

REPORT

Human Rights Violations and Popular Struggle in South Hebron Hills

October November December 2019



Operation Dove

Nonviolent Peace Corps of Associazione "Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII"

www.operationdove.org

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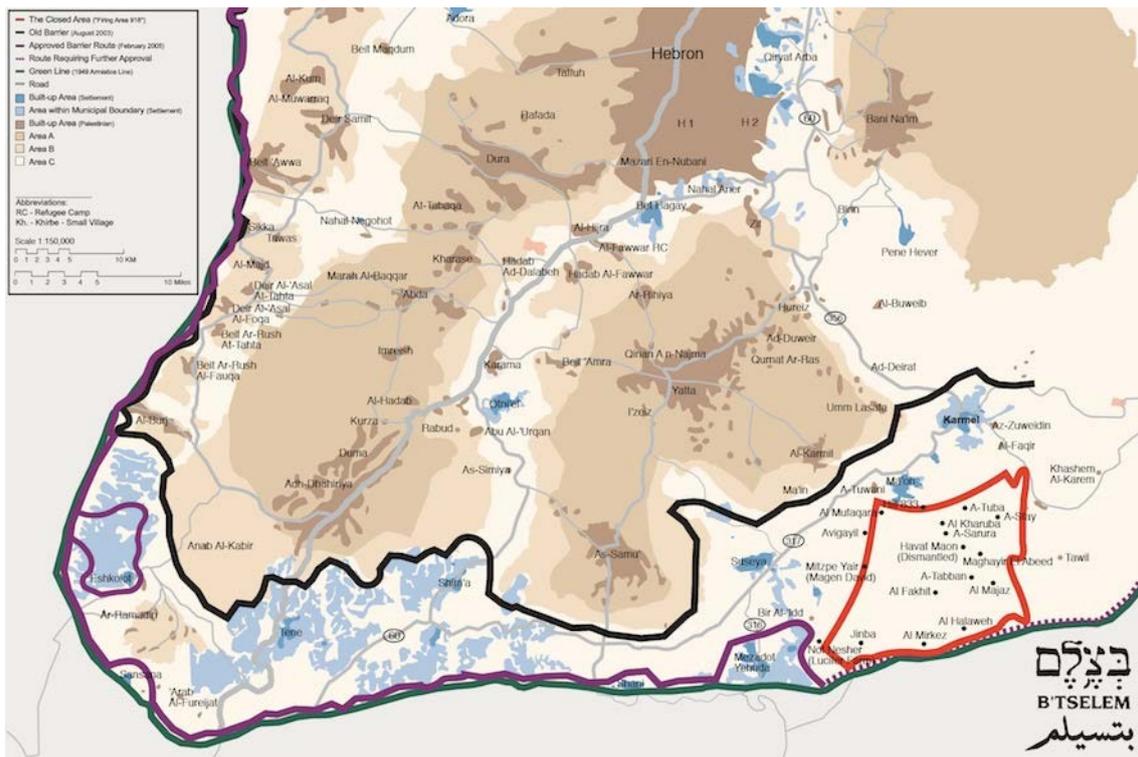
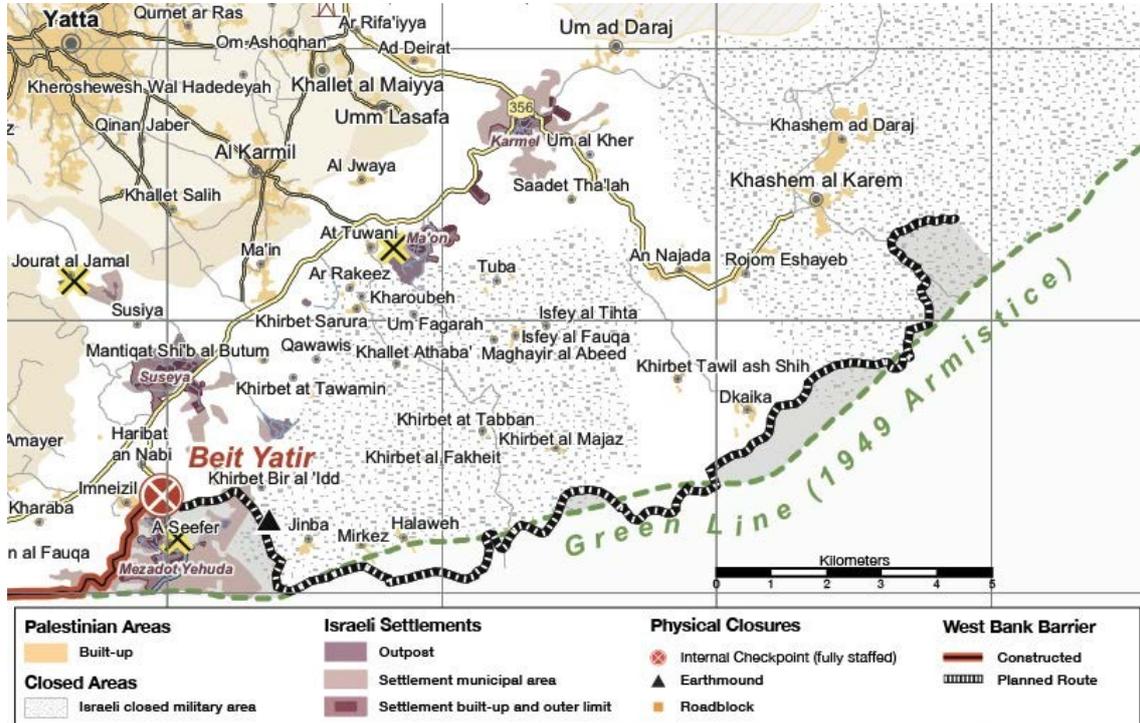
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OVERVIEW

During the months of October, November and December 2019, Operation Dove volunteers recorded around 10 harassment by the Israeli armed forces (Army, Border Police and Police) against the Palestinian inhabitants of the south Hebron hills.

6 Palestinians have been kept under detention without any charge or evidences, a clear intimidation for people who were accessing Palestinian land near Israeli settlements or outposts (Umm Zeitouna, December 22; Kharrouba, December 28). In two cases the Israeli army, pushed by Israeli settlers, raided private Palestinian house or properties (Susiya, October 2; Al Birkeh, October 15).

OD volunteers monitored 4 flying checkpoints, set up 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 December 20, the Israeli army closed for 3 hours and half all the entrances to the Palestinian villages in the Bypass Road 317, from Ma'on to Susiya settlements, because a settlers marathon.

During the period surveyed the Israeli Civil Administration (DCO) decided for the demolition of 6 Palestinian houses in the village of KHALLET ATTHABA (November 21), Maghayir Al Abeed (December 5, 24) and Ghuwein Al Fauqa (December 24).

OD volunteers recorded six verbal harassment and three physical aggression by Israeli settlers against the Palestinian population in the area. An Israeli settler coming from Havat Ma'on outpost attacked with his dog Palestinian youth in Tuba village (November 1) and in At-Tuwani (November 15). In both cases Palestinians have been bitten by the settler's dog. On October 1, Israeli settlers threw a Molotov cocktail inside the Palestinian village of Susiya. On October 29, settlers from Avigayil outpost stole olives from Palestinian trees in Al Mufaqrara.

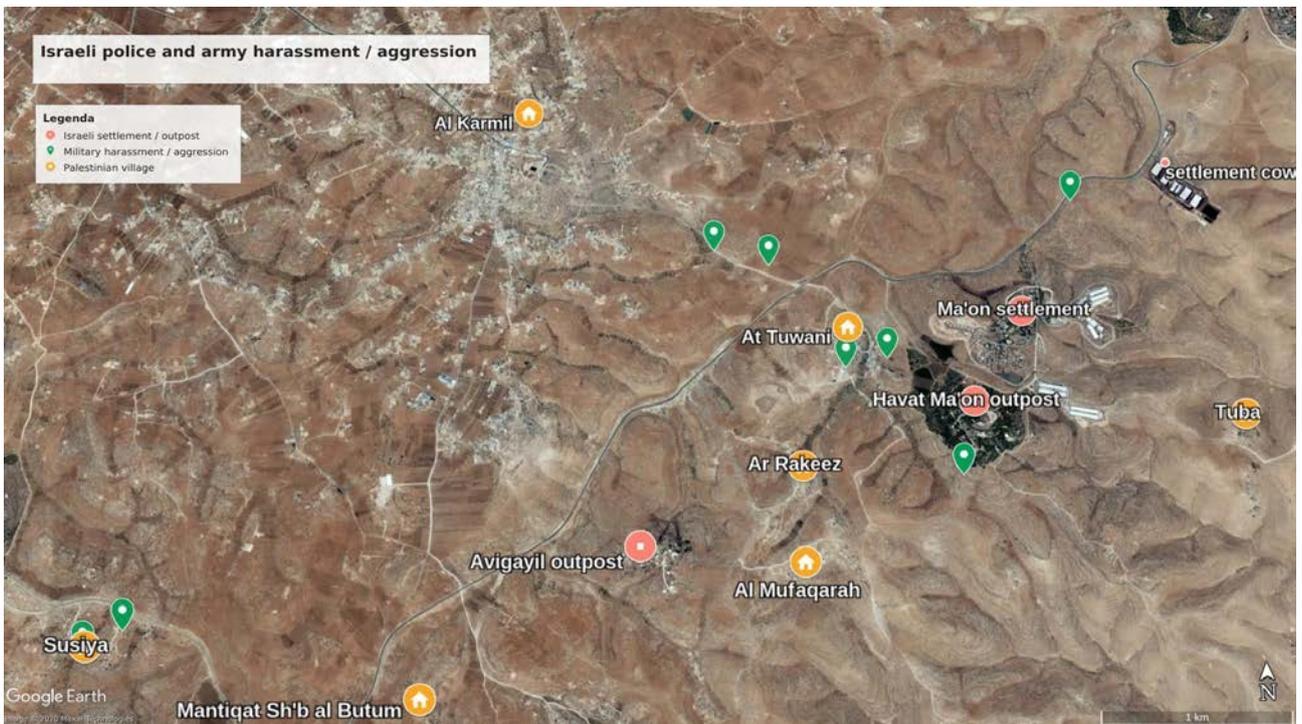
In this three-month period OD volunteers recorded several expansion works and building of new houses in the Israeli settlement of Susiya and in the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on.

In the three months surveyed the Israeli military escort failed to arrive for 2 times, putting in danger the Palestinian children who have been forced to walk alone in the dangerous roads around or in between Ma'on settlement and Havat Ma'on outpost, only accompanied by other young Palestinians. In the end of December the soldiers of children's military escort tried several times to prevent OD volunteers and Palestinian activists from monitoring the escort, asserting that their were not allowed to wait the children in the At-Tuwani meeting point.

In the south Hebron hills area there have been 3 nonviolent actions where Palestinians, Israelis and Internationals gathered : rebuilding house after demolition, protection of farmer during plowing work in a dangerous area and planting new olive trees where the Israeli settlers uprooted trees in the past.

ISRAELI ARMY AND POLICE

Military harassment and aggression



On October 2, in the morning, Israeli army and DCO arrived into the property of a family in the Palestinian village of Susiya. According to Palestinian witnesses, the Israeli forces had been previously alerted by members of the Israeli NGO Regavim who took pictures of the private Palestinian property using a flying drone. The Israeli forces took pictures of the structures, entering inside the Palestinian tents.

On October 15, at around 8:30 AM, an Israeli army jeep (#281686) of the school patrol stopped a Palestinian shepherd and his son while they were grazing their sheep just above the Sumud Freedom Garden, in At Tuwani Palestinian village, Havat Ma'on Israeli illegal outpost. The soldiers stepped out of the car, stood in front of the Palestinian people on the spot and started making phone calls. After some minutes they told the shepherd that he should not graze the sheep beyond the road surrounding the wood of the Israeli outpost. Around 9 AM the soldiers left the area.

On October 15, in the evening, an Israeli settler reached with his car (#4357013) the area of Al Mahar, near the Palestinian village of Al Birkeh. The settler took some pictures of a Palestinian truck with a crane that was located close to a house under construction, and was later joined by an army jeep (#281686). At around 9 PM OD volunteers and Palestinians activists arrived on the spot. The army prevented OD volunteers from getting close to the settler's car and then pushed away the Palestinians as well. The settler left the spot at 9:34 PM. Palestinians continued to speak with the soldiers and then another army jeep arrived (#534073). The Palestinian owner tried to explain to the soldiers the legal status of the land showing them a map of his property. In the meantime the army were preventing Palestinians from getting close the area. At 10:42 PM the Israeli DCO (#6406086) arrived and the officers talked with the owner of the house under construction. The army kept pushing Palestinians away. At 11 PM the first army jeep (#534073) left the spot, followed after 15 minutes by the DCO and the other army jeep.

On November 11, at around 9:30 AM one Israeli army jeep (#534143) and one Israeli Border police jeep (#275017) arrived in the school's entrance in the Palestinian village of At Tuwani where they stopped a Palestinian car. After 10 minutes the Israeli armed forces left the village.

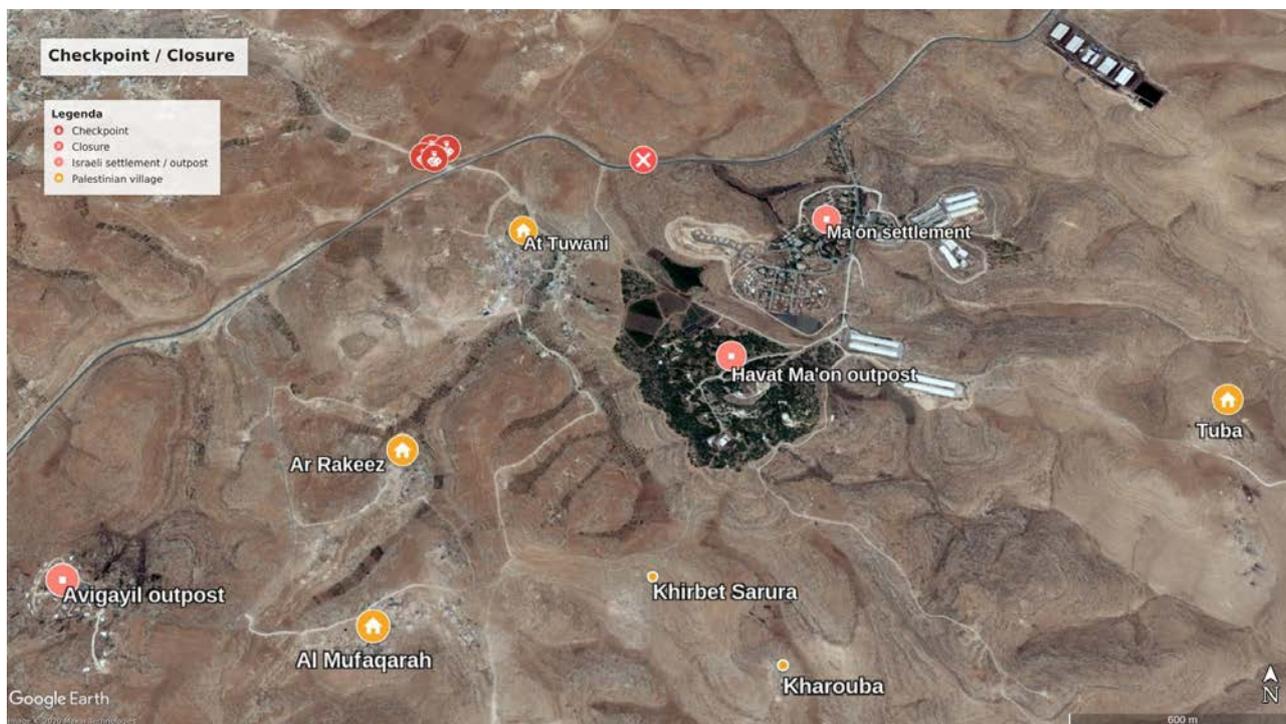
On November 17, an Israeli Civil Administration truck (#9957734) arrived in the Palestinian village of Susiya. Israeli officers took pictures of several houses and structures in the village.

On December 22, at around 3:30 PM, five Palestinian activists of Youth of Sumud were stopped by Israeli Army in Umm Zeitouna area, nearby the Bypass road 317. The Israeli army took their identity cards and detained them until Israeli police (#42125) arrived at 3:46 PM. After about ten minutes the Israeli police returned the Palestinian ID and left the area with the Army.

On December 28, at 3:56 PM two Israeli military jeeps (#274029 #534073) stopped on the Bypass road 317 near Khelly valley, At Tuwani village. Six soldiers went out from the jeeps and walked from Khelly valley to Humra valley, on the road close to the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on. Once the Army stopped in Humra valley, Kharrouba hill side, they asked Palestinians and OD volunteers to identify themselves. Then, the soldiers held the OD's passports for around thirty minutes. At 4:24 PM when another Israeli Army jeep (#534029) and a group of Palestinian and International activists arrived on the spot, the Army gave the passports back and the group left the area.

On December 30, at around 5 PM, Israeli police (#42140) confiscated a Palestinian car on the road that connect the Palestinian village of Tuwani and Yatta. After having checked the document of the driver, the police left the spot at 5:27 PM.

Checkpoints and closures



On October 11, at around 10:36 PM, the Israeli Police set up a check point on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. When OD volunteers arrived on the spot the policemen stopped a Palestinian pick up at the entrance of the Palestinian village of At Tuwani. They checked the vehicle, forced the Palestinian family to remove their properties and at the end they confiscated the pick up. Israeli Police left the area at 10:47 PM with the confiscated car.

On December 1, at 11:12 AM, Israeli Army (#274054) set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. The Israeli Army stopped eleven Palestinian cars checking the documents of the drivers. At 11:43 AM the Israeli Army left the area.

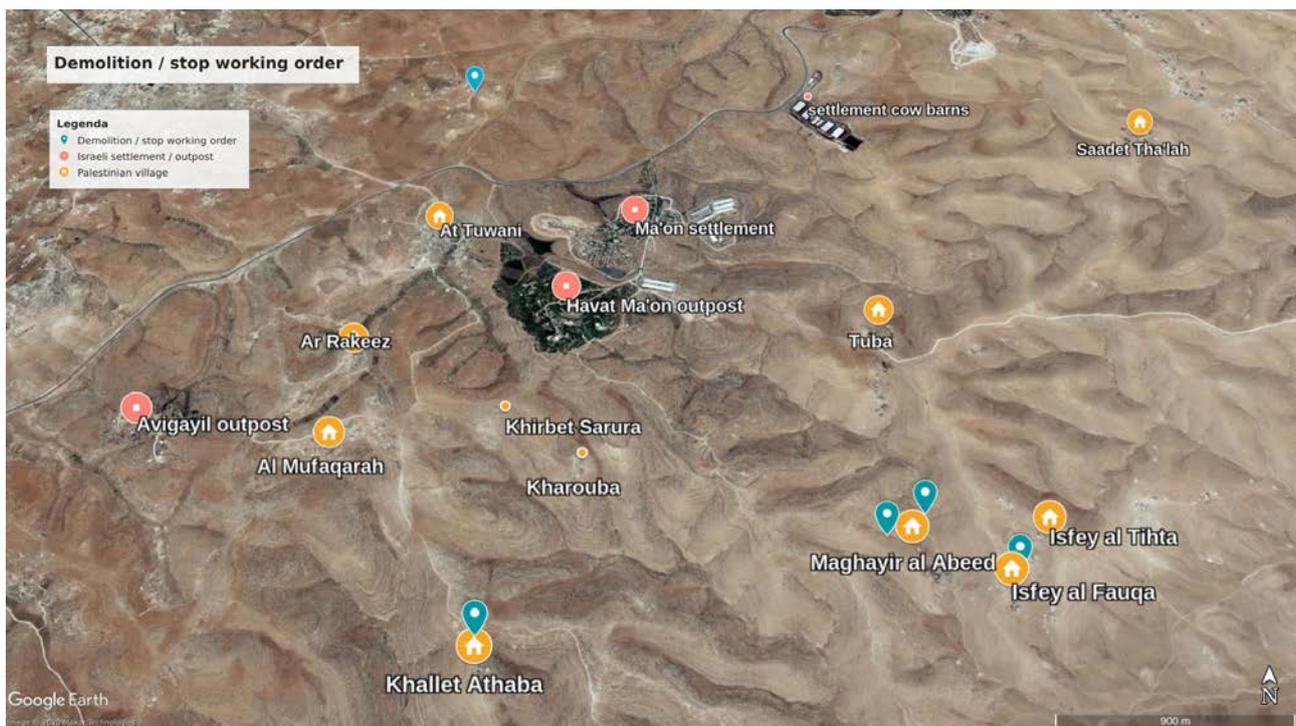
On December 20, at around 4 PM, two Palestinian cars were stopped by Israeli Police (#42140) on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. The Israeli Police took the documents of the Palestinians which waited for a while to have them back. At 4:08 PM one Palestinian car went away. At 4:19 PM the second Palestinian car and the Israeli Police left the area.

On December 20, at around 8 AM, the Israeli forces closed the Israeli Bypass Road 317 and all the entrances to the Palestinian villages from the Israeli settlement of Ma'on to the Israeli settlement of Susiya. The reason of the closure was to let a group of Israeli settlers

to do a marathon. At around 11:30 AM the Israeli forces removed the closure on the Bypass Road 317 and to the Palestinian villages in the area.

On December 21, at 09:29 AM, Israeli Border Police (#661435) and Israeli Army (#53143) set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. At 9:30 AM the Israeli army jeep left the area. The Israeli Border Police stopped five Palestinian cars checking the document of the drivers. At 9:42 AM the Israeli Border Police left the area.

Demolitions and stop working orders



On November 21, at around 1 PM, Israeli armed forces demolished a Palestinian house in the village of KHALLET ATHABA.

On November 27, at around 4 PM, the Israeli Civil Administration confiscated a Palestinian truck that was working in the Palestinian village of Jawwaya. The DCO was accompanied by two Israeli Army jeeps and one Israeli settlers' car.

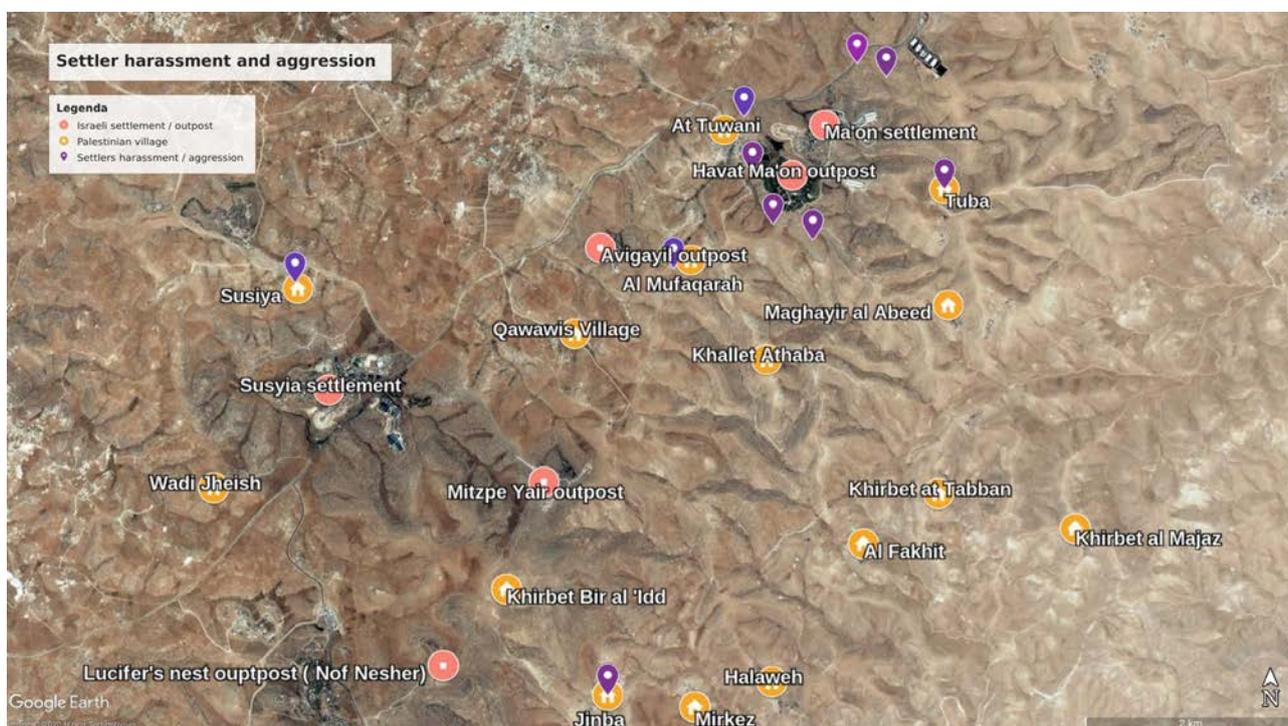
On December 5, at 9 AM, the Israeli forces (Army: #275017, #655131, #184334) demolished three houses in the Palestinian village of Maghayir al Abeed. They left the spot at 9:23 AM.

On December 24, at around 11:24 AM Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334, #47416901; Army: #275064, #534143; Border police: #665567) demolished a house in the Palestinian village of Maghayir al Abeed. They left the spot at 11:23 AM.

On December 24, at around 10 AM, the Israeli army demolished a house in the Palestinian village of Khirbet Ghuwein al Fauqa. They left the spot at around 11 AM.

ISRAELI SETTLERS

Settler harassment and aggression



On October 1, in the late evening, some settlers coming from the Israeli settlement of Susiya threw a Molotov cocktail inside the Palestinian village of Susiya. The homemade bomb fell very near to a playground, not far from the Palestinian houses.

On October 18, at around 9:30 AM, the Civilian Security Coordinator of the Israeli settlement of Ma'on arrived in Palestinian Khelly valley verbally attacking a Palestinian shepherd that was grazing his flock in the area. The CSC started to beat the sheep and the Israeli Army that was on the spot pushed the Palestinian shepherd out of the area. After a while another Palestinian arrived in the area and the CSC started to ask him his ID. The Israeli soldiers pushed the Palestinian guy back in order to prevent him from documenting the situation and getting closer to the Palestinian shepherd. Later, Israeli Army and settlement's security left the area.

On October 29, in the morning, settlers coming from the Israeli illegal outpost of Avigayil stole olives from a field in the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqara. The olive trees belong to a family from the Palestinian village of Shabel Butum. An Israeli Police jeep reached the spot in the evening to investigate the theft.

On November 1 at around 6:00 PM, a group of Israeli settlers coming from the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on arrived in the Palestinian village of Tuba. The settlers started to scream and shout in order to terrorize the inhabitants, then they entered in two Palestinian houses, threatening the families who were inside. After a while, one Israeli army jeep (#534073) and other Palestinians arrived on the spot. During the verbal confrontation between the Israeli settlers and the Palestinian inhabitants the settler's dog bit a Palestinian activist on the shoulder. At around 7:00 PM settlers and soldiers left the village.

On November 13, at around 7:30 AM, an Israeli settler from the illegal settlement of Ma'on approached and threatened a Palestinian shepherd who was grazing his flock in Umm Zeitouna valley. After the aggression the settler left the area.

On November 15, around 10:30 AM, a group of six settlers, coming from the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on, went out from the wood that hosts the outpost and reached the Palestinian water well in Humra Valley. The Israeli settlers started walking in the valley and chased a Palestinian family who were working on the land. Then the settlers went back up on the road near Havat Ma'on. Another Israeli settler with a dog went out from the wood and started insulting the Palestinian family. Around 10:40 AM, three Palestinian guys and an Israeli activist reached the spot, close to the group of settlers that were standing on the road. The Israeli settlers began to tape and verbally harassed the Palestinians and the activists on the spot while the other settler incited the dog against Palestinians and Internationals. The dog attacked one of the Palestinian guys, biting him on his arm. Meanwhile, another Havat Ma'on settler, armed with a gun, and car of the Civilian Security Coordinator of the Israeli settlement of Ma'on (#71713801) arrived on the spot. Later on, several Palestinian inhabitants of the village of Tuwani and Israeli activists arrived on the spot, followed by army jeeps (#534073; #274054; #703065; #790463; #617032; #617006) and Palestinian ambulance. Five Israeli soldiers got closer to the Palestinian injured and then they moved close to the group of Israeli settlers. At 11 AM, the armed settler tried to reach a Palestinian family who were standing on the other side of the hill. The Israeli soldiers ran after him and he changed direction toward the entrance of the village of At Tuwani. At 11:20 AM, three Israeli police cars (#42120; #42147; #42159) one Israeli DCO car (#6406086) arrived on the spot. The soldiers and the policemen talked with the settlers and the Palestinians. A Palestinian was temporary detained. The soldiers checked the passport of one OD volunteer and later they tried to arrest her. At around 11:45 AM all the Israeli forces and the settlers left the area.

On November 15, at around 11:10 AM, an Israeli settler coming from the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on arrived near the entrance of the Palestinian village of At Tuwani armed with a gun in order to threat the Palestinian inhabitants of the village. Israeli army instead of prevent the aggression pushed the Palestinians present on the spot away.

On November 23, at around 10:30 AM, an Israeli settler from the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on chased and threatened a Palestinian shepherd who was grazing his flock on Meshaha hill, between At-Tuwani and Tuba Palestinian villages. After the aggression, the settler left the area.

On November 27, at around 4 PM, a group of Israeli settlers coming from the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on passed through the Palestinian village of Jinba, chasing and harassing the Palestinian inhabitants.

On December 22, at around 3 PM, an Israeli settler from the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on was plowing with his tractor the land in Umm Zeitouna valley. When he saw two OD volunteers, he cut their way for the Palestinian village of Tuba ordering them to leave the land. After a couple of minutes he threatened to call the police and he made a call. After five minutes the Civilian Security Coordinator of the settlement of Ma'on reached the area. Following this, the two OD volunteers left the area going towards Tuba village.

Settlement expansion



On October 4, OD volunteers took evidence of Israeli settler building a structure in the Palestinian land of Wadi Sued, Qawawis village.

During the month of November, OD volunteers took evidence of Israeli settlers restoring a house in the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on, Meshaha Hill side.

On December 12, OD volunteers monitored an Israeli settler plowing the land near the road that connect the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on to Old Havat Ma'on Hill.

During the month of December, OD volunteers took evidence of Israeli settlers restoring a house in the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on, south side overlooking Kharrouba valley.

SCHOOL PATROL

This is the sixteenth 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 three months surveyed. Here below there are the most serious cases recorded:

On November 12 at about 7:40 AM, some Palestinian children and their relatives from the Palestinian village of Tuba were walking on the street between the Israeli settlement of Ma'on and the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on escorted by the Israeli army. At 7:44 AM an Israeli settler's car was driving out from the road of the greenhouse of the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on. The Israeli settler directed his car against the Palestinian children and at the last moment he changed his direction, forcing the Palestinian people to get out of the way.

On November 25 and 28, in the afternoon, the military escort did not show up. The Palestinian school children were forced to walk back home alone, accompanied by a couple of Palestinian human right activists.

On December 3, at 7:45 AM an Israeli settler coming from the settlement of Ma'on reached with his dog the Palestinian schoolchildren who were walking toward At-Tuwani village escorted by the Israeli soldiers. The soldiers succeeded to prevent the contact between the settler the students who reached the school safely.

On December 23, at around 11:20 AM the Israeli soldiers prevented a Palestinian man, relative of the students, from walk back from At-Tuwani to Tuba village with the schoolchildren.

On December 22, 23 and 26 the Israeli soldiers argued with YOS Palestinian activists and OD volunteers about their right of monitoring the military escort from the meeting point located in At-Tuwani village, in the beginning of the road that passes between the Israeli

settlement of Ma'on and the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on. According to the orders of the soldiers the activists would not allowed to wait the school children in the meeting point. The restriction, without any legal bases, was a clear attempts of intimidation. Indeed, the soldiers did not produced any order or map to support their version.

PALESTINIAN POPULAR STRUGGLE

On December 14, at around 11.30 AM, several Palestinians with Israeli activists and a group of Internationals attended a nonviolent action in the Palestinian village of Maghayir al Abeed, removing ruins of three Palestinian houses demolished by Israeli forces on December 5.

On December 21, at around 1 PM, Palestinians farmers alongside Palestinian Israeli and International activists attended a nonviolent action in Old Havat Ma'on hill where are located some Palestinian fields that belongs to a family from the village of Maghayir al Abeed. The activists accompanied and supported a Palestinian farmer who were plowing his fields. The Palestinian fields are located beside a road used by Israeli settlers that in the past years attacked Palestinian farmers several times.

On December 31, at around 12 PM, a group of International visitors (about 50 people) reached the Sumud Freedom Camp in Sarura Palestinian village. After a speech about the experience of Sarura and the mission and activities of the group Youth of Sumud the group moved to At Tuwani village to plant olives trees in the Khelly Valley, where Israeli settlers destroyed dozens of olive trees in the last years. Several Israeli soldiers patrolled the area during the nonviolent action.