

18-19 May 2021 – West Bank Situation update #1

Situation

- On 18 May, a general strike called by the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee in Israel's Arab communities called for took place throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and in mixed-cities in Israel. A day of rage was also announced in the West Bank.
- The strike was accompanied by demonstrations and marches, and heavy confrontations with the Israeli Security Forces (ISF). Four Palestinians were reported killed, including one minor and one Palestine refugee. Approximately 300 Palestinians were injured from live rounds/ammunition.
- Clashes in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem continue on a daily basis in the evening. The neighborhood is currently blockaded with cement blocks and a checkpoint with limit movements and access.
- On 19 May, a sharp decrease in injuries was reported, compared to the very tense day of demonstrations. Qalandia checkpoint was a hotspot of heavy clashes. One Palestinian female was killed by a settler in Hebron near Kiryat Arba'. Six Palestinians were injured, two from live ammunition, one with Plastic-Coated Metal Bullet (PCMB) and three were physically assaulted.
- Since the beginning of May, 29 Palestinian fatalities were recorded (10 were Palestine refugees), all from live ammunition. Likewise, over 650 injuries by live ammunition were also reported. Trends of settlers' violence are also very worrisome, with over 170 incidents in two weeks.

Impact on UNRWA Operations

- Essential services, including health, education and sanitation, are running normally, although movements between governorates in the West Bank is limited, to protect safety and security of staff.
- Education: UNRWA schools, like other Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Education (MoE) educational facilities in the West Bank were closed on 18 and 19 May, in light of heightened tension. Schools re-open on 20 May, except for 22 located in hotspots and flashpoints, including proximity to checkpoints and settlements. UNRWA Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) continue working remotely. Four examples of the 22 schools affected in detail below:

- Al-Jiftlik School: concerns around attacks by settlers. Buses transporting teachers passed through Hamra checkpoint, without displaying the UNRWA logo, to prevent exposure;
- Jalazone Schools: Daily confrontations are reported between Palestinians and ISF; some bullets and tear gas were thrown within schools' vicinity.
- Shu'fat School: Daily confrontations are reported, and dozens of gas canisters landed in the school yard.
- Aqbat Jaber Schools: The road beside the schools witnessed closure because of burning of car tires.

- Health: UNRWA health clinics are operating normally, except for those in East Jerusalem, whose work was impacted by the Israeli Civil Administration's (ICA) decision to restrict access to Jerusalem to UN, INGO and diplomatic staff members holding West Bank ID. The decision is in place for two days and will be lifted as of 20 May. Some of the Mobile Health teams were not able to undertake some visits to remote communities (e.g. Barta'a), due to evident risks posed by settlers, as well as exposure to clashes on the roads. UNRWA continues to support PA Ministry of Health (MoH) vaccination roll-out, by administering vaccines to refugees in its health centres.

- **MMD:** UNRWA microfinance branches were closed for one day, in line with the Palestinian Monetary Authority’s (PMA) decision to close banking sector and microfinance institutions.

Planned Activities

- Reactivate Psychological First Aid (PFA) hotlines that have been used to address concerns of families in quarantine due to CIVID-19, for families facing distress and trauma in light of the current emergency, and use available referral mechanisms for those in need.
- Back-up support to Gaza Field Office: logistics and procurement, finance, staff care through West Bank Field Office hotlines.
- Crisis Intervention Unit/Protection Teams coordinated response to address protection-related concerns of Sheikh Jarrah families threatened with forced displacement, including with regard to distress and trauma, with a focus on women and children.

Image 1. Trend of Live ammunition injuries and confrontations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (Jan 1-May 19- before 9 am- 2021)

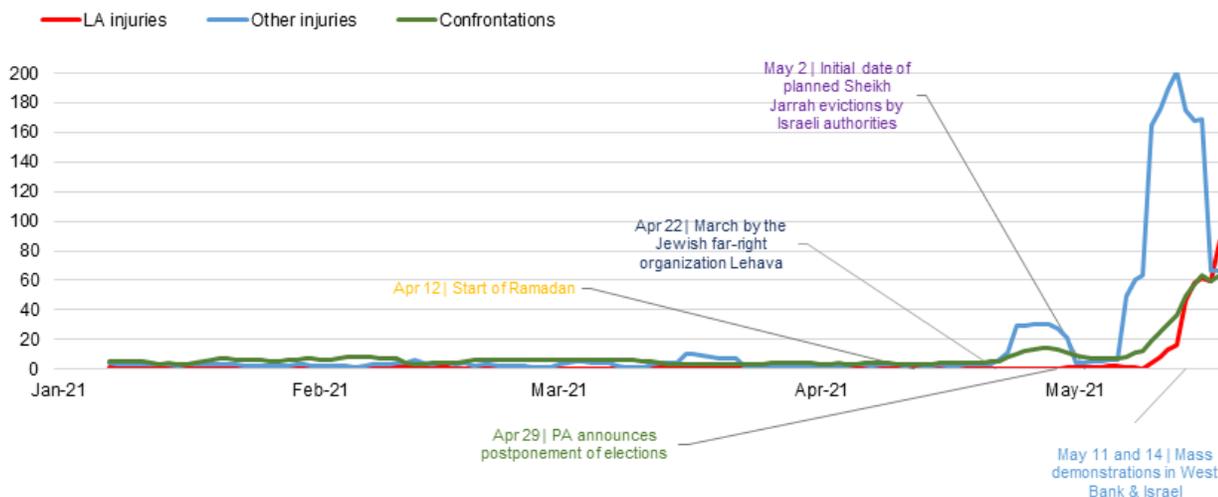


Image 2. Trend of Palestinian fatalities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (Jan 1-May 19- before 9 am- 2021)

