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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Palestinian Territories / Israel –July to December 2023

31 December 2023

10 July 2023

Jenin: Several dead and wounded during military operation

In the first half of 2023, nearly 140 Palestinians were killed by Israeli military firearms in the West Bank, according to Associated Press figures. While more than half of those killed were reportedly armed militia members, twelve children under the age of 16 were also among the victims. During the same period, Palestinian gunmen killed a total of 25 Israelis, mostly civilians.

On 03.07.23, the Israeli military launched a large-scale military operation in the Jenin refugee camp, in the north of the West Bank. The Israeli military used drone attacks and ground troops to destroy command centres of armed militias and confiscate weapons. The refugee camp has turned into a retreat for armed groups, the army said. Traffic in and out of the camp was blocked, and damage disrupted electricity and water supplies. It was the largest military operation in the West Bank in almost two decades.

After two days of intense fighting the Israeli military withdrew its troops from the refugee camp. Twelve Palestinians, including four children, lost their lives in the operation, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. 143 others were wounded, 20 of which still are in critical condition. One Israeli soldier was killed. More than 500 families, numbering approximately 3,500 people, were meanwhile displaced or fled as a result of the fighting. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a large number of the displaced were able to return to the refugee camp shortly after the withdrawal of the troops. However, about 20 families are said to be still unable to return. The Israeli government announced that it would repeat such operations if necessary.

West Bank: Violent clashes claim lives

Since the beginning of 2022, military raids have been taking place in the West Bank almost daily. Hamas in the Gaza Strip fired several rockets on Israel. Israeli military aircraft then shelled several targets in the Gaza Strip.

On 06.07.23, a Hamas militant shot a member of the Israeli military at the entrance to the Israeli settlement of Kedumim in the West Bank after his car was stopped for a search. After a short chase, the Palestinian was shot dead by the military.

On 07.07.23, two Palestinians were killed in fighting by Israeli military personnel near the city of Nablus. According to Israeli domestic intelligence, the two men were involved in an attack on Israeli security forces. The two killed men belonged to the armed groups Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the al-Aqsa Brigades. A few hours later, a Palestinian was shot dead by the Israeli military while participating in protests in the village of Umm Safa.

Israel: Several wounded in Tel Aviv attack

On 05.07.23, a member of Hamas drove his car into a busy bus stop in Tel Aviv and began stabbing bystanders with a knife. He killed an unborn baby when he wounded its mother and seven other people. An armed civilian killed the

attacker. Hamas announced that the attack was in retaliation for the Israeli military operation in the Jenin refugee camp.

17 July 2023

West Bank: Several dead and wounded in military operations

During a security check by Israeli security forces on 10.07.23, a Palestinian motorist threw a grenade at them and opened fire on other military personnel, the Israeli army reported. The attacker was then shot dead by the security forces.

On 16.07.23, a Palestinian assailant wounded three Israelis, including two girls, who were driving their car on a West Bank road when he opened fire on them from his moving vehicle. Israeli security forces later detained a suspect in Bethlehem and confiscated his car and a gun. Two other suspects were also reportedly detained.

West Bank: Journalist arrested

On 13.07.23, a Palestinian journalist was detained by the PA police after he had previously contradicted statements made by the Palestinian leadership on social media. The same journalist had been arrested by the Palestinian security authorities already several years ago after reporting on protests against the autonomous authorities. During his detention, he was allegedly beaten and ill-treated.

24 July 2023

Gaza Strip: Heatwave exacerbates energy shortage

An international press agency reported on 18.07.23 that a heat wave with temperatures of more than 38 degrees Celsius is causing prolonged power cuts in the Gaza Strip. As a result, electricity is cut off for up to twelve hours a day. Hamas, the ruling party in the Gaza Strip, cited Israel's 16-year blockade as the cause for the poor economy and lack of development, including of the electricity grid.

Representatives of Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank blamed each other for the current situation. According to local officials, the 2.3 million inhabitants need 500 megawatts per day in the summer. However, only 120 megawatts are available from Israel and another 60 megawatts from a power plant in the Gaza Strip, the report said.

Gaza Strip: Outstanding public salaries paid

The salaries of 50,000 public sector employees in the Gaza Strip were paid out three weeks late on 19.07.23. According to the Hamas Finance Ministry, the delay was due to late payments from the main donor, Qatar, a drop in taxes and additional expenses.

Currently, the Qatari government is supposed to transfer USD 30 million per month to families, for fuel for electricity generation and for public sector salaries. More than half of the population in the Gaza Strip is living below the poverty line.

West Bank: Several dead and injured in clashes with Israeli military

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in the West Bank, the Israeli military shot and killed a Palestinian at a protest in Nablus on 20.07.23. The Palestinian Red Crescent informed that four more Palestinians were wounded.

According to consistent reports, a minor Palestinian was shot by Israeli security forces on 21.07.23 when he, along with others, threw stones at the military near the village of Umm Safa.

Shortly before, three Israeli military personnel were wounded in violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in the village of Beit Umar, near the city of Hebron.

On 22.07.23, a Palestinian was killed after Israeli military personnel opened fire on his car near Nablus. Another person was wounded by a gunshot and subsequently arrested. According to the military, the driver had tried to deliberately steer the car into a group of military personnel.

31 July 2023

West Bank: Several dead and injured in military operations

On 25.07.23, the Israeli military shot dead three armed Palestinians near the town of Nablus. According to the military, the men had opened fire on Israeli soldiers from their car. The Islamist group Hamas announced that three of its members had been killed.

On 26.07.23, a Palestinian was shot dead when armed clashes broke out between Israeli military personnel and armed Palestinians during a raid. The military informed that fire had been opened at the Israeli troops and stones and paint had been thrown at them. Two other people were injured by gunfire. Among them was a woman whose car was accidentally caught in the gunfire, the Palestinian Red Crescent said.

According to Palestinian health authorities, a 14-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli military personnel near the village of Qalqilya on 27.07.23. The military stated that the soldiers had fired warning shots in the air after being pelted with stones and firebombs by Palestinians. The incident will be investigated, the military said.

Gaza Strip: Protests against Hamas government

On 30.07.23, several thousand Palestinians briefly protested against the difficult living conditions and chronic energy shortages in the Gaza Strip.

The protests took place in various localities in the Gaza Strip, including Gaza City and Khan Younis. In one case, a flag of Gaza's ruling Hamas was burnt before police broke up the protests. In breaking up the protests, police in some places reportedly destroyed mobile phones used to document the protests and arrested several people. There also was a brief confrontation of supporters and critics of Hamas who threw stones at each other.

07 August 2023

Deaths in Tel Aviv attack

According to Israeli authorities, a Palestinian gunman opened fire in central Tel Aviv, killing an Israeli security guard before being shot dead by police on 05.08.23. The attack occurred one day after an Israeli settler in the West Bank killed a Palestinian.

The armed Palestinian was identified by police as a resident of a village near the northern West Bank town of Jenin, according to media reports. Last month, the Jenin refugee camp became the scene of the largest Israeli offensive in the West Bank in almost two decades. Twelve Palestinians, including at least eight militants, and one Israeli soldier were killed in the fighting, which forced thousands to flee and destroyed large parts of the camp (cf. BN of 10.07.23).

Deaths in raid and violent riots in West Bank

On 04.08.23, Israeli security forces killed an 18-year-old Palestinian during a military raid in Tulkarem, according to Palestinian health officials, while another Palestinian was killed when Israeli settlers stormed a village and engaged in fighting with residents.

The raid triggered protests from residents, as reported by the local branch of the militant Palestinian group Islamic Jihad. Israeli forces used tear gas, stun grenades and live ammunition. Palestinians threw stones and explosives at the soldiers. The Israeli army said it fired at attackers. The army also said that it arrested five Palestinians, confiscated explosives and broke up protests in other West Bank villages.

According to a statement by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, armed Israeli settlers entered the village of Burqa, east of Ramallah city, shot 19-year-old Qusai Matan and wounded two other Palestinians sometime later on 04.08.23. The Palestinian Red Crescent said Matan, who was shot in the neck, died shortly after arriving at the hospital. The Israeli army said it is investigating the reports. A Palestinian Authority representative said that dozens of Israeli settlers had entered the village, set fire to two cars and opened fire on Palestinian protesters who had poured into the street and thrown stones.

14 August 2023

Three dead in military operation near Jenin

On 06.08.23, three Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers in the northern West Bank. The Israeli army said it killed the men near the Jenin refugee camp, where a large-scale military operation had taken place last month. According to the statement, the men had planned an attack. A M-16 rifle was seized in their vehicle.

The militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad condemned the killings. It is not known whether the three men belonged to either organisation. The Israeli military identified one of those killed men as Naif Abu Tsuik and described him as a "senior military officer" from the camp.

Israel: House arrest for murder suspect in Qusai Matan case

A Jewish settler suspected of involvement in the murder of a 19-year-old Palestinian in the West Bank last week (cf. BN of 07.08.23) was released from detention and transferred to house arrest on 09.08.23, a Jerusalem court announced.

The judge said there was insufficient evidence to extend the suspect's detention. The court also ordered that a second Jewish settler accused of shooting 19-year-old Palestinian Qusai Matan remain in detention while he is treated in hospital for wounds sustained in the attack on the Palestinian village of Burqa on 04.08.23.

One dead during military operation in Zawata

On 10.08.23, a Palestinian militant was shot dead by Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank. This death brings the number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank this year to 168, as reported by an international news agency.

The incident occurred amid ongoing Israeli raids in the West Bank. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, Israeli troops killed the 27-year-old in the West Bank town of Zawata, north of the city of Nablus. The area is a flashpoint for fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinians.

According to the Israeli military, a gunman opened fire on soldiers operating in the Nablus area, prompting them to fire back. Palestinian attacks on Israelis have already killed at least 27 people this year. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed offshoot of the Fatah party, later said the victim had been one of its members. The Israeli military has been raiding areas under Palestinian Authority administration almost every night in a bid to dismantle militant networks and prevent future attacks, according to the military. The raids triggered the heaviest fighting in the West Bank in about two decades, resulting in a high death toll.

28 August 2023

Injured Palestinian dies after raid

On 26.08.23, it was reported that a 20-year-old Palestinian from the town of Jaba, near Jenin, succumbed to his injuries one month after he was shot during the Israeli army raid in the occupied West Bank (see BN of 10.07.23).

His death brings the death toll of people killed in connection with the two-day raid up to 14. The Israeli army claimed to have inflicted heavy damage on the militant groups in the Jenin refugee camp and to have confiscated weapons and money during the raid.

11 September 2023

Dead in West Bank raid

On 05.09.23, a Palestinian militant was killed by the Israeli army during a raid in the West Bank.

The militant Palestinian group Islamic Jihad later announced that the man had been one of its members. During the raid in the Nur Shams refugee camp near the town of Tulkarem, a firefight ensued between Israeli troops and armed Palestinians. According to the Israeli army, a cache of explosives was found and detonated. Local residents showed videos of bulldozers demolishing the asphalt of the entire main road of the camp.

In addition, a Palestinian minor was killed near the main road through the Jordan Valley after allegedly shooting at Israeli soldiers and wounding one of them. According to the Israeli military, the teenager had previously fired at a shopping centre in a nearby Israeli settlement.

25 September 2023

Israeli air strikes on targets in the Gaza Strip

From 22.09. to 24.09.23, the Israeli army carried out a series of air-strikes against Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip after some Palestinian protesters on the Israeli border with Gaza hurled firebombs and explosive material into Israel.

According to Palestinian health authorities, the Israeli army fired on the protesters, wounding 28 people. Three Hamas military posts were hit by the air-strikes, according to the Israeli army. Reportedly, no one was killed in the attacks in the Gaza Strip. The unrest in Gaza has heightened tensions in recent weeks, prompting the Israeli government to deny entry to Israel to thousands of Palestinian workers from the impoverished region.

UN Report on the Displacement of Palestinian Population and Settler Violence

According to a UN report published on 21.09.23, more than 1,100 Palestinians were displaced in the occupied West Bank in 2022 due to violence by Israeli settlers. Compared to previous years, these numbers are unprecedented, the UN said.

The report documents about three incidents per day in the West Bank related to Israeli settlers. According to the report, this is the highest daily average since 2006. As a result of the violence, five Palestinian communities were completely evicted, half of the residents were displaced from six communities, and a quarter of the population was displaced from another seven communities, the report says. According to the report, the affected population lives mostly from livestock and agriculture. Almost all communities are said to have reported that pastoralists and farmers were limited in their activities after Israeli settlers cut off access to their grazing land. According to the UN Coordination for Humanitarian Aid in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the UN has recorded unprecedented levels of settler violence against the Palestinian population this year.

09 October 2023

Israel declares war after Hamas attack / Course of developments

The Israeli government formally declared the country to be at war on 08.10.23. A national state of emergency had already been declared on 07.10.23. Fighting continues between the Israeli military and Hamas fighters in towns in the south of Israel. The Israeli military has been carrying out strikes in the Gaza Strip since 07.10.23 in retaliation for the attacks by Hamas. According to information from the military, more than 800 targets in the Gaza Strip have been hit to date, in addition to which a large part of the city of Beit Hanoun in the north-east has been almost completely destroyed. The bombardment of the Gaza Strip has since intensified, with civilian locations also being hit and civilians killed. The UN has reported that by the evening of 08.10.23 159 dwellings in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed by Israeli air raids and 1,210 seriously damaged. The number of displaced people in the Gaza Strip had risen by tens of thousands, to 123,000. UNRWA has reported that a school accommodating more than 225 people was directly hit. More than 1,100 people have been killed and several thousand injured to date in the Palestinian territories and Israel.

The Israeli military stated that it had restored the majority of the border with the Gaza Strip to Israeli control, killed hundreds of fighters and captured dozens. An Israeli military spokesman further stated that Israel had positioned 100,000 reservists in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip.

Hamas carried out a coordinated major attack on Israel on 07.10.23. In the attack, Hamas fighters fired thousands of rockets at Israel and advanced on Israel by land, sea and air. Fighters deliberately killed civilians and captured people in towns, along motorways and at a techno music festival. By its own account, the Zaka rescue service recovered some 260 bodies at the festival site. According to Hamas, more than 130 people were captured during the attack and taken to the Gaza Strip with the aim of exchanging them for thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israel. Members of the military, civilians and children are among the prisoners. The Israeli military estimates that 1,000 Hamas fighters advanced into Israeli territory. Hamas referred to the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and the blockade of the Gaza Strip in justification for their attack. According to information from rescue services, at least 700 people have been killed in Israel, including 44 soldiers. The health ministry in Gaza stated that 413 had been killed in the Gaza Strip, including 78 children and 41 women. Around 2,000 people have been injured on both sides.

16 October 2023

Vast numbers of people flee their homes in the Gaza Strip

According to reports in the media, more than a million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip have fled their homes since Hamas launched the attacks on Israel on 07.10.23. The Israeli army's international spokesman has stated that around 500,000 people have left the northern part of the Gaza Strip. On 13.10.23 more than 70 people died in an explosion on an evacuation route which Israel had declared to be safe. Israel has announced an impending ground offensive by its forces, increasing numbers of whom were moving into position along the border with the Gaza Strip as per 15.10.23. According to information from the Israelis, dozens of military targets have already been attacked and neutralised. Although entire districts have been destroyed in the Israeli air strikes, militant militias have continued firing rockets towards Israel. International and local aid organisations are warning that a ground offensive by Israel could expedite a humanitarian crisis in the coastal enclave of the Gaza Strip. They point out that many areas already lack access to water, food, fuel and healthcare.

23 October 2023

Current developments / humanitarian situation

According to reports in the media, areas which were supposed to serve as a safety zone for the Palestinian population have also been hit in Israeli attacks targeting Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military has stated that more than 100 targets linked to Hamas in this area have been attacked throughout the Gaza Strip, including a tunnel and arms depots.

According to Israel's defence minister, Israel is not aiming to maintain control over the civilian population in Gaza after the war against the militant Hamas organisation. Palestinian militias have also continued their attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Al-Qassam Brigades - the military wing of Hamas - have claimed responsibility for the twelve direct and indirect fire attacks on 22.10.23. Meanwhile, the number of clashes between Palestinian fighters and Israeli armed forces in the West Bank has roughly halved, to nine confrontations. According to reports in the media, more than 1,400 people have been killed in Israel to date - for the most part civilians who died during the first attack by Hamas on 07.10.23. Referring to information from the health ministry which is run by Hamas, more than 4,600 have been killed to date in Gaza.

It is reported in the media that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is worsening as air strikes by Israel continue. Local hospitals and helpers reportedly lack sufficient capacities to attend to injured people and to recover and identify dead bodies. According to a statement from the Hamas-led interior ministry in Gaza, night-time attacks throughout the Gaza Strip on the night of 22.10.23 caused a large number of further deaths and injuries. The Israeli government had repeated its warning to the people living in the northern part of the Gaza Strip to move for their own safety to the south of the Wadi Gaza, a strip of wetland which runs through the area south of Gaza City.

30 October 2023

Current developments; humanitarian situation

According to reports in the media, Palestinian militias, including Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades and the military wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Saraya Al-Quds), are continuing their attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Israeli armed forces began broadening their ground operations in the north of the Gaza Strip on 28.10.23 and are continually carrying out air strikes on targets with suspected links to Hamas. According to reports from the Israeli military, a leading member of Hamas' secret service department was killed in an attack on 26.10.23. Commanders of the Al-Qassam Brigades in Gaza City and in the southern city of Khan Yunis have allegedly also been killed in attacks. Further clashes have occurred in the West Bank between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants. Anti-Israeli protests have also taken place. The Lions' Den armed Palestinian group has stated that it is establishing increasingly closer links with Hamas and has called for a general strike throughout the West Bank.

Aid organisations have stated that the extensive outage of telephone and internet networks is making it more difficult to help injured people. The supply situation for the civilian population in the Gaza Strip has been further compounded by the ongoing hostilities. More than 30 aid trucks were able to enter the Gaza Strip via Egypt on 29.10.23, marking the largest delivery since the resumption of supplies. However, according to the UN relief agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), large numbers of people living in the southern and central regions of the Gaza

Strip have broken into warehouses and distribution centres to steal basic foods, such as flour. Meanwhile, hundreds of patients are reportedly stuck in hospitals in the north because they are physically incapable of moving to the south to seek shelter there, as ordered by the Israeli government.

06 November 2023

Current developments / humanitarian situation

According to reports in the media, Israel is continuing its attacks on the ruling Hamas organisation in Gaza. Israeli troops divided the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip ahead of an announced further advance after all telecommunications in the region had been interrupted for the third time since the beginning of the war. The military states that the southern Gaza Strip is not a safe zone, but it is safer than anywhere else in Gaza. A four-hour window to enable people to flee into the southern regions was declared once again on 05.11.23. It was announced on 06.11.23 that Israeli forces would march into Gaza City within 48 hours.

According to reports in the media, two refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip area were hit on 05.11.23 in the course of Israel's air and ground offensive. A house was allegedly attacked in the Al-Maghazi refugee district. According to reports citing the health authority, which is controlled by the Islamist Hamas organisation, more than 30 people died in the attack. To date, more than 2,500 targets have reportedly been attacked in the Israeli offensive together with the air force and navy. Israel has so far rejected proposals by international partner countries for a humanitarian pause in fighting in view of the rising number of civilian casualties.

Meanwhile, there have been protests in Israel against prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. According to reports in Israeli media, several hundred people protested outside one of Netanyahu's homes in Jerusalem and demanded his resignation. On the evening of 04.11.23 clashes with the police occurred in Jerusalem when demonstrators attempted to break through barriers. Three people were reportedly arrested.

According to information from the Hamas-controlled health ministry in Gaza, the number of Palestinians killed has since risen to 9,700, including more than 4,000 children and minors. In the West Bank more than 140 people have reportedly been killed in clashes between Palestinians and Israelis. The figures cannot be independently verified, however.

13 November 2023

Current developments / humanitarian situation

According to reports in the media, Israel is continuing its campaign against the ruling Hamas organisation in Gaza. The two largest hospitals in the Gaza Strip, Al-Shifa Hospital and Al-Quds Hospital, have been closed. Israeli snipers are continuing to shoot at individuals in the vicinity of Al-Shifa Hospital, in which an unknown number of people are still trapped as a result of the hostilities. A number of vulnerable patients and three newborn babies have died as a result of the power outages since 12.11.23.

The WHO's director-general stated in a social media post that Al-Shifa Hospital had been without a water supply for a number of days and was no longer able to serve as a hospital. According to information from the hospital management, around 650 patients and seriously injured people are being treated by some 500 doctors and nursing staff at Al-Shifa Hospital. Around 2,500 displaced people are also said to be sheltered in the hospital buildings. On 11.11.23 the Palestinian health ministry in Gaza estimated that some 3,000 medical staff and patients and around 15,000 to 20,000 displaced people are currently located at the hospital. A UN health official has stated that ambulances and other special methods would be necessary in order to relocate most of the remaining patients.

Israel's prime minister Netanyahu has rejected urgent international calls for a ceasefire, stipulating as a precondition the release of all of the approximately 240 hostages which were taken by Hamas in the attack of 07.10.23 which sparked the war. According to information from the health ministry in Gaza, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, more than 11,000 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the war, with minors and children accounting for two thirds of this total. Some 2,700 people have been reported missing. Hamas continues to hold around 240 hostages who were abducted in the course of the attack, including men, women, children and elderly people. According to information from the Israeli military, 48 members of the Israeli military have been killed in the course of the ground offensive in the Gaza Strip.

20 November 2023

Current developments / humanitarian situation

By its own account, the UN found itself forced to stop supplying food and other essential goods to the Gaza Strip on 17.11.23, warning of a growing danger of widespread famine after internet and telephone services had collapsed in the besieged Gaza Strip due to a lack of fuel.

Israel's government has announced that two trucks carrying fuel for the UN will be allowed into Gaza daily. This corresponds to half the amount of fuel which the UN says it needs for the people in Gaza, including fuel supplies for water systems, hospitals and trucks. The Israeli government has refused to allow fuel into the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war, claiming that it would be seized by Hamas and used for military purposes. Israel has also drastically reduced the supply of food, water and other goods via Egypt. According to the UN, the daily supplies from Egypt cover only 10 % of the Gaza Strip's food requirements. In addition, the shutdown of the water system means that the majority of the population have access only to contaminated water, which has led to a breakout of diseases. In addition, a WFP spokeswoman has stated that dehydration and malnutrition are on the increase and almost the entire population of the Gaza Strip is being affected by a shortage of food.

Conditions at the Al Shifa Hospital complex have worsened still further. According to the hospital's director, 52 patients have died so far.

The Israeli forces have announced that they could broaden their offensive to include the south of the Gaza Strip while continuing their operations in the north. The Israeli government had previously called on people from the Gaza Strip to flee to the south. Should the offensive shift to the south, it is unclear where the Palestinian refugees could go. The Egyptian government is refusing to admit people from the Gaza Strip who are seeking shelter. According to the Hamas-run health ministry in the Gaza Strip, since the beginning of the Israeli ground offensive on 13.10.23 the death toll in the Gaza Strip has risen to over 13,000. The UN states that approx. 1.7 million of the Gaza Strip's 2.3 million residents have been displaced. It is unclear how many of them have fled to the south.

27 November 2023

Temporary ceasefire

A four-day ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect on 24.11.23. Under the terms of the temporary ceasefire, a total of 50 Israeli hostages who were abducted by Hamas are to be released. Israel is to release 150 Palestinian prisoners in return. To date, a total of 58 hostages have been released by Hamas, 40 of whom are Israelis. In addition, 17 Thai hostages and one Philippine hostage have been freed in accordance with a separate agreement between Hamas and the Egyptian government.

04 December 2023

Current developments and humanitarian situation

According to reports in the media, hostilities resumed between Israel and Hamas on 01.12.23, following the end of the seven-day ceasefire. The Israeli military announced that it was continuing its attacks after missiles were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip. Within hours of the ceasefire coming to an end, Israel attacked more than 200 targets with ground, air and naval units. Locations in Khan Younis and Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip were among the targets. On 04.12.23 the Israeli forces renewed their call for the mass evacuation of Khan Younis, following Israel's announcement on 03.12.23 that it was expanding its ground offensive to cover the entire Gaza Strip.

According to information released by the Palestinian health authorities on 01.12.23 more than 100 Palestinians have been killed since the fighting resumed.

More than 100 hostages who were abducted in the Hamas attack on 07.10.23 were released during the temporary ceasefire. Israel released Palestinian prisoners in return. It was also possible for humanitarian aid to be transported to Gaza on a larger scale.

According to reports in the media, a worsening of the humanitarian situation in Gaza is now being predicted in the face of the renewed fighting.

11 December 2023

Bombing of the Gaza Strip

Israeli war planes bombed parts of the Gaza Strip on the night of 09.12.23, including a number of areas in the south of the territory to which the Palestinian civilian population was supposed to be evacuated. On 09.12.23 residents of the Gaza Strip reported air strikes and shelling in the north and south, including the city of Rafah, which is situated close to the Egyptian border. In recent weeks the Israeli army had called on the civilian population to seek shelter in this region.

The latest attacks took place one day after the USA had vetoed a UN resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, although the overwhelming majority of Security Council members and many other countries supported this resolution. The 15-member council voted 13:1 in favour of the resolution, with the United Kingdom abstaining. According to a statement by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the humanitarian aid system in the Gaza Strip is on the verge of total collapse. Reports in the media point out that the Gaza Strip's borders with Israel and Egypt are to all intents and purposes sealed off, forcing the Palestinian population to seek shelter within the Gaza Strip. According to information from the health ministry in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, the death toll in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war now exceeds 17,700, with women and children making up the largest proportion of this total. The Israeli government holds Hamas to blame for the civilian casualties and accuses the Hamas fighters of using civilians as human shields. Israel has now designated Muwasi, a narrow coastal strip in the south, as a safe zone. Living conditions in this area are reportedly inadequate, however, with overcrowded accommodation and poor sanitary facilities.

Hostages and Palestinian prisoners were released in the course of a temporary truce between Israel and Hamas. It is nevertheless to be assumed that more than 130 hostages are still being held in Gaza, however. According to the health ministry in Gaza, more than 2,500 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire collapsed on 01.12.23, with women and children making up around two thirds of this total.

18 December 2023

Current course of the conflict and humanitarian situation

The Israeli military has continued its attacks throughout the Gaza Strip, including the south, where ground operations have been stepped up. Israeli air strikes and tank shelling continued on the night of 14.12.23, including in the southern city of Rafah. Rafah belongs to the areas of the densely populated Gaza Strip in which the Palestinian civilian population has been instructed by the Israeli army to seek shelter.

At least 90 people were killed and more than 100 injured in air strikes on targets in the Jabalia refugee camp in the north of the Gaza Strip. According to information from doctors, at least twelve Palestinians were killed or wounded in Deir el-Balah, in the centre of the Gaza Strip, while an Israeli air strike on a house in Rafah in the south claimed at least four lives.

According to the Palestinian authorities, at least 18,894 people have been killed in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, more than 50,897 people have been wounded and more than 7,780 people are missing. In the West Bank, more than 3,365 people have been injured. A total of 116 military personnel have been killed to date in the ground offensive in Gaza, which began on 27.10.23. The Israeli military confirmed on 15.12.23 that the bodies of three hostages who were abducted by Hamas in October 2023 had been recovered. According to the military, the hostages were mistakenly killed by Israeli soldiers in Shejaiya, an area in the north of the Gaza Strip in which intense fighting was in progress. Hamas is still holding approx. 129 of the original total of approx. 240 hostages in the Gaza Strip.

According to the latest information from UNOCHA, WHO and the local authorities, at least 305,000 dwellings had been destroyed or damaged in Israeli attacks up to 13.12.23. This amounts to approx. 50 % of all dwellings in the Gaza Strip. 339 educational establishments and 197 houses of prayer have also been damaged. 26 out of a total of 35 hospitals are no longer operational.

On 01.12.23 the Israeli army published an online map of the Gaza Strip on which the enclave is divided up into more than 600 numbered blocks. It called on the civilian population of the Gaza Strip to identify the block corresponding to their residential area and to evacuate when requested to do so. Many residents of the Gaza Strip barely have any access to internet due to the collapse of the telecommunications infrastructure, however. In addition, it has been

reported in the media that the online information does not correspond to the information on leaflets which have been distributed by the Israeli army.

Since the Israeli military offensive was launched in response to the attack by Hamas on 07.10.23, some 1.9 million people, corresponding to around 90 % of the population, are now displaced and attempting to escape the hostilities. They have fled first and foremost to the south of the Gaza Strip, where they are sheltering in inadequate emergency accommodation.

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