

05 Apr. 06

B'Tselem to the IDF: Make open-fire regulations public

B'Tselem today urged the IDF to publicize immediately the open-fire regulations given to soldiers in the Occupied Territories. The request comes after an IDF report that confirms the ongoing critique of human rights organizations that the regulations are unclear to soldiers. Since the beginning of the intifada, the IDF has refused to publish the open-fire regulations, which are provided to soldiers orally, and not in writing. The ambiguity surrounding the regulations enables the military high command to evade its responsibility for civilian deaths. From September 2000, IDF soldiers have killed at least 1,816 Palestinians who were not participating in the fighting, 593 of whom were minors.



From B'Tselem's video, Lethal Ambiguity

[Additional details](#)

▶ [Use of firearms](#)

▶ [View video](#)

Precedent: Section of Separation Barrier in Jerusalem ruled illegal

On 20 March 2006, the Tel-Aviv Magistrate's Court accepted the appeal of residents of the Sheikh Sa'ed neighborhood, next to Jerusalem, opposing the route of the Separation Barrier, and cancelled the land requisition orders that Israel had issued to build this section. The Court held that the planned route of the Barrier would cause disproportionate harm to the daily lives of the residents, and rejected the state's claim that the residents constitute a threat to state security. The court recommended that the Barrier be built east of the neighborhood, in a way that enables the residents to gain access to East Jerusalem.

This is the first time that an Israeli court has cancelled a section of the Separation Barrier around Jerusalem. B'Tselem issued a statement welcoming this ruling and providing background information to the case.

The Sheikh Sa'ed neighborhood is built on a hilltop, and access is possible only via Jerusalem. Construction of the Barrier along the route Israel planned would have severed the village from the



Sheikh Sa'ed. Photo: B'Tselem

city, and forced many of the residents to abandon their homes. Those who remained would have been imprisoned there. In its statement, B'Tselem pointed out that because of the political motivations in determining the route, the Separation Barrier continues to harm hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the Jerusalem area.

[Additional details](#)

[The Separation Barrier](#)

Organizations: Investigate the humiliation of the Jericho detainees

On 14 March 2006, the IDF detained some 270 Palestinians in Jericho following a ten-hour siege on the prison. After the Palestinians in the prison facility surrendered, Israeli soldiers forced them to remove their clothes and leave the prison clad only in underpants. Photos of the naked detainees were broadcast and published in the Israeli and foreign media. In testimonies provided to B'Tselem, the detainees stressed the humiliation they felt from the dissemination of the photos in the media.

Following the action, B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights wrote to the Judge Advocate General demanding that he investigate the violation of the detainees' right to human dignity. According to the Geneva Convention, Israel must treat detainees with respect and protect them from public curiosity. Even if the decision to make them undress was based on legitimate security grounds, these reasons cannot justify parading them naked before the media. In failing to shield the detainees from the cameras, the IDF breached international humanitarian law.



The action in Jericho. Photo: Reuters

[Additional details](#)

[Letter to the judge advocate general \(DOC\)](#)

Targeted killing in Gaza: Grave suspicion of war crime

On 8 March 2006, Israel's Air Force fired a missile at a residential area in Gaza and killed five Palestinians. Two of the five persons killed were the target of the attack; they had been suspected of firing Qassam rockets at Israeli communities. The other three persons who lost their lives were bystanders, all minors: the brothers Ra'id and Mahmoud al-Batsh, 7 and 16 years-old, and Ahmad a-Sweisi, 14. Nine other bystanders were wounded, one of them critically.

Disproportionate attacks are defined as war crimes under international humanitarian law

The circumstances of the attack raise a grave suspicion that it was disproportionate. This type of attack is defined as a war crime under international humanitarian law. B'Tselem wrote to the Judge Advocate General and demanded that he order a Military Police investigation against the persons responsible for the attack.

[Additional details](#)

Video testimony: Police officers beat and abuse a detainee

In November 2005, the Israel Police arrested Iyad Shamasneh, resident of East Jerusalem. He was suspected of transporting Palestinian workers who had been staying in Israel without permits. Police officers took Shamasneh to a police station in which he was severely beaten and abused. Eventually he was released with no legal action taken against him.



B'Tselem video

[View video testimony](#)

Soldiers disrupt work at factory in the northern West Bank

In recent months, since the evacuation of four settlements in the Jenin area, IDF soldiers have repeatedly entered the area belonging to a charcoal plant in Ya'bed, a town near Jenin. The soldiers typically enter the plant and order the owner and his workers to leave and go home for one reason or another. The process for making charcoal requires that the wood-burning fires continue around the clock, and the army's actions have caused great losses to the owner and his employees.

These losses come in addition to the business' high marketing costs resulting from the general restrictions that the army places on Palestinian movement in the West Bank. As a result of the repeated disruptions and restrictions, the owner wants to move the plant and is looking for an alternate site.



The charcoal plant in Ya'bad. Photo: B'Tselem

[Testimony of the plant owner](#)

Testimony: Soldiers abused high-school student

On 2 February 2006, soldiers stopped Fares 'Aweidat while he was on his way home from school and abused him for hours. In his testimony to B'Tselem, 'Aweidat related that after soldiers stopped the taxi in which he was riding, "two [of the three soldiers] grabbed me and put my hands behind my back. They bound my hands with plastic handcuffs and threw me onto the ground. One of the soldiers blindfolded me... The soldiers grabbed me under my arms, lifted me up, and shoved me into a corner of the jeep. One soldier sat next to me, grabbed the back of my neck with one hand, and punched me in the head and face with his other hand... I cried out in pain and vomited before the jeep stopped."

For at least an hour, 'Aweidat was interrogated on suspicion of throwing stones. During the interrogation, he was repeatedly beaten. He was ultimately released, but not before the interrogators forced him to sign a document, the contents of which were unknown to him. The youth was bruised all over his body and required medical care.

B'Tselem wrote to the Judge Advocate General's Office and demanded a Military Police investigation.



Fares 'Aweidat, 17. Photo: B'Tselem

[Testimony of Fares 'Aweidat](#)