

REPORT

Human Rights Violations and Popular Struggle in South Hebron Hills

October November December 2018



Operation Dove

Nonviolent Peace Corps of Associazione "Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII"

www.operationdove.org

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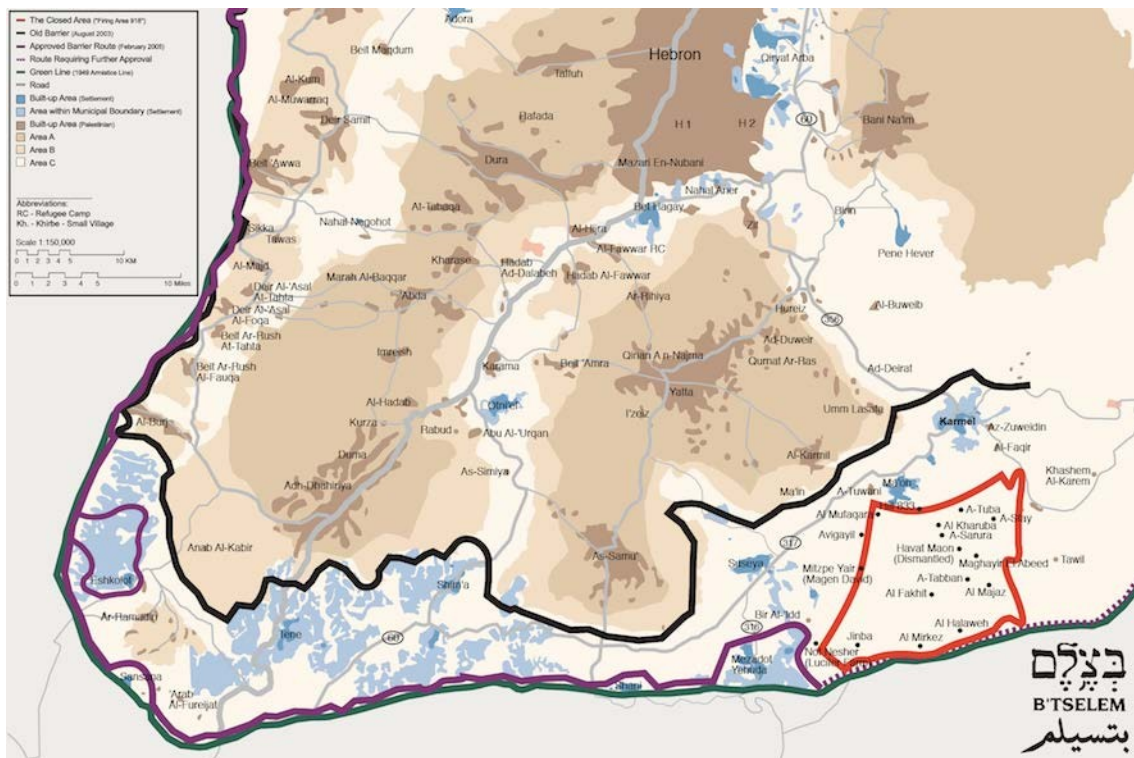
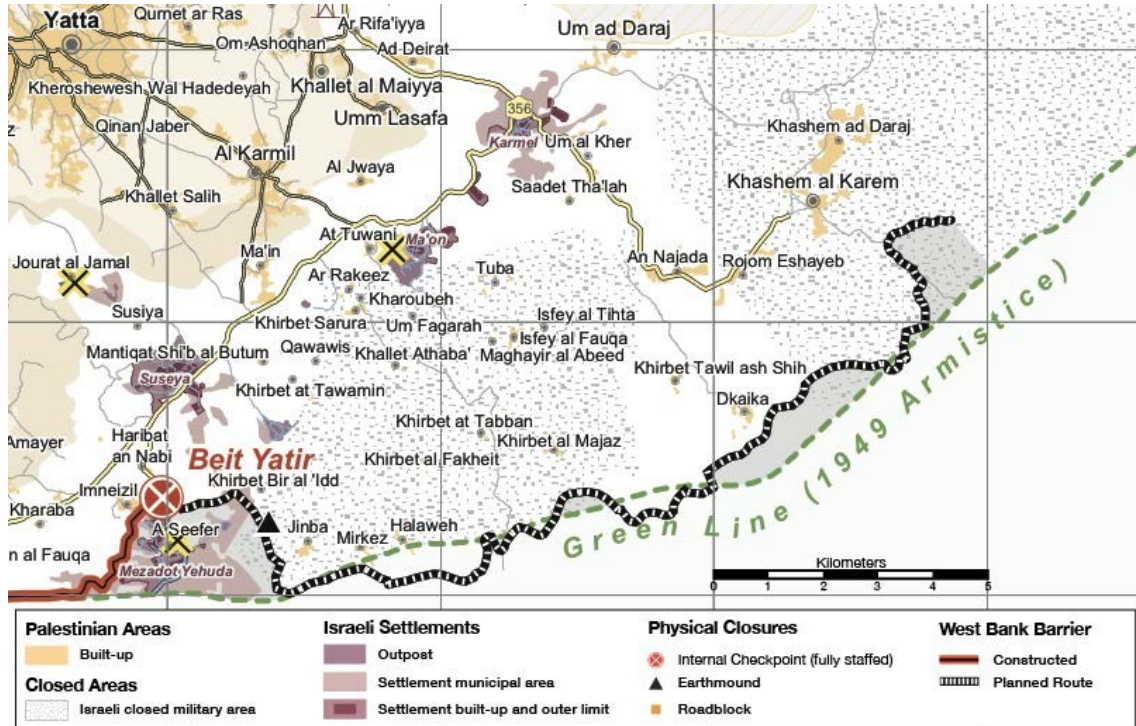
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OVERVIEW

During the months of October, November and December 2018, Operation Dove volunteers recorded several incidents of harassment by the Israeli armed forces (Army, Border Police and Police) against the Palestinian communities of the south Hebron hills.

In the cases surveyed, the Israeli soldiers raided three Palestinian villages (Tuba, October 7; Al Mufaqara and Ar Rakeez, December 25). They searched houses and property and questioned the residents. OD volunteers observed collaboration between Israeli settlers and Israeli soldiers attempting to prevent Palestinian shepherds from accessing their land located near the outpost (At Tuwani, December 15) threatening the resident of Tuwani Village, (At Tuwani, December 13). The declaration of "closed areas" (At Tuwani, December 29) is still one of the most used tools of Israeli forces attempting to prevent Palestinian demonstrations and actions against the illegal expansion of the Israeli settlements.

OD volunteers monitored 5 flying checkpoints, installed by the Israeli army on the road that connects the city of Yatta / Al Birkeh village to the village of At Tuwani, the main gateway to the "Massafer Yatta area". On November 29, Israeli forces closed the Israeli Bypass Road 317 at all the entrances to the Palestinian villages between the Israeli settlement of Carmel and the Israeli settlement of Susiya, in order to clear the road for a settler marathon.

In this three-month period in the South Hebron Hills area the DCO (Israeli Civil Administration) demolished 6 Palestinian structures and a Palestinian school, composed by 7 classrooms, in the village of Simya. In most instances the Israeli forces also confiscated all of the remaining building materials in order to prevent inhabitants from reconstructing the structures. On December 31 the Israeli Civil Administration uprooted and confiscated 175 Palestinian olive and almond trees. The Israeli army also delivered 7 demolition orders and 7 stop working order to Palestinian structures under construction.

OD volunteers recorded two acts of aggression towards Palestinian inhabitants by Israeli settlers coming from the outposts of Havat Ma'on (At Tuwani, October 6) and Mitzpe Yair (Qawawis, November 14) . Twice during this period Israeli settlers tried to plow or plant new trees on the Palestinian land in order to claim the property for future annexation. In both cases Israeli forces were present but did not stop the settlers. In the village of At Tuwani Israeli settlers broke 13 olive and almond trees and put road spikes on the Palestinian road in front of the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on .

From October to December 2018 OD volunteers monitored several instances of expansion in the Israeli settlements of Ma'on and Susiya and the outpost of Havat Ma'on.

The Palestinian schoolchildren from Tuba and Maghayir Al Abeed villages were put in danger at least three times when the Israeli army escort failed to arrive on time to escort the them to and from school. The children were forced to walk alone on the road where they are at risk of violence from settlers from the outpost of Havat Ma'on.

In the South Hebron hills there were 2 nonviolent demonstrations in support of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. In one case the Israeli forces prevented the protesters from reaching their planned destination by declaring a "closed area".

ISRAELI ARMY AND POLICE

Military harassment and aggression



On October 7, in the morning, Israeli soldiers and Civil Administration officers raided the Palestinian village of Tuba.

On November 29 at around 4 PM, two Israeli police cars (#15961, #15904) stopped and confiscated a Palestinian car at the entrance of the Palestinian village of At Tuwani.

On November 30, at around 1 PM, the Civilian Security Coordinator of Ma'on Israeli settlement conducted a training for five Israeli soldiers in Khelly valley on privately owned Palestinian land in At Tuwani village. Two Palestinians approached and asked why the soldiers were there. In response the CSC demanded the IDs of the Palestinians. The Palestinians refused and he insisted that the soldiers check the documents of all who were present. Two more Palestinians and two OD volunteers arrived, and shortly thereafter an Israeli army jeep (#61445) also arrived. Two soldiers got out of the jeep and tried to identify the Palestinians. The Army jeep left the area at around 1:50 PM. The five soldiers walked alongside it with the security chief of Ma'on on the road flanking At Tuwani village.

On December 10 at around 6:45 AM, Israeli police officers confiscated a Palestinian car at the entrance of the Palestinian village of At Tuwani .

On December 13, in the evening, the Israeli army aggressively patrolled the area between the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on and the Palestinian village of At Tuwani. At around 2 AM two Israeli soldiers and two armed settlers reached the first house in At Tuwani village. They forced the Palestinian residents who were in the yard, to go back into their homes.

On December 15, at around 10:50 AM, four Israeli settlers walked out of the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on to watch two Palestinian shepherds who were grazing their flock in Kharrouba valley on privately owned Palestinian land. At 11:10 AM an Israeli settler's car (#1912678) arrived, bringing four Israeli soldiers, who ordered the Palestinian shepherds to leave the area. The soldiers stood in Kharrouba valley for a while until an Israeli army jeep (#661445) arrived. Three Israeli soldiers got out of the jeep and spoke with the settlers and the four soldiers. Then the Army jeep left the area and after a few minutes the four soldiers and the settlers returned to Havat Ma'on outpost.

On the night of December 25, around 15 Israeli soldiers and three Army jeeps (#881445, #274023, #665562), raided the Palestinian villages of Al Mufaḡara and Ar Rakeez. The Israeli forces arrived in Al Mufaḡara at around 9 PM. When a Palestinian man asked why they were there the commander explained that the Army was looking for military gear that was lost during the day in the area. The soldiers ordered all of the Palestinians present to sit, and also talked with the OD volunteers, and gave permission for them to film during the search. The Army entered four houses in which women and children were present. They ordered the Palestinians to stay seated and asked for information about work done that day in the nearby village of Ar Rakeez. Then, at around 10 PM, the Army moved to Ar Rakeez, where they raided and searched three more houses. The soldiers spoke with the Palestinian owners of the houses, explaining what they were searching for. When they failed to find anything the soldiers became more aggressive, and ordered the people to stay far away from the doors of their homes. At about 10:30 PM the soldiers stopped the search and left the area without finding anything.

On December 29, at around 10:30 AM, Israeli forces (Army: #661445, #534293; Border police: #655655) arrived and stopped near the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on to monitor a group of Palestinians and Internationals who were walking from the Palestinian village of Sarura to the village of At Tuwani. The Army followed the group to At Tuwani village without talking to the people. At around 11:00 AM, the Army moved to Sumud Freedom Garden where they took away the Palestinian flag, and then moved to private Palestinian land in Khelly valley, where they told the Palestinian protesters that the march was illegal, threatened them with arrest, and temporarily closed the area of Khelly Valley.

On December 30, at about 3 PM, Israeli soldiers stopped two Palestinians in the Sumud Freedom Garden area, in At Tuwani village. The soldiers detained them for more than an hour in the rain, on the pretext of checking their identities.

Checkpoints and closures



On November 8, at around 7:30 PM, Israeli soldiers set a checkpoint on the road that connects Al Birkeh village to At Tuwani Palestinian village. Israeli soldiers searched several Palestinian cars and then left the area at around 8:30 PM.

On November 9, at around 1 PM, Israeli soldiers set a checkpoint on the road from At Tuwani Palestinian village to Al Birkeh village. After stopping few Palestinian cars, the soldiers left at around 1:40 PM.

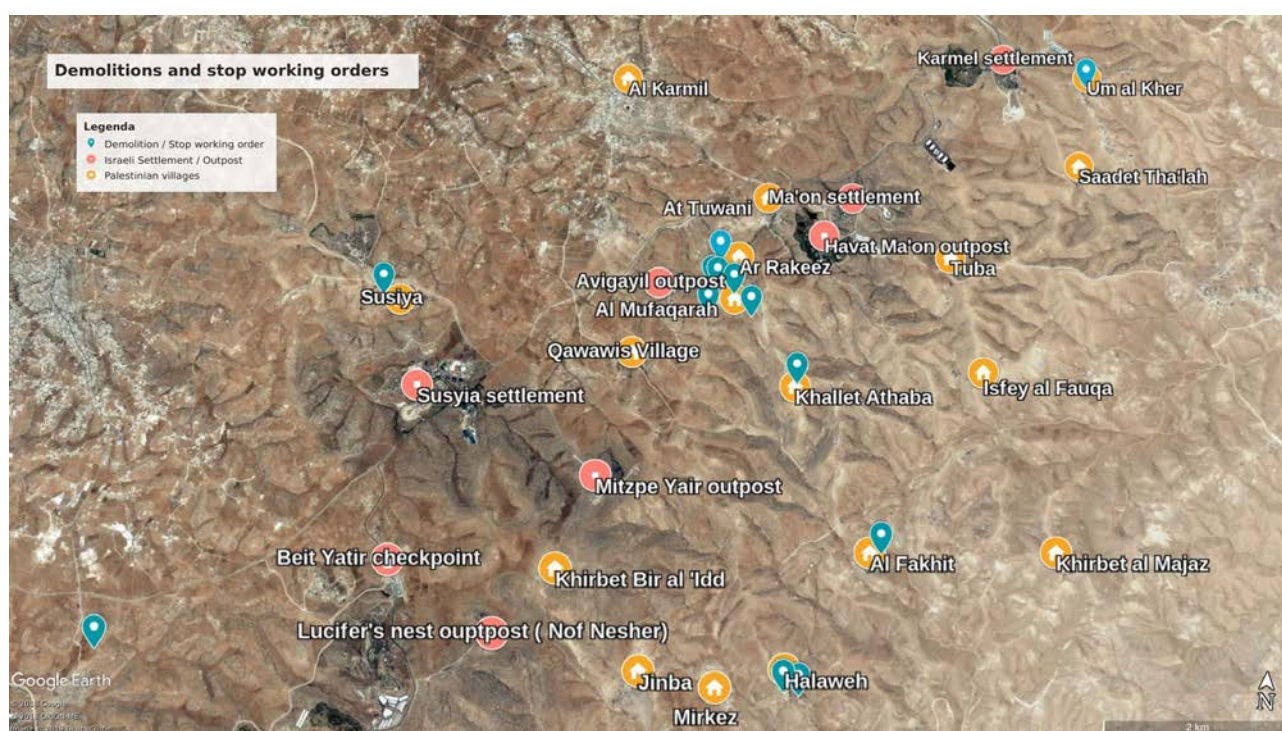
On November 29, at around 1 PM, Israeli forces closed Israeli Bypass Road 317 and all the entrances to the Palestinian villages between the Israeli settlement of Carmel and the Israeli settlement of Susiya in order to clear the road for settlers running in an Israeli marathon. At around 4 PM Israeli forces reopened the bypass road and all of the entrances to the villages.

On December 13, at around 2:45 PM, three Israeli soldiers set a checkpoint at the entrance of At Tuwani Palestinian village. At around 3:37 PM they stopped a Palestinian boy and forced him to get off his bike. After a few minutes two soldiers approached the OD volunteers and another Palestinian and ordered them to stop photographing the incident. The Israeli soldiers checked the documents and searched the trunks of almost 15 cars, then allowed them to pass. At 6:39 PM an Army jeep (#274023) arrived and left, taking the three soldiers.

On December 23, at around 7:15 PM, an Israeli Army jeep (#274023) set a checkpoint on the road from the Palestinian village of At Tuwani to Al Birkeh village. The soldiers stopped and checked the ID of a Palestinian man who was walking, but did not stop any cars. The Israeli soldiers left at around 7:48 PM.

On December 29, at around 3:30 PM, the Israeli Army set a checkpoint at the entrance of the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. After stopping 14 Palestinian cars, they left at around 4 PM.

Demolitions and stop working orders



On October 2, the Israeli army seized a new Palestinian structure in the Palestinian village of Halaweh. The village is located inside the area referred to by Israeli authorities as "Firing Zone 918. Israeli authorities are attempting to turn the area, which includes 8 Palestinian villages, into a military zone, forcing the expulsion of all of the Palestinian residents.

On October 3, Israeli soldiers dismantled and seized a building under construction in the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqara.

On October 9, Israeli soldiers demolished a Palestinian house in Halaweh village.

On October 17, the Israeli Civil Administration demolished a house in Khallet Al Mayya, Yatta, a tent in Susiya village and an animal shelter in Ghuwein village.

On November 5, the Israeli Civil Administration delivered a demolition order for the new school in Khallet Atthabe Palestinian village.

On November 5, Israeli army delivered a “removal order” in the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqara Palestinian village. The order is effective for 5 dunums and includes a house, toilet, cave, well and several trees planted one year ago. The document orders the owner to demolish the structures and trees himself within 45 days. If he does not comply the Israeli army will destroy the buildings and trees and then force him to pay them for the demolition.

On November 12, Israeli soldiers delivered a stop working order for a new house in Ar Rakeez Palestinian village.

On November 15, Israeli Civil Administration officers delivered 2 stop working orders for structures in Al Fakheit Palestinian village.

On December 3, at around 9:45 AM, the Israeli army issued one demolition order and four stop working orders for new houses in Umm Al Khair Palestinian village.

On December 5, at around 9:50 AM, the Israeli army dismantled and confiscated the structures (around 7 classrooms) and building materials for a school that was intended to serve almost 55 children in the Palestinian village of Simya, near As Samu' city.

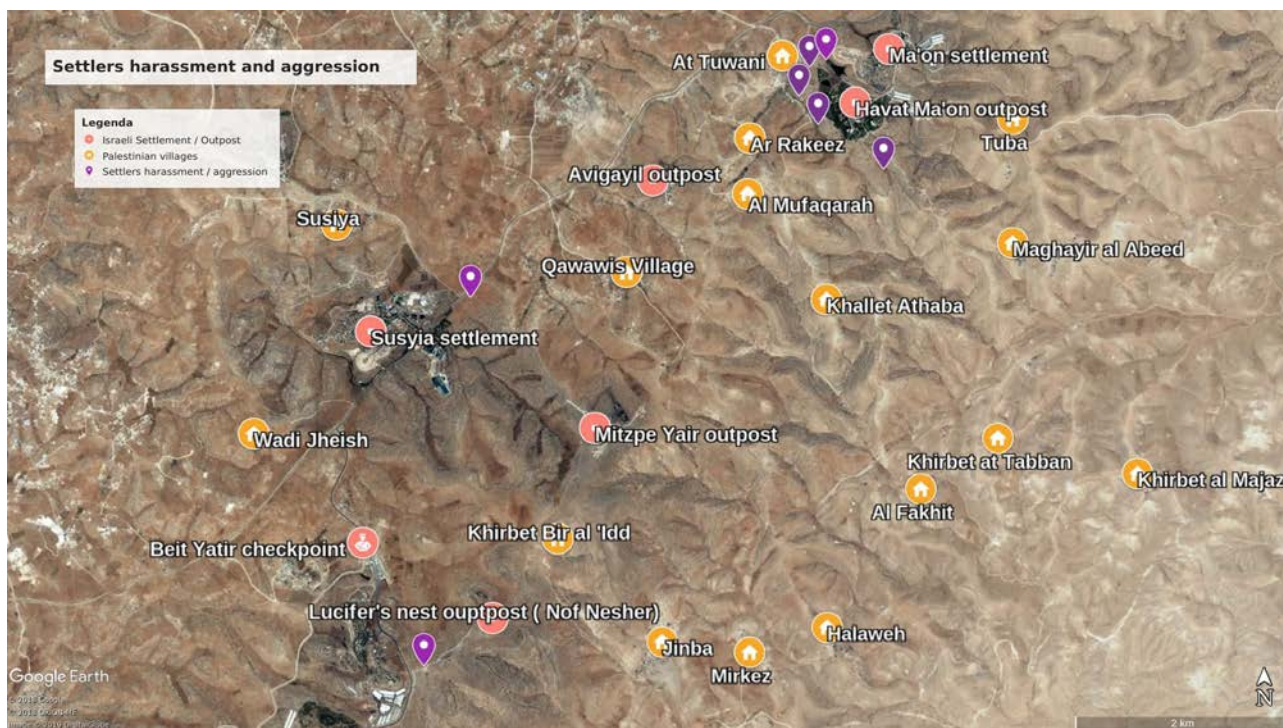
On December 10, at around 1 AM, Israeli soldiers confiscated building materials for a school in Simya Palestinian village, near As Samu' city.

On December 31, at around 9.30 AM, Israeli forces uprooted 50 olive and almond trees in Ar Rakeez Palestinian village

On December 31, at around 10 AM, Israeli forces demolished 125 olive trees and 400 meters of fence in Al Mufaqara village.

ISRAELI SETTLERS

Settler harassment and aggression



On October 6, armed settlers from Havat Ma'on, accompanied by Israeli soldiers, raided At Tuwani village multiple times during the afternoon and night, using violence against the Palestinian inhabitants.

On November 14, a settler family assaulted two Palestinian farmers while they were plowing their fields in Wadi Sued, near Qawawis village. Israeli soldiers were present but did nothing to prevent the settler aggression.

On November 29, at around 12:30 PM, two Israeli settlers coming from the illegal Israeli outpost of Nof Nesher arrived in the Palestinian village of A Sefeer and began to plant trees in plowed Palestinian land, damaging the crops that had already been planted. Israeli forces were present but did not stop the settlers.

On December 12, at around 2PM, two OD volunteers and the Palestinian owner of the land reported damage to ten olive and two almond trees in Khelly valley in At Tuwani village.

On December 14, in the early morning, Israeli settlers damaged an olive tree in Humra Valley on private Palestinian land, and put road spikes on the road between the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Mufaqaara. Israeli forces (Police: #42125; Army: #790369, #274023, #281693) came in the morning to observe the damage.

On December 19, at around 1 PM, Israeli settlers coming from the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on plowed in Meshaha Valley on privately owned Palestinian land in At Tuwani village, despite the presence of the Israeli Army.

Settlement expansion



On November 28, OD volunteers reported the presence of a new wood pergola on the east side of the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on, outside the wood.

During the months of November and December, OD volunteers observed evidence of work being done on new houses on the east side of the Israeli settlement of Ma'on.

On December 26, at around 4:15 PM, Israeli settlers plowed in Umm Zeitouna valley, on Palestinian land close to Tuba village.

On December 26, at around 11:00 AM, some Israeli settlers from the settlement of Susya built a new structure on private Palestinian private land. According to witnesses, the structure was dismantled in the afternoon by Israeli forces

On December 28, OD volunteers monitored one bulldozer leveling the road on the west side of the illegal Israeli Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on.

During the month of December, OD volunteers observed evidence of settlers' working on land on the east side of the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on, outside the wood.

SCHOOL PATROL

This is the fifteenth continuous year during which the children from the Palestinian villages of Tuba and Maghayir Al-Abeed have needed a military escort in order to reach the school in At-Tuwani village safely. To get to school the children must walk along a road which once provided easy travel between the villages, but which now runs between the Israeli settlement of Ma'on and the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on. For the past fifteen years violent behavior by settlers from the outpost, the existence of which is illegal under both Israeli and International law, has made the road inaccessible to Palestinians. Even escorted by Israeli soldiers the schoolchildren continue to face the possibility of violence, harassment and intimidation as they walk to and from school. Under Israeli Knesset Committee for Children's Rights order, the military escort is responsible for protecting the children from settler violence and intimidation throughout their walk to school in the morning, and their return trip home in the afternoon. Operation Dove volunteers documented multiple instances in which the military escort failed to provide protection to the children, leaving them vulnerable to settler violence on several occasions during the first months of the 2018-2019 school year. Here below there are the most serious cases recorded.

On October 31, in the afternoon, the Israeli soldiers did not arrive at the end of the school day. The schoolchildren walked home alone, accompanied only by two Palestinians from At Tuwani village.

On December 23, in the morning, the Palestinian schoolchildren were forced to wait for the military escort in a dangerous place for more than half an hour. Because of the delay the students missed their first class.

On December 26, in the morning, the Israeli army escort did not arrive to meet the children. The Palestinian schoolchildren decided to walk alone with OD volunteers. In the middle of the path the students met two Israeli soldiers who completed the path with the children.

On December 27, in the morning, the Israeli army did not show up at all. The Palestinian children waited half an hour and then, after several phone calls to the Army base, decided to walk alone, accompanied by OD volunteers.

PALESTINIAN POPULAR STRUGGLE

On December 24, in the evening, Palestinian inhabitants of At Tuwani village attended the lighting of the Christmas tree in Sumud Freedom Garden to support the struggle of all the Palestinian prisoners.

On December 29, at around 9 AM, “Youth of Sumud”, a Palestinian group, organized a nonviolent demonstration in support of Palestinian prisoners with the participation of an Italian delegation. The group walked from the Palestinian village of Sarura to At-Tuwani village. When the demonstration reached the Palestinian land of Khelly valley, on the west side of the Palestinian village of Tuwani, close to Ma'on Israeli settlement, Israeli authorities stopped them, declared the area a closed military zone, and prevented them from continuing the march.