23 Feb	Qusra	The house of a 62-year-old woman and her husband is attacked by a group of settlers who smash the windows.	E
6	Montaha	17 Apr	Al Aouja	A herd of goats belonging to a Bedouin family is stolen by a group of settlers in the Jordan Valley. The herd was the family's only source of income.	F
7	Dina	20 Apr	Suseya	A mob of settlers attack a school bus smashing the windows. A 13-year-old girl is taken to hospital with glass in her eyes.	G
8	Shirin	12 May	Al Khadr	A husband and wife are threatened with death by a security guard from a nearby settlement as they collect vine leaves from their land.	H

9	Wafaa	10 Jun	Hebron	A woman, her two daughters and an old man are sprayed with urine by a young settler as they were walking home in Hebron.	I
10	Faeda	20 Jun	Sabastiya	A woman describes how her agricultural land has been confiscated, her trees burned and sewage pumped onto her olive trees from the nearby settlement.	J
11	Yosra	5 Jul	Burin	A mob of 30-40 settlers attack a Palestinian house and are then protected by Israeli soldiers who fire tear gas into the village.	K
12	Halema	6 Jul	Yatta	A family's water spring is taken over by settlers and soldiers in the south Hebron hills. In the process the family's 22-year-old son is arrested.	L
13	Khatima	18 Jul	Al Qibliyah	Four armed settlers attack and beat a 50-year-old woman as she collects herbs near her home. The woman is hospitalized for four days.	M

## **5. Concluding remarks**

- 5.1 During the period immediately following the release of the UN Report, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of housing starts in the settlements. In the first quarter of 2013, housing starts increased by 355 percent over the previous quarter, and 176 percent over the same period in 2012. This increase coincides with concerted attempts by US and European officials to encourage the parties to return to the negotiating table in what is seen by many as a last ditch attempt to save a viable two-state solution. The objective evidence suggests that the Israeli Government is actively seeking to sabotage these efforts.
- 5.2 According to UN figures, during the first half of 2013, there were 212 reported attacks by settlers against Palestinians and their property. Attacks leading to personal injury increased by 5.5 percent, whilst attacks involving property damage rose by 41 percent



compared with 2012. As of 22 July, 7,130 Palestinian olive trees have been destroyed, or 1,019 trees per month. The objective evidence suggests that the scale of attacks by settlers on Palestinians in the West Bank is occurring with the tacit support of the Israeli authorities.

- 5.3 The continued existence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are a source of friction giving rise to local Palestinian protests which are aggressively suppressed by the Israeli military. The first half of 2013 has seen a dramatic rise in the number of Palestinian protesters killed and injured as a result of taking part in the protest movement. So far this year, eight Palestinians have been killed (compared with nine for the whole of 2012) and there has been a 75 percent increase in those injured during protests. According to UN figures, 2,640 Palestinians have been injured taking part in protests in 2013, or 440 per month. During the same period, there has been a 12.2 percent increase in the number of Palestinian children detained by the Israeli military.<sup>19</sup>
- 5.4 The evidence collected by WCLAC during the first half of 2013, corroborates the information contained in the preceding paragraphs. The evidence also indicates that settlers continue to attack Palestinians with impunity, and in some cases, with the active support of the Israeli military.
- 5.5 The conclusion of this submission is that the situation on the ground relating to the impact of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem on the Palestinian population has deteriorated in the six months following the publication of the UN Report. Further, there is no likelihood that the situation will improve due to an absence of international and domestic accountability.

**Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling**  
**Ramallah**  
**16 September 2013**

**ANNEXURE A**

**Name:** Fatima S.  
**Age:** 41  
**Location:** Burin village, West Bank  
**Date:** 2 February 2013

**A mother of five describes the day a mob of settlers attacked the village of Burin, in the West Bank, whilst being protected by Israeli soldiers.**

Fatima lives with her husband and children in the West Bank village of Burin. The village is situated between the settlements of Yitzhar and Bracha. "Our house is located close to a road used by the settlers from Yitzhar," says Fatima. "The settlers often march down the hill and attack our village. They sometimes park their cars on the road and terrorise us."

"On 2 February, at around noon, I was at home with my children," recalls Fatima. "Most of the men of the village were at work. All of a sudden I heard the sound of people shouting. I looked out of the window towards the hill on which the settlement of Yitzhar is built, and saw a group of 30 to 40 settlers running towards my house. Some of the settlers were carrying sticks, whilst others were masked. It was a terrifying scene, although I have witnessed it many times."

One of Fatima's sons went out of the house to confront the settlers. Other young men from the village who were not working at the time were on another hill where a second group of settlers from Bracha were attacking the village. Fatima's son was joined by some other villagers who tried to stop the settlers from entering the village. "Shortly afterwards Israeli soldiers arrived and started firing tear gas at us," recalls Fatima. "A huge white cloud filled the area and I felt like I was suffocating. It was a heavy type of gas that makes it difficult to breathe. I still feel some pain in my chest today, 10 days later," says Fatima.

"The settlers threw rocks at our house and the soldiers kept firing tear gas. One of the soldier's threw a tear gas canister at my son which hit him in the face, causing him to bleed. I nearly lost my mind when my son returned to the house with blood on his face. I tried to wipe the blood from his face as the house filled with gas. He was in a lot of pain and started vomiting," recalls Fatima. "The situation continued until early evening and the soldiers continued to provide protection to the settlers. I constantly feel unsafe in my own house with my young children. On that day I realised how the settlers can get away with anything with the army's protection. I have no doubt that one day the settlers will take over our house with the help of the army. We live a life of sheer terror," says Fatima.

## ANNEXURE B

**Name:** Rahmeh N.  
**Age:** 70  
**Location:** Burin village, West Bank  
**Date:** 2 February 2013

**On 2 February 2013, a mob of settlers from Yitzhar and Bracha attacked the West Bank village of Burin, terrifying local women and children.**

“My house is very close to the road used by settlers from the nearby settlement of Yitzhar,” says 70-year-old Rahmeh. “Settlers from Yitzhar have caused us so much trouble over the years. They are a constant source of stress for the entire village. They often attack our village and my house is the first to be hit.”



“On 2 February, a group of settlers, protected by Israeli soldiers, removed some protest tents erected by a group of activists on land belonging the village. The activists were trying to stop a group of settlers from an outpost near Bracha settlement from taking the land. Clashes between the settlers, activists and villagers erupted and other settlers from Yitzhar attacked the village where my house is located,” recalls Rahmeh.

“At around noon, I was at home with my daughter-in-law, Salam, and three of my young grandchildren. All of a sudden I heard Salam calling out that settlers were running down the hill towards our house. I looked out of the window and saw around 30 to 40 settlers. I rushed to shut all the doors and windows because I knew there was going to be trouble. My grandchildren were terrified and started to cry. I felt there was very little I could do to calm them down.”

“As soon as the settlers approached they started throwing rocks at our house. We were scared and kept well away from the windows. I then heard the sound of shots and soon our house started to fill up with tear gas. Word spread in the village and someone called my son who rushed home thinking the house was on fire. When he arrived I had already lost consciousness. When I regained consciousness I found myself in an ambulance on the way to hospital. At the hospital I was given first aid and oxygen. Thankfully I was discharged the same day.”

“I feel a deep sense of insecurity in my own home,” says Rahmeh. “This is not the first time this has happened – it has become routine. Things got slightly better in the last six months but it seems as though the settlers are organising for violence once again. When the soldiers show up they attack us instead of making sure the settlers don’t come too close. I hardly ever leave my house now for fear that something might happen in my absence. We live a life of constant terror and we are left to defend ourselves.”

## ANNEXURE C

**Name:** Salam Y.  
**Age:** 20  
**Location:** Burin village, West Bank  
**Date:** 2 February 2013

**On 2 February 2013, a mob of settlers from Yitzhar and Bracha attacked the West Bank village of Burin, terrifying local women and children.**

Twenty-year-old Salam lives with her husband in the West Bank village of Burin. Their house is located near a road used by Israeli settlers from Yitzhar. At around noon, on 2 February, Salam was at home with her mother-in-law. “I was watching her cook when all of a sudden I heard the voice of a women screaming,” recalls Salam. “I looked out the window towards the hill where the settlement is built and saw about 40 settlers running down the hill towards my house. Some of them were carrying sticks and some wore masks. I was terrified and shouted loudly to alert my mother-in-law.”

“Minutes later, when word spread that settlers were about to attack us, young men from the village rushed to the area to try to protect our houses. Clashes erupted and it looked like things were getting out of control. I was scared and didn’t know what to expect because this was the first time I’ve seen this since I got married and moved to this village 10 months ago,” says Salam. “I am not used to settlers.”

“A short time later, Israeli soldiers showed up and started firing tear gas at the young men who were throwing stones at the settlers to stop them approaching. I felt I wanted to cry but held back. My husband was at work so I didn’t call him but called my brother-in-law instead. About 15 minutes later tear gas filled the house and I was unable to breathe. A cloud of gas filled the room and I couldn’t see anymore. I heard the voice of my brother-in-law who then held my hand and dragged me out of the house. At that moment I lost consciousness and fell on the ground. I don’t remember what happened next, but when I gained consciousness I found myself outside the house. I was still confused and bewildered and instead of walking away from the settlers I walked towards them until my brother-in-law stopped me.”

“I spent the rest of the day at my brother-in-law’s house in the centre of the village and didn’t go back home until the evening. When I came home I didn’t find my mother-in-law and was very worried about her. My neighbour told me she had to be rushed to the hospital because of the tear gas. She was released later on that day. I will never forget this incident, I felt sick and tired for days. I feel unsafe in my own house and worry that settlers might attack the village again. My house is exposed and there is no one who can protect us.”

## ANNEXURE D

**Name:** Fatima R.  
**Age:** 38  
**Location:** Qusra, West Bank  
**Date:** 23 February 2013

### **A mother of three describes the day Israeli settlers fired shots at her family as they planted almond trees on their land in the village of Qusra, in the West Bank.**

Thirty-eight year old Fatima lives with her husband and three children in the West Bank village of Qusra, near the town of Nablus. “Our village is surrounded by settlements built on land belonging to the village and the villages nearby,” says Fatima.



“On Saturday 23 February 2013, I went with my husband and children to some agricultural land we own near the village. We wanted to plant some almond trees, to do some weeding and have a nice day outside in the spring weather. At around noon, after doing a lot of work on the land, we had a tea break in a small shed we have on the land. Suddenly we heard the sound of men shouting outside and cursing using bad language which I am too embarrassed to repeat. We looked out and saw five Israeli settlers nearby carrying guns. One of them was masked. I was very scared,” says Fatima.



“My husband and I walked outside to see what was going on but the minute the settlers saw us they started to shout and verbally abuse us, it was awful. I was very worried about my husband and told him to come back inside. However, before we could do anything, I saw the masked settler take position behind a pile of dirt about 50 meters away and aim his rifle at us and started shooting in our direction. Bullets landed all around us and I was terrified and thought I was going to be killed on the spot. There was no one around except us. I instinctively ducked and started to crawl towards our car which was parked on the dirt road a few meters away. My husband did the same and told me to get into the car as quickly as possible.”

Fatima and her husband made it safely to their car but were worried for their children still inside the shed. “When the settlers noticed that my husband was trying to move the car away they ran towards us and started throwing stones. I cannot describe how terrified I was, my heart was pounding and I didn’t think we were going to make it out safely, but luckily we did.”



“Miraculously my children escaped and no one was physically hurt but I am still in shock four days later,” says Fatima. “I wake up in the middle of the night panicking and I find it hard to go back to sleep. My knees are shaky and I sometimes feel my legs are unable hold me anymore. My husband went back to the land later that day and found that the settlers had pulled out some trees, smashed the windows of the shed and caused damage to the property. One of the other villagers was seriously hurt by gunshots fired by settlers

that day and was transferred to a hospital in Israel. Neighbours who live up on the hill near our land later told us that soldiers arrived at the scene more than an hour later. Instead of keeping the settlers away the soldiers started firing tear gas and sound grenades at Palestinian villagers. My husband collected tens of empty tear gas canisters like it was a war zone.”

“This is not the first time that settlers from the nearby settlement of Yesh Kodesh have caused us trouble, it happens all the time,” says Fatima. I think there were about 15 attacks since June last year. On 1 January this year settlers destroyed about 60 small olive trees which my husband had planted himself. The loss is not simply financial; the idea of not being able to work our own land is deeply disturbing. The settlers don’t want us here, they want to drive us off our land so that they take it over, that’s basically it.”



## ANNEXURE E

**Name:** Nada Y.  
**Age:** 62  
**Date:** 23 February 2013  
**Location:** Qusra, West Bank

### **A 62-year-old woman describes the day a group of settlers attacked her house and how when Israeli soldiers intervened they provided protection to the settlers.**

Nada lives with her husband in the Palestinian village of Qusra, in the West Bank. “My husband and I run a small dairy farm and we also sell eggs. Our house is located on the top of a hill at the edge of the village, about 500 meters from the other houses. The Israeli settlement of Migdalim, where Orthodox Jews live, was built on the hill across from us in 1984. Ever since the settlement was built, our lives have changed for the worse.”

On Saturday, 23 February, at around noon, my husband was about to leave the house to help our son who was herding cattle on the land around the house. As he was leaving we heard the sound of dogs barking as if someone was getting too close to the house. We looked out to see what was going on. We saw a group of settlers getting out of the settlement security car very close to our house. I was afraid and told my husband not to confront them since we were by ourselves without any protection. Before I finished my sentence I saw four armed settlers with metal sticks in their hands approaching the house. One of them had his face covered with his pullover. He looked scary. They started to shout at us, cursing us and calling us names. They told us in broken Arabic to stay inside the house. Two of the settlers started to throw stones at the house and to smash the windows with their sticks. I was terrified and thought we were going to be killed. This lasted for about 10 minutes. I cannot describe the fear and helplessness I felt. I was sure I was going to be killed on the spot.”

“I was pleased my sons were not in the house since they wouldn’t have remained silent. They would have confronted the settlers and gotten themselves into a fight with them. We were saved by some young men from our village who were passing by. I later found out that settlers had also attacked our neighbours’ house further up on the hill. The young men clashed with the settlers and tried to keep them away from the house when Israeli soldiers came and started to fire tear gas and stun grenades at the young village men; protecting the settlers instead of keeping them away from us. All the tear gas got into the house because of the smashed windows and I could hardly breathe.”

“The clashes with the soldiers lasted until around 5:00 p.m. By that time I was trembling from fear and exhaustion. I couldn’t believe it when it was all over and we were not hurt. My



granddaughters came to check on us when the soldiers and settlers had left the area. I was very pleased to see them. This is not the first time that settlers have attacked our house, but this was the worst incident by far. Settlers want to make our lives so hard and unbearable that we leave our land and walk away. The fact is we will never leave our land. This is the only land we own and this is where we will stay as long as we live.”

## ANNEXURE F

**Name:** Montaha G.  
**Age:** 36 years  
**Location:** Jericho, West Bank  
**Date:** 7 April 2013

### **A Bedouin woman from near Jericho describes how the family's herd of goats were stolen by settlers from a nearby outpost.**

Montaha lives with her husband, children and extended family in a tent near Jericho, in the West Bank. The family makes a living from their 90 livestock. Although the family owns land in Area C (Palestinian territory under full Israeli security and administrative control), the Israeli authorities refuse to issue them with building permits. "The settlement of Kokhav Hashahar was built 2 km from our land in the 1970s," says Montaha. "Four months ago, the settlers built an outpost nearby that 10 to 20 religious Jews inhabit. They are very hostile towards us."

"On 7 April, at around 11:00 a.m., I heard my brother-in-law, Khalid, crying and screaming, so I hurried out, and found him panicking. Khalid was saying that we had lost our herd of goats. The family gathered, but we were not sure what had happened. Khalid told us that he had to hide out of fear for his life when he saw four settlers carrying guns coming from the outpost. They took the livestock back to the outpost and later to the settlement. We couldn't believe we had lost our only source of income. We reported the incident to the Palestinian authorities, who in turn reported it to the Israeli authorities. We also reported it at an Israeli police station nearby, where we waited three hours before a police officer decided to go to the location of the incident to collect evidence. Nothing was done, even though the surveillance cameras at the settlement must have recorded everything that happened."

"We did not give up hope of getting our livestock back. One day we saw the settlers moving the herd. We called the police who managed to retrieve six of our livestock. Two weeks later the police returned three of our goats after another three had died. A short time later another goat died, leaving us with only two, not enough to make milk and dairy products to sell at market. I dream that one day the rest of our goats will be returned as we need the income. We were given no support or compensation. Our way of life is threatened, and we don't know what to do or where to live," says Montaha.

## ANNEXURE G

**Name:** Dina N.  
**Age:** 13  
**Location:** Susiya, South Hebron hills, West Bank  
**Date:** 20 April 2013

**On 20 April 2013, a mob of settlers from Suseya, attacked a group of children on their way to school, injuring one girl in her eye and terrifying others.**

“The settlement of Suseya was built on village land in the 80s and settlers have been giving us a hard time ever since,” says Dina. “We are not allowed to build on our land or herd our goats and settlers often physically and verbally abuse villagers and destroy our crops. Life in our small village is very hard.”

“On 20 April 2013, at around 7:00 a.m., I got in a vehicle and was on my way to school as usual together with 12 other students when I noticed a group of about 10 settlers aged 20 to 30 carrying sticks and stones and shouting things in Hebrew,” recalls Dina. “Although I don’t understand Hebrew it was clear that the settlers were threatening us and were about to attack the vehicle we were in. I was scared and so were the other students.”

“Sure enough, seconds later, settlers attacked our car with sticks and threw stones at us. Stones fell on our car from all directions and made horrifying sounds. We held our heads and stuck to each other out of fear. Some of us were shouting and calling for help,” remembers Dina. “I was in the seat behind the driver and one of the settlers hurled a stone the size of an orange at the window next to me. The window was shattered and glass got into my eyes. I was in severe pain and feared that I was blinded because I couldn’t see.”

“I screamed out of fear and so did the other students. The driver kept on driving as fast as he could, because he wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible. He kept assuring us, saying: ‘everything is going to be all right.’”

Sometime later an Israeli police car arrived and prevented the settlers from chasing the students any further, allowing the driver to reach the school. “He dropped off the other students and drove me to the hospital where I was given first aid. I was prescribed medication and advised not to expose my eyes to the sun,” recalls Dina. “I feel my eyes are not normal still; I blink and twitch a lot. I tremble and shake out of control because of the fear I felt. I missed school that day and in my mind I keep imagining settlers chasing me.”

“The other students later told me they weren’t able to focus at school. Some told me they cried in the classroom as they recalled what happened on the way to school. Life in our village is hard. Incidents like this are not unusual and each day we worry about what that day might bring.”

## ANNEXURE H

**Name:** Shirin S.  
**Age:** 30  
**Location:** Al Khadr, West Bank  
**Date:** 12 May 2013

### **A woman describes how she and her husband were threatened with death by a guard from a nearby settlement as they collected vine leaves from their land.**

Thirty-year-old Shirin lives with her husband and children in the village of Al Khadr, near Bethlehem, in the West Bank. “The settlement of Efrat was built 5 km away about 30 years ago. The settlers built a fence around the settlement, which divided our land. Access to our land is now limited, and the only way for us to get to it to cultivate and harvest is through a gate that the settlers control. The gate is usually open between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., but remains closed during Jewish holidays.”

“On 12 May 2013, I went with my husband to our land to collect grape leaves when two settlement security jeeps showed up. Two officers got out, carrying guns. One approached, shouting and expressing his animosity towards us. He yelled at us to get off this land, saying that it did not belong to us. My husband responded that this is our land, where we make our living, which we inherited from our ancestors, but the man was completely unresponsive. He asked for our IDs and my husband gave his, but I did not have mine. I told him I don’t carry it, and he became furious. After that, he took my ID number from my husband’s card, and relayed our information over the phone to an unknown recipient. Then, we were told that under direct orders, which the officer received, we were not allowed to be on the land. We do not know who gave those orders, but we were threatened with arrest if we disregarded them.”

“We begged him to allow us to stay, but he refused and continued shouting at us, telling us to leave the land. We refused to leave, and the situation intensified, with the officer threatened to kill us if we did not obey. At this point, the other security officer, who had been silent the whole time, interfered and took him away from us. Many thoughts ran through my head at that moment. I was afraid that my husband and I would surely die and that my children would be raised as orphans. We realised that our only option was to leave the land. The officer chased us for 300 metres, threatening us until they made sure we were out of the gate. “

“Due past experiences, we did not file a complaint with the Israeli authorities, because we don’t believe it makes any difference. When my father-in-law filed a complaint in the Israeli court against the settlers of Efrat, who uprooted 150 grapevines and 50 olive trees on his land, the case went on for years with no result. There were no real changes on the ground, just some interest

from the press. The press requested that my husband and I return to the land with cameras to record the incident if the same situation occurred, but I refused to go back there out of fear. We remain helpless. Our lives are in danger, and we do not know how long this situation will last. All I wish is to get to our lands safely, without fear, to reap the fruits of our labour. I don't know who to go to and have no shoulder to cry on.”

## ANNEXURE I

**Name:** Wafaa G.  
**Age:** 43  
**Location:** Hebron, West Bank  
**Date:** 10 June 2013

### **A woman from Hebron describes how a group of young settlers sprayed an old man, herself and her daughters with a bottle of urine.**

Wafaa lives with her husband and children in the West Bank city of Hebron. On 10 June 2013, at about 4 p.m., I was walking home with two of my youngest daughters. As we were walking the narrow streets of the old city, I saw a group of about seven young settlers, aged around 18 years, in front of us. One of the settlers held a plastic bottle containing a yellow liquid. At the same moment, an old man, around 90 years old, was passing by. The old man was barely able to walk and was using a walking stick. The young settler holding the bottle walked towards the old man and started to spray the old man with the yellow liquid. The old man was helpless and tried to continue along his way. The settler continued to spray the old man and make fun of him,” recalls Wafaa.

“The settler with the bottle then came towards me and my two daughters and did the same to us. I tried to call out the Israeli soldiers who were 10 feet away from us but they did not take any action. I yelled again and one of the soldiers started to speak in Hebrew but I was not able to understand. Then one of the Israeli soldiers took me to the nearest police station, 40 metres away, where I filed a complaint against the settler who sprayed us. An Israeli soldier, who spoke Arabic, accompanied me to look around in the neighborhood trying to find the attackers but we found no one. The police then took my personal information and told me that they will file a complaint against the settler with the Israeli police in Jaabra.”

“The yellow liquid that was sprayed on us was disgusting. I think it was urine. I felt so sorry watching that old man being humiliated, even more than I felt sorry for myself and my daughters. Our lives are always in danger from the settlers. Settlers violate us as they want and get away with it. Palestinians, on the other hand, are punished for offences without any evidence. Since the incident my daughters now fear walking in the street where the attack happened. They never feel safe and when they come back home they thank God that they were not exposed to any harm.”

## ANNEXURE J

**Name:** Faeda S.  
**Age:** 54  
**Location:** Sabastiya, West Bank  
**Date:** 20 June 2013

### **A woman from a town near Nablus describes how their agricultural land has been confiscated, set fire to and had sewerage pumped onto it from a nearby Israeli settlement.**

Faeda lives with her husband and children in Sabastiya, near Nablus in the West Bank. “My husband and I own agricultural land right next to the settlement of Shave Shomron. We took good care of this land and cultivate vegetables, grapes, citrus and olive trees. In 2002, 59 acres of agricultural land was confiscated by the Israeli authorities and added to Shave Shomron as a “military training zone”. However, we still managed to work the land from time to time.”

“Then on 20 June 2013, we received a telephone call from Sabastiya municipality informing us that our agricultural land was on fire. By the time my husband reached the place an Israeli fire engine was already there, sometime later the civil defense from Nablus city showed up. We believe the settlers from the nearby settlement set fire to the land which destroyed grape vines and apricot trees. We also lost 70 olive trees. Watching the land, that my ancestors worked hard to cultivate, being burned and confiscated by the Israeli officials breaks my heart. Many times we would risk our lives to go and cultivate the land even when the Israeli military were training. We would hear the terrifying sound of bullets, and on many occasions we were evicted by the military.”

“The settlement of Shave Shomron also pumps their sewerage water onto our agricultural land. The olive trees dried up and wild pigs started to gather around the area. We were not able to pick olives anymore because it was surrounded with sewerage water with its unbearable smell. The town went on protest marches to change the situation. Afterwards the settlement administration reduced sewerage pumping but it is still gathering on our lands. Many people are not allowed to cultivate their lands and we have to obtain special permits from the Israelis if we wish go there. We used to extract a100 gallons of olive oil from those lands but now we can’t get out one drop. We counted on this produce for our incomes. When the trees dried up we didn’t have anything left to sell.”



## ANNEXURE K

**Name:** Yusra N.  
**Age:** 72  
**Location:** Burin, West Bank  
**Date:** 5 July 2013

**On 5 July 2013, a group of Israeli settlers attack a Palestinian house in the village of Burin, near Nablus, in the West Bank. Soldiers arrive and fire tear gas and stun grenades into the village.**

Yusra lives in the village of Burin, near Nablus, with her husband and extended family. The Israeli settlement of Bracha is built nearby. The surrounding region is prone to attack by settlers. “On Friday, 5 July 2013, we were all at home in the afternoon when all of a sudden stones were thrown at our house,” recalls Yusra. “We suspected settlers as they have attacked our house so many times in the past. We all went upstairs to my son’s apartment for safety. I looked out of the window and saw between 30 and 40 settlers, young and old, surrounding the house. They kept throwing stones and broke all the windows facing the settlement. Settlers also came into our vegetable garden and destroyed it. They also destroyed our olive seedlings and the lemon trees. This made me feel very sad.”

“Some young men from the village heard the news of the attack and came to our house to try to scare the settlers away. A short time later, Israeli soldiers arrived and started firing tear gas and stun grenades at the young men from our village who came to protect us and directly at our house and on the roof. I was very scared, first from the settlers and the stones they were throwing, and then from the soldiers, the tear gas and the stun grenades they fired. It was like a battle field, it was terrible,” recalls Yusra.

“My grandchildren were terrified and cried the whole time. They were scared of the tear gas and the stun grenades. This situation went on for about three hours. I was exhausted by the time it all ended. Later in the day I found out that my granddaughter, Yara, fell and broke her leg as she ran away from a settler who looked like he was about to throw a stone at her. My grandchildren are now too scared to play around the house because our neighbour’s house, which is about 15 meters away, was taken over by settlers who have occupied it. About Four or five settlers remain in the house and are protected by Israeli soldiers.”

“Our life is very hard,” says Yusra. “Settlers have been causing us trouble for a long time. Almost every Friday and Saturday they do something to harm and scare us. They want us to leave. We don’t feel safe in our own homes and on our own land. Settlers endanger our lives, scare us and make our lives miserable.”

## ANNEXURE L

**Name:** Halema H.  
**Age:** 56  
**Location:** Um Al Kher, West Bank  
**Date:** 6 July 2013

### **A woman from the South Hebron Hills describes how the family's water spring was taken over by Israeli soldiers and settlers and her adult son was arrested.**

Halimeh lives in the small Palestinian village of Um Al Kher, in the South Hebron Hills. "I live with my family on land which my father-in-law owns. In the early 1980s the Israeli settlement of Carmel was built on land that belongs to the village. The settlement fence is no more than 70 meters away from our homes."

"On 6 July 2013, at around 10:00 a.m., I went with my husband, my children and my sister-in-law to the well we own to give the cattle some water to drink. When we got there we found a number of settlers with their families sitting there. About 30 military vehicles were also there and about 50 soldiers were in the area. As soon as we got there, four soldiers approached my son (22 years) and grabbed him without saying a word. They tied his hands behind his back with plastic ties, blindfolded him and led him to a nearby jeep. I saw the soldiers beat him on his back while inside the jeep before they closed the back door. I was terrified and felt I needed to rescue my son because he hadn't done anything wrong. I talked to the soldiers and asked them to let my son go but they didn't listen to me. I stood in front of the jeep to prevent it from driving away but the driver drove back and forth until I fell on the ground and hurt my face. The jeep then drove away towards the settlement."

"My husband and I followed them together with my sister-in-law and again asked them to release our son, but they didn't listen to us. One of the soldiers pushed my husband and my sister-in-law in an aggressive way. I went to the Commander and asked him to let my son go thinking he would be more responsive but instead he grabbed me by my arm, shook me violently and pushed me away. I fell on the ground, felt dizzy for a few seconds and then lost consciousness. When I regained consciousness I found myself in the emergency room at the hospital in Hebron. My husband was beside me. He told me my sister-in-law had to also be taken to the emergency room. I remained at the hospital for about five hours and the doctors told me to rest because there were bruises all over my body."

My son later told me they took him to the police station at the settlement of Kiryat Arba near Hebron. He was released at 10:00 p.m. that day and was made to pay NIS 1,500 (about \$400) as a fine. He was not told why he was arrested and no charge sheet was presented against him. I

have since been feeling ill. I have headaches and I get panic attacks thinking settlers have attacked our village. All this is because of the settlers who don't want us to live our lives on what is left of our land. All I want is to be able to live in peace and dignity with my family, I want nothing else."

## ANNEXURE M

**Name:** Khatima S.  
**Age:** 50  
**Location:** Al Mazra'a Al Qibliyeh, West Bank  
**Date:** 18 July 2013

### **A woman from a village near Ramallah describes how she was surrounded by four settlers and severely beaten as she picked herbs near her home.**

Khatima lives in a small village near Ramallah with her husband and five children. The Israeli settlement of Talmon is located nearby. Khatima's husband is unable to work due to illness so she supports the family. "I pick wild herbs from the nearby hills and sell them at the market in Ramallah."

"On 18 July this year, I left the house at 8:00 a.m. with my nine-year-old son, Yousef, and went to pick sage on some land we own. I told my son to sit in the shade of an olive tree whilst I went picking about 40 meters away. All of a sudden I heard a noise nearby. I looked up and saw four settlers who were about 25 meters away and walking towards me. Three of the settlers were carrying pistols and the fourth was carrying a rifle. I was terrified and turned my back and tried to walk away. I heard them speak in Hebrew saying "bo bo" which means "come come". I ran as fast as I could but I was struck in the back with a rock. I felt severe pain but didn't look back, I just kept running," recalls Khatima.

"I was terrified and feared that they might shoot me. I was in such pain that I couldn't run any further and fell down. I tried to stand up again and run but the settlers surrounded me. The older settler, who was carrying the rifle, stepped on my foot, pressed very hard and started to beat me with his gun. The others beat me with their pistols and slapped and kicked me. I tried not to scream because I didn't want my son to hear me; I didn't want him to come and be exposed to danger himself. I was sure I was going to die."

"One of the settlers hit me very hard on my head with the back of his gun. It was a painful blow. My nose was bleeding heavily and I lost consciousness. A while later, I cannot tell how long, I gained consciousness and didn't know where I was or what was going on. It took me a few seconds to realise that there was a heavy rock on my back. I looked around and saw that I was in the middle of a pool of blood. I tried to stand up but I couldn't. I slowly crawled towards my son who was shocked and terrified when he saw me. I told him to get help from workers at the nearby quarry. After he left I kept crawling towards the road fearing that the settlers might come back for me if I stayed there. A short while later my son came back with the owner of the quarry

who took me in his car to the hospital. I lost consciousness again before reaching the hospital. I spent four days at the hospital where I was treated for wounds and bruises.”

“I now suffer from aches and pains. I find it difficult to walk around the house to do my house work. I have also become forgetful. I still visit the clinic for follow up treatment. I also wake up terrified in the middle of the night thinking I’m being chased by settlers. I wake up screaming and shouting loudly. My son Yousef also has nightmares and wakes up screaming in the middle of the night. I hug him close to my chest and tell him he is all right and try to make him go back to sleep. The quarry owner told me later that my son tried to revive me in the car on the way to the hospital by wiping my face with water. My son would tell the driver to drive as fast as he could to get me to the hospital as quickly as possible. I worry about my family and our income as I won’t be able to collect herbs for a while. I am also terrified of going back into the hills.”

<sup>1</sup> Report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of Israeli settlement on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Human Rights Council, 2013 – Available at: <http://is.gd/SziEDa>

<sup>2</sup> Children in Military Custody (June 2012) – Available at: <http://is.gd/zLzlxQ>

<sup>3</sup> As compared to other quarterly data. Americans for Peace Now – “Construction Starts in Settlements Reach 7 Year High,” available at: <http://is.gd/cSkOY2>

<sup>4</sup> Israel Central Bureau of Statistics – Construction Begun and Construction Completed in First Quarter of 2013, Table 4, available at: <http://is.gd/raeCgS>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Settler-related incidents (Jan – Jun 2013) – Source: OCHA

<sup>7</sup> Figures for first six months of 2013 show 57 recorded incidents as opposed to 54 over the same period in 2012. Data according to UNOCHA –Humanitarian Bulletin (December 2012), p. 16, available at: <http://is.gd/ZLhZDO>; and UNOCHA –Humanitarian Monitor (June 2013), page 16, available at: <http://is.gd/YH8FRV>

<sup>8</sup> Figure calculated from UNOCHA – Protection of Civilians (16-22 July 2013), available at: <http://is.gd/tuIyLU> ; UNOCHA – Protection of Civilians (9-15 July 2013), available at: <http://is.gd/LapyF6>; and UNOCHA – Humanitarian Bulletin (December 2012), p. 11, available at: <http://is.gd/ZLhZDO>

<sup>9</sup> See Box on Al Mughayyir, UNOCHA –Humanitarian Bulletin (December 2012), page 11, available at: <http://is.gd/ZLhZDO>

<sup>10</sup> UNOCHA – Humanitarian Monitor (January 2013), pages 7 and 14, available at: <http://is.gd/iGSZ49>

<sup>11</sup> UNOCHA – Humanitarian Monitor (May 2013), page 12, available at: <http://is.gd/HShW7k>

<sup>12</sup> Examples, including video footage available via B’Tselem at: <http://is.gd/waExHs>

<sup>13</sup> An example in the January Humanitarian Monitor details the firing of live ammunition by soldiers responding to a clash in Qusra. UNOCHA – Humanitarian Monitor (January 2013), page 11, available at: <http://is.gd/iGSZ49>

<sup>14</sup> Yesh Din – Law Enforcement on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank, pages 2-3, available at: <http://is.gd/WjFOz7>

<sup>15</sup> UNOCHA – Humanitarian Monitor (January 2013), page 11, available at: <http://is.gd/iGSZ49>

<sup>16</sup> UNOCHA – Humanitarian Monitor (January 2013), page 14, available at: <http://is.gd/iGSZ49>

<sup>17</sup> UNOCHA –Humanitarian Monitor (June 2013), pages 2-4, available at: <http://is.gd/YH8FRV>

<sup>18</sup> UNOCHA –Humanitarian Monitor (June 2013), pages 2-4, available at: <http://is.gd/YH8FRV>. So far in 2013, eight Palestinians have been killed, compared with nine for all of 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Military Court Watch – Statistics. Available at: <http://is.gd/M3B8Q2>