

REPORT

Human Rights Violations and Popular Struggle in South Hebron Hills

January February March 2020



Operation Dove

Nonviolent Peace Corps of Associazione "Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII"

www.operationdove.org

INDEX

- ◆ OVERVIEW

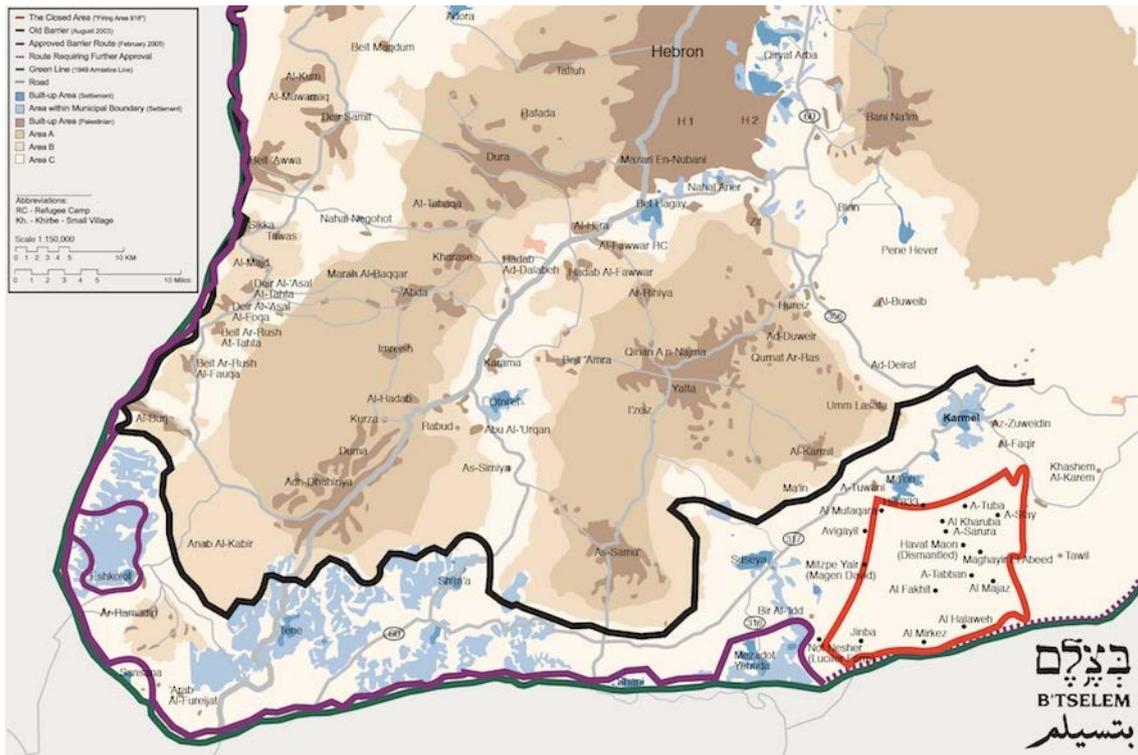
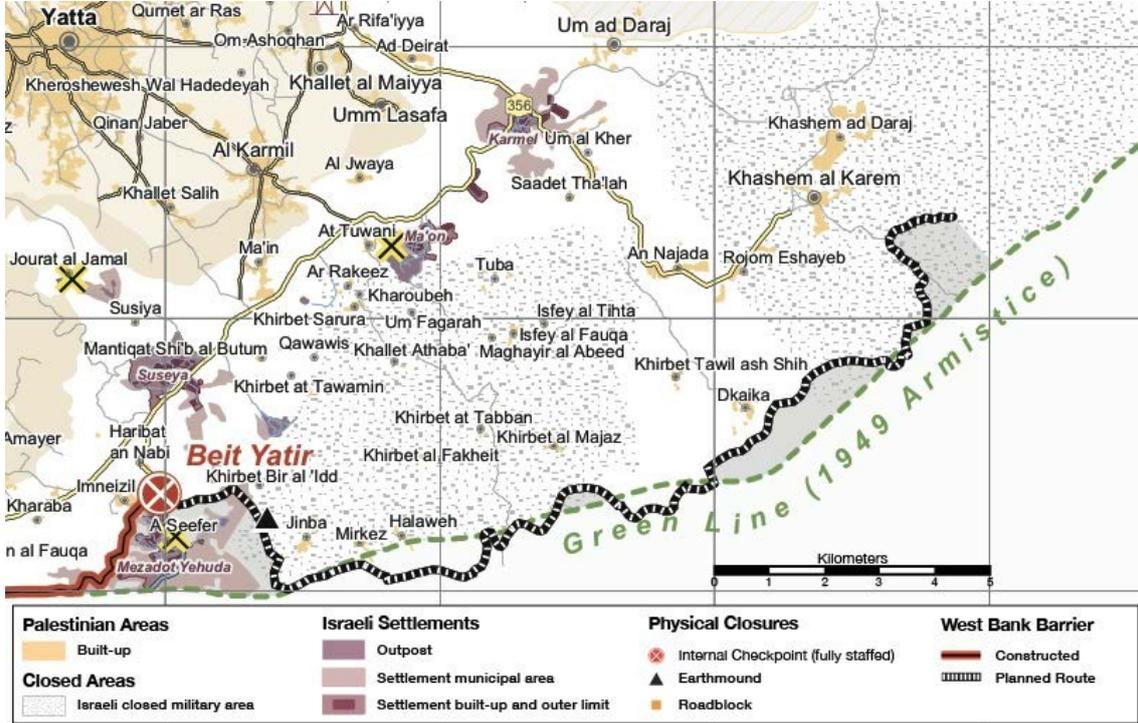
- ◆ ISRAELI ARMY AND POLICE
 - Military harassment and aggression
 - Checkpoints and closures
 - Demolitions and stop working orders

- ◆ ISRAELI SETTLERS
 - Settlers harassment and aggression
 - Settlement expansion

- ◆ SCHOOL PATROL

- ◆ PALESTINIAN POPULAR STRUGGLE

MAPS



OVERVIEW

During the months of January, February and March 2020, Operation Dove volunteers recorded around 11 incidents of harassment and 4 cases of aggression, with the use of physical violence, by the Israeli armed forces (Army, Border Police and Police) against the Palestinian inhabitants of the south Hebron hills.

Israeli soldiers prevented Palestinian shepherds from grazing the flocks on their own land 4 times. The Israeli soldiers were pushed or led by Israeli settlers, the same settlers that are involved in the attempt of takeover and annexation of the Palestinian land to the settlements or outposts. Israeli army raided 5 times the Palestinian villages of the area, taking pictures of the structures and the documents of the residents. Two Palestinian vehicles have been confiscated. In one case (Susiya, February 19) the Israeli army damaged with the military jeep the water pipes in the village. Four Palestinians have been arrested: it happened during demolitions and during the 3 cases in which the soldiers broke up with violence the Palestinian families who gathered on their fields.

OD volunteers monitored 6 flying checkpoints, set up by the Israeli army on the road that connects Al Birkeh village to the village of At Tuwani. In two cases the Israeli army make a closure of the road: on March 24 the soldiers installed concrete blocks to prevent the passage of Palestinian cars. This road is the main way of connection between the city of Yatta and the rural villages of the "Massafer Yatta" area.

Israeli Civil Administration (DCO) delivered 9 demolition orders and 13 stop working orders to Palestinian structures in the villages of the South Hebron Hills area. Israeli armed forces demolished four houses, one animal shelters and part of two Palestinian schools (Birin, January 16; Susiya, February 19). In Massafer Yatta area the Israeli bulldozers razed the road near Shabel Butum village (March 3). In addition, Israeli forces confiscated 3 Palestinian vehicles used to work on the structures under demolition order.

OD volunteers recorded 6 harassment and 3 attacks by Israeli settlers against the Palestinian population in the area. In two cases (Sarura, January 11; At-Tuwani, March 27) Israeli settlers from Havat Ma'on illegal outpost attacked with dogs Palestinian youth, injuring them. On March 28, Havat Ma'on's settlers attacked Palestinians who were walking from At-Tuwani to Tuba village and threw stones to a Palestinian house in At-Tuwani. Despite the presence of Israeli soldiers in the area there were no consequences for the settler aggressors, on the contrary 3 Palestinians have been arrested. In 4 cases Israeli settlers harassed Palestinian shepherds and farmers, forcing them to leave their land to avoid a physical aggression. In 2 cases Israeli settlers violated Palestinian private properties to stress and threaten the Palestinian residents. In three cases (At-Tuwani/Ein Al Beyda spring, January 5 and 14; Susiya, March 19) Israeli settlers uprooted or destroyed Palestinian olive trees.

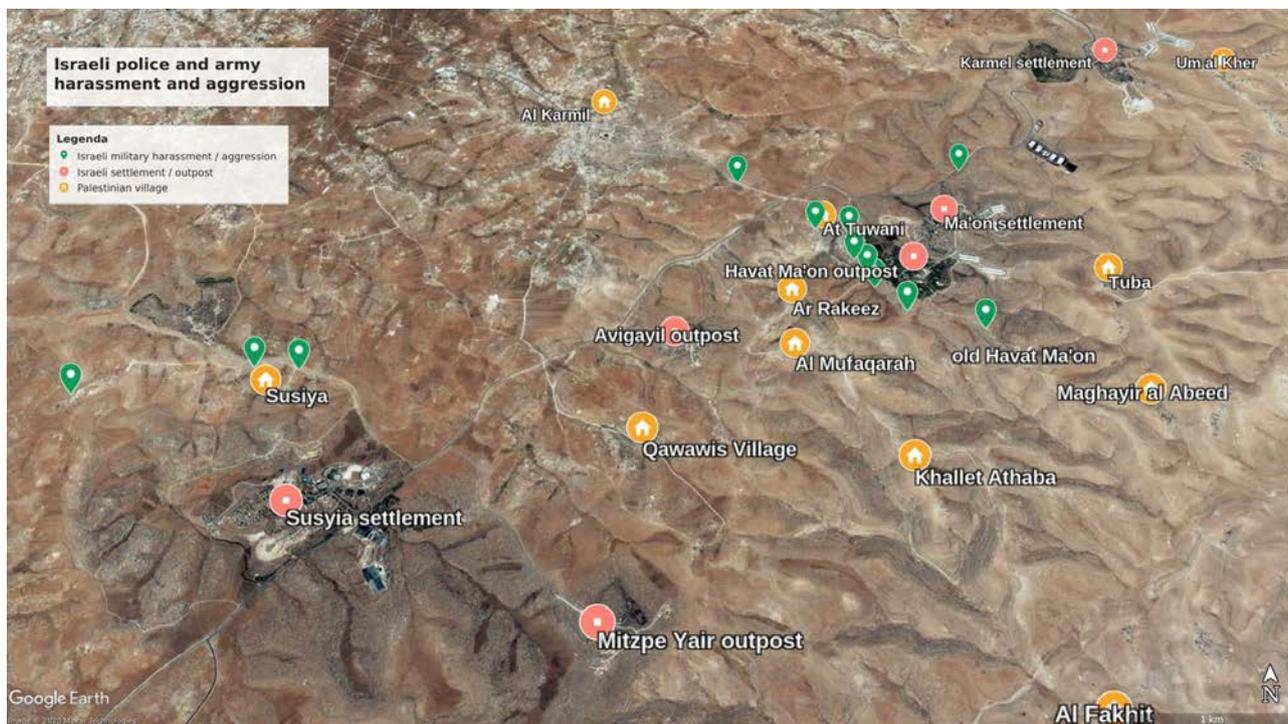
In this three-month period OD volunteers recorded the tree planting by the Israeli Civil Administration on Palestinian land close to the Israeli settlement of Carmel (January 14) and the building of new military tower just outside the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on (January 16).

On the right of education's side, on February 10, the Israeli military escort failed to arrive both in the morning and in the afternoon, putting in danger the Palestinian children who have been forced to walk alone in the dangerous road between Ma'on settlement and Havat Ma'on outpost, only accompanied by OD volunteers and other young Palestinians. In the morning, two children refused to go to school because they were scared. In the afternoon an Israeli settler from Havat Ma'on harassed OD volunteers and Palestinian activists on their way back to At-Tuwani, trying to prevent the group from continue their walk.

In the South Hebron hills there have been one nonviolent action of restoration of the Palestinian ancient water spring of Ein Al Beyda, near At Tuwani village. Despite the large number of Israeli armed forces in the spot the Palestinian succeeded to clean the spring and plant olive trees. The next days Israeli settlers destroyed the Palestinian olive trees.

ISRAELI ARMY AND POLICE

Military harassment and aggression



On January 3, at about 10:40 AM, an Israeli Army jeep (#655597) arrived in Sumud Freedom Garden, in the Palestinian village of Tuwani. A soldier stole a Palestinian flag. When Palestinians and International activists reached the garden, the jeep went away at 10:56 AM. Meanwhile, another Israeli army jeep arrived and when Palestinians told the DCO about the theft of the flag the new soldiers claimed it had not occurred. The Israeli Civil Administration then declared all the area a closed military zone.

On January 6, at 11:38 AM, Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334, Army: #655597) arrived in the Palestinian village of At Tuwani with an Israeli archaeologist. They entered inside a Palestinian private property, looking at the area around one Palestinian house. They left the area at 11:56 AM.

On January 11, at around 11:20 AM, an Israeli army jeep (#685597) and a settler's car coming from the illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on stopped in Umm Zeitouna valley, near the Bypass Road 317. The soldiers and the settler followed two Palestinian shepherds who were grazing flocks in the area. The shepherds ran away because of the

presence of the settler and soldiers. After patrolling the area, the Army and the settler moved away at around 12 AM.

On January 27, at 3:45 PM, Israeli Civil Administration (#9957334) confiscated a tractor in the Palestinian village of Susiya.

On February 2, at 9:30 AM, Israeli forces (Army #534157; DCO: #9957334) and Carmel security personnel arrived in the Palestinian Village of Um Al Kheir intending to confiscate an excavator but they left the area at 10:04 AM without confiscating anything.

On February 7, at around 10 PM, an Israeli army jeep arrived in Ar Rakeez and soldiers entered in a Palestinian house and looked around.

On February 9, at around 5 PM, Israeli forces (Border Police: #665567; Army: #790480) arrived in the Palestinian village of Susiya. The soldiers damaged the new water pipe of the village passing over it with the jeeps. The Palestinian inhabitants protested against the damaging and the soldiers pushed them away with violence. Israeli forces left the area at around 5:10 PM.

On February 13, at around 10:40 PM, Israeli police raided the Palestinian village of Sarura and demanded to see the IDs of three Palestinians. The policemen also took the mobile phones of the Palestinians and held them for about 10 minutes. They returned the phones and left the area at 10:50 PM.

On February 18, at around 11:50 AM, an Israeli army jeep (#184877) stopped in Meshaha Hill, between Tuba and At-Tuwani Palestinian village. The soldiers tried to reach a Palestinian shepherd who moved away the flock. In the meanwhile a Palestinian activist arrived on the spot. The soldiers asked him his ID card, checking it and putting it inside the jeep. When OD volunteers arrived on the spot, the Palestinian activist was under detention. At around 12:40 PM, a second Palestinian activist arrived on the spot. The soldiers checked the passports of the OD volunteers and gave back the ID card of the Palestinian activist and they left the area, at around 1 PM.

On February 19, at around 9:30 AM, Israeli forces (Army: #534031, #534143, #275064; Border Police: #661435; DCO: #9957334, #9957734) raided the Palestinian village of Susiya to carry out a demolition. During the demolition, at around 10:15 AM, one Palestinian activist was arrested by the Israeli Army and taken to Kiryat Arba police station, where he spent the night.

On February 22, at around 10:20 AM, an Israeli settler with a car followed two OD volunteers in the road that connects the Palestinian village of At Tuwani to Kharrouba valley, where a Palestinian shepherd was grazing his sheep. After a while several settlers came outside the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on. The settlers approached another Palestinian shepherd who was grazing his sheep, while other Palestinians arrived on the spot. At around 11:00 AM, four Israeli soldiers, coming from Havat Ma'on outpost, approached the group, spoke with the settlers and started to push violently the Palestinians and the activists present on the spot away from the area. At 11:00 AM, a jeep

of Israeli Army (#184877) arrived on the spot, while the soldiers continued to spoke with the settlers. At around 12:00 AM, an Israeli Police car (#42720) arrived on the spot, asked to the Palestinians and the internationals the passports and the IDs and detained, for nearly 30 minutes, 4 Palestinians and 6 internationals. At around 12:30 AM, the Police released all the people, threatening to leave the area before being arrested, and then went away.

On March 3, at around 11:50 AM, the Israeli Police (#42120) stopped a Palestinian car, who were going from the Palestinian city of Yatta to At-Tuwani village. The policemen confiscated the car using a tow truck . The Police left at 12:30 PM.

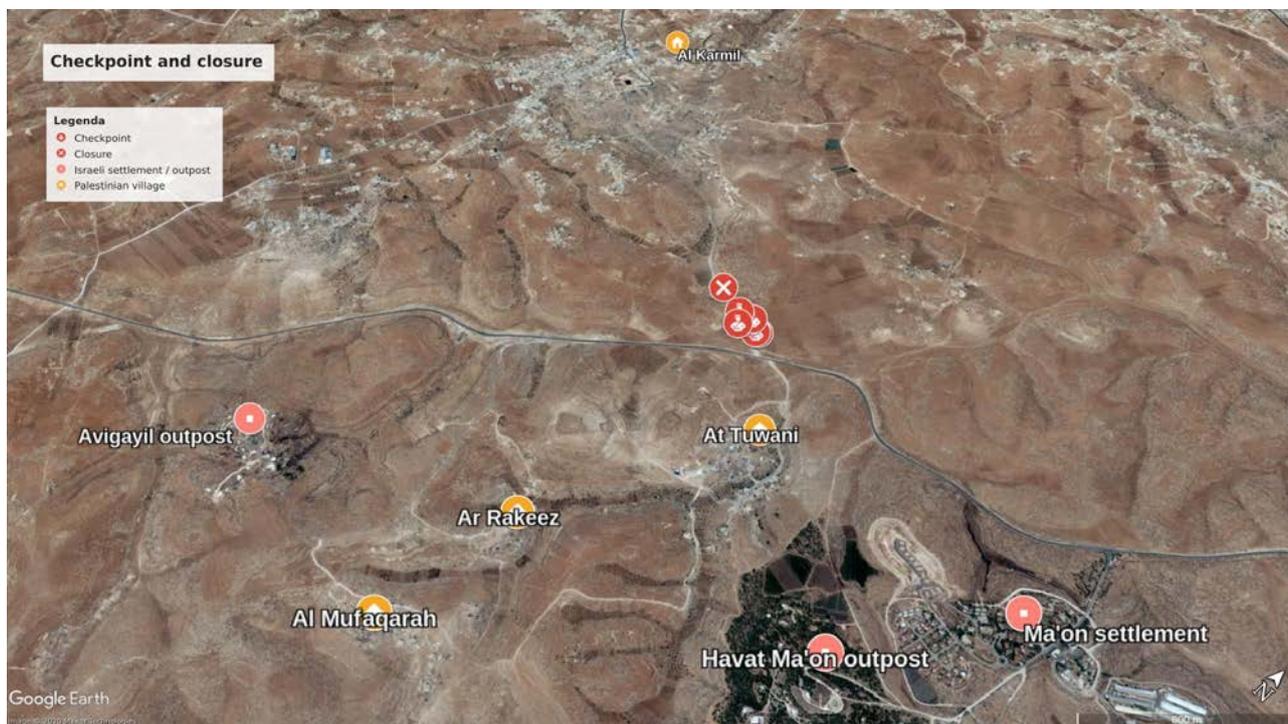
On March 11, at around 10:26 AM, Israeli soldiers (#184877) prevented Palestinian shepherds from grazing on their land in Humra valley, near the Palestinian village of At Tuwani. At around 10:54 AM another jeep of Israeli army (#534172) arrived on the spot, while the soldiers continued to speak with the shepherds and the commander told to the shepherds to leave the place. At around 12 PM, the shepherds left the area.

On March 11, in the morning, Israeli soldiers chased and harassed Palestinian shepherds who were grazing their sheep on their own land in Humra valley in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani.

On March 20, Israeli army prevented Palestinian shepherds from grazing their flocks on their own land in Humra valley in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani.

On March 28, after a group of Israeli settlers from Havat Ma'on illegal outpost attacked Palestinians in At Tuwani village, several Israeli soldiers reached the area of Humra. The soldiers spoke with the the settlers and then started pushing away violently the Palestinian inhabitants, firing sound bombs and tear gas towards the people. Several Palestinians were affected by tear gas. Three Palestinians were arrested after being beaten up by the soldiers. One Palestinian had a broken hand.

Checkpoints and closures



On January 12, at 5:37 PM, Israeli soldiers set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They stopped six Palestinian vehicles. At 5:47 PM, the Israeli Army left the area.

On January 22, at 10:28 AM, Israeli Army (#655579) set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They stopped seventeen Palestinian vehicles. At 11:05 AM, the Israeli Army jeep left the area.

On February 6, at 4:18 PM, Israeli Forces (Army: #534157; Police: #42120; DCO: #8179986) set up a closure in the middle of the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They prevent Palestinian vehicles coming from Al Birkeh from driving on the road. At 4:20 PM, the Israeli Police jeep left the area. At 4:23 PM, the Israeli Army jeep left the area. At 4:25 PM, the Israeli DCO jeep left the area.

On February 18, at 10:13 AM, Israeli soldiers (#184877) set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They stopped 19 Palestinian vehicles, checked the documents of the drivers and looked inside of the vehicles. At 11:56 AM, the Israeli Army jeep left the area.

On February 28, at 4:18 PM, Israeli soldiers (#665509) set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They stopped 5

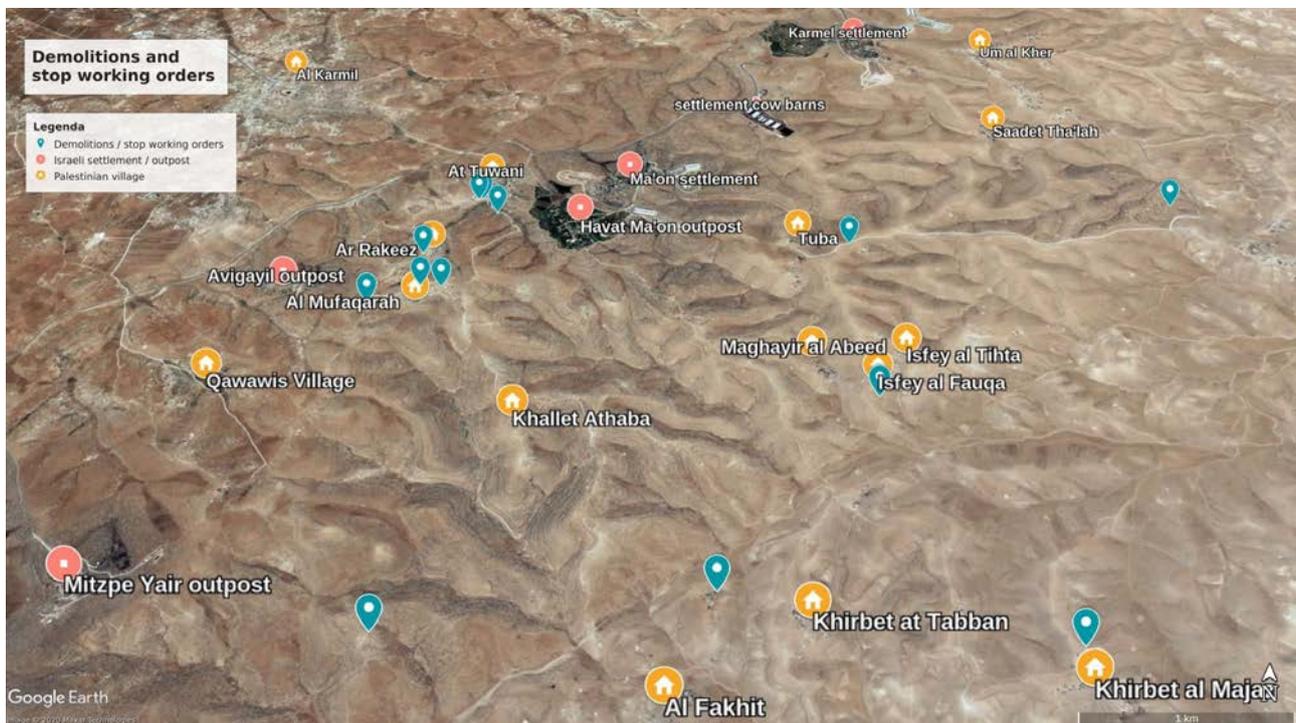
Palestinian vehicles and checked the documents of the drivers. At 5 PM, the Israeli Army jeep left the area.

On February 29, at 9:38 PM, Israeli soldiers set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They stopped 1 Palestinian vehicle and checked the document of the driver. At 9:53 PM, the Israeli Army jeep left the area.

On March 9, at 3:59 PM, Israeli Police (#42120) set up a checkpoint on the road that connects the Palestinian villages of At Tuwani and Al Birkeh. They stopped 1 Palestinian vehicle and checked the document of the driver. At 4:04 PM, the Israeli Police left the area.

On March 24, at about 12 PM, Israeli armed forces closed with concrete blocks the only road which connects At Tuwani as well as all the Palestinian villages in the Massafer Yatta to the city of Yatta.

Demolitions and stop working orders



On January 2, at about 10:30 AM, a DCO car arrived in the Palestinian Village of Al-Majaz and confiscated the car of the clinic. They took also photos of the village' school. They left at about 10:45 AM.

On January 7, at 11:56 AM Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334, Army: #534157) arrived in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani. They delivered three demolition orders for two houses and one room and left the area at 12:45 AM.

On January 13, as a Palestinian activist reported, Israeli forces delivered stop working orders to several houses in the Palestinian village of Gzewia.

On January 15, at about 11 AM Israeli forces delivered a stop-working order for a house in the Palestinian village of Tuba.

On January 16, at 9:34 AM Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334, #9958034; Army: #534073, #184334, #275064, #655131, #252034; Border Police: #665562, #665567) demolished a house in the Palestinian village of Ar-Rifa'iyya. The Border police violently attacked the Palestinian families and arrested two young men, and used pepper spray and sound bombs to disperse the crowd. They left the area at 10:20 AM.

On January 16, at 11:26 AM Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334, #9958034; Army: #534073, #184334, #275064, #655131, #252034; Border Police: #665562, #665567) destroyed the foundation of a school in the Palestinian village of Birin. They left the village at 1:43 PM.

On January 27, at around 10 AM, Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334; Army: #655597) delivered a stop working order for a house and a sheep enclosure in the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqrara.

On February 4, a Palestinian activist reported that Israeli forces confiscated a tractor that was working in the playground of the school in the Palestinian village of Susiya.

On February 5, Israeli army delivered a stop-working order for a playground close to the school in the Palestinian village of Susiya.

On February 12, at 11:20 AM, Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334; Army: #184877, #534157; Border Police: #534194) delivered 4 demolition orders to Palestinian houses in the village of At-Tuwani.

On February 12, at 11:42 AM, Israeli forces (DCO: #9957334; Army: #184877, #534157) confiscated a Palestinian truck in the village of At-Tuwani using a tow truck (#5965074). They left the village with the car at 13:33 PM.

On February 19, at around 09:30 AM, Israeli forces (Army #534031, #534143, #275064; Border Police #661435; DCO #9957334, #9957734) demolished part of the school in the Palestinian village of Susiya.

On February 27, at around 10:00 AM, Israeli forces demolished a house and a sheep shelter in the Palestinian village of Sfay.

On February 27, at around 11:00 AM, Israeli forces demolished a house in the Palestinian village of Mufaqaara.

On February 27, at 11:18 AM, Israeli forces demolished a house in the Palestinian village of Ar Rakeez.

On March 3, at around 9:30 AM, Israeli forces (DCO: #9957734, #9957934; Army: #534031, #275064, #534157) demolished the road that connects the Palestinian villages in the Massafer Yatta area, the so called Firing Zone 918, and the city of Yatta. The bulldozers demolished the road in different points. At around 11 AM the Israeli forces and the bulldozers left.

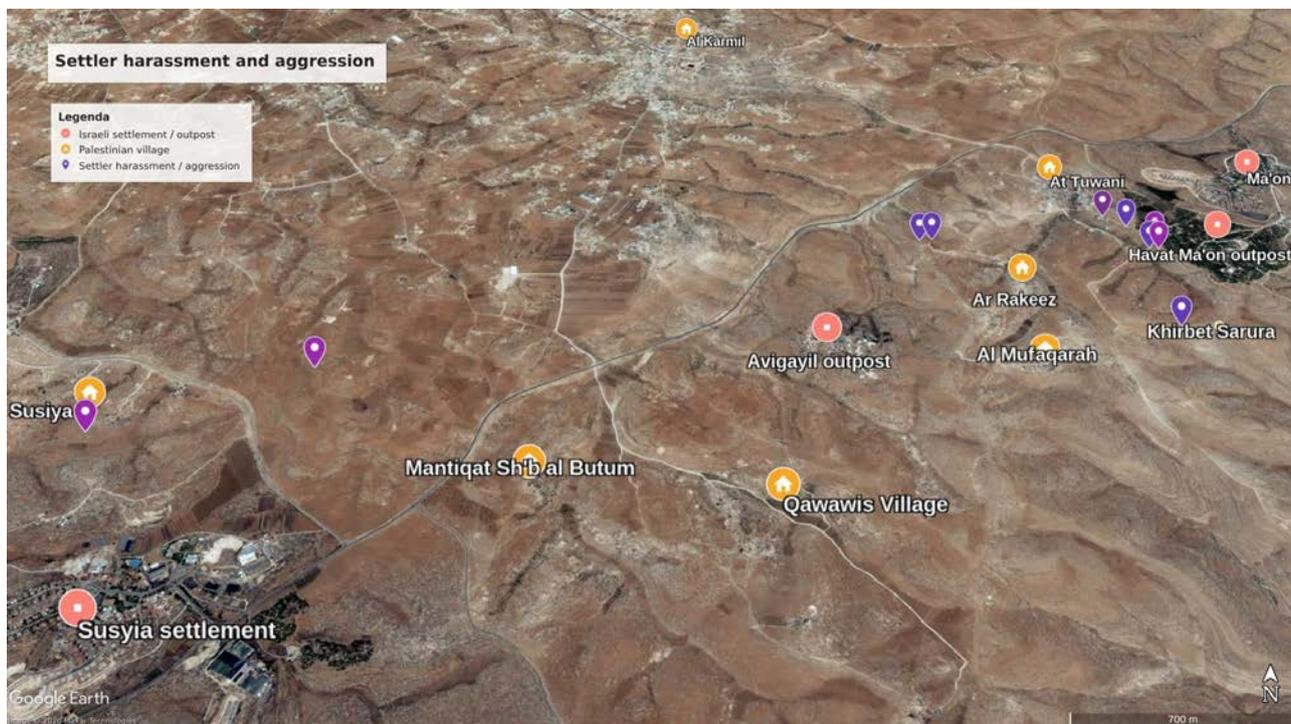
On March 26, the Israeli Civil Administration raided the natural reserve of Umm Al Khair and Kashem Al Daraj and delivered a final evacuation orders that will expire in seven days. After the 7 days day the Israeli forces will come to destroy the natural reserve.

On March 31, at about 10:30 AM Israeli forces delivered a stop-working order for a sheep shelter in the Palestinian village of Al Tabban.

On March 31, at about 11:30 AM Israeli forces delivered a demolition order for all the structures and trees in a specific area located in the west side of the Palestinian village of Mufaqaara.

ISRAELI SETTLERS

Settler harassment and aggression



On January 5, Israeli settlers from the outpost of Avigayil uprooted 15 Palestinian olive trees located in the Ein Al Beyda spring.

On January 11, at around 1:40 PM, two settlers from the Israeli illegal Israeli outpost of Havat Ma'on were walking with two dogs on the road that connects Havat Ma'on to the outpost of Avigayil. When they approached the Palestinian village of Sarura Palestinian activists met them, and while they were speaking one of the dogs attempted to bite one of the Palestinians. The settlers then returned to the outpost of Havat Ma'on at around 2:15 PM.

On January 14, as a Palestinian activist reported, a group of settlers came to the Palestinian spring of Ein Al Beyda and destroyed one olive tree which had been planted by Palestinians.

On February 4, at 1:15 PM, four Israeli settlers from the illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on riding motorbikes and quads arrived on the road connecting the illegal Israeli outpost of

Havat Ma'on to Kharrouba Hill. One of the settlers drove close to a Palestinian shepherd and two OD volunteers. At around 01:51 PM, two of the settlers returned to the outpost of Havat Ma'on and the other two continued on the road to the Israeli outpost of Avigayil.

On February 15, at around 09:10 PM, four settlers from the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on came near the first house of the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani, scared the family inside. Then they return near the outpost. At around 09:20 PM, the settlers spoke with a Palestinian activist, while other settlers started to come outside the woods. Then, when other Palestinians approached the spot, the settlers returned inside the outpost. At around 09:30 PM, Israeli forces, two jeeps of Army and one Border Police, arrived on the spot, asking to the Palestinians what happened. At around 10:10 PM, the Israeli forces left the area.

On February 17, at around 2:40 PM, a settler from the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on followed a shepherd who was grazing his sheep in the Palestinian land of Humra. When a jeep of Israeli Army (#184877) arrived on the spot, the settler run against the shepherd, and started to harass him and the Palestinians activists present on the spot, threatening them with a stick. At around 3:30 PM, a second jeep of Army (#534157) arrived on the spot. After a while, at around 4 PM, the two Army jeeps went away.

On March 10, at around 11:40 PM, a group of settlers from the Israeli illegal outpost of Havat Ma'on came near the first house of the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani. The settlers point against the Palestinians strong lights and push them to go away. Then, Israeli forces reached the spot and spoke with the settlers while the Palestinian had already leave the area.

On March 19, Israeli settlers destroyed several olive trees - older than 30 years- belonging to a Palestinian family from Susiya village.

On March 19, in the morning, Israeli settlers attacked with dogs Palestinian shepherds in the village of Susiya.

On March 27, at about 1 PM, Israeli settlers from Havat Ma'on outpost attacked Palestinian shepherds and activists in Humra valley, At Tuwani village. One of the settlers threatened with a gun the shepherds who were grazing their flocks on their own land. One Palestinian injured by settlers dog's bite.

On March 28, in the morning, a group of Israeli settlers coming from Havat Ma'on illegal outpost assaulted two Palestinian human rights activists in Kharrouba valley, nearby At Tuwani village, while they were accompanying two Palestinian minors from Tuba village to their homes. The settlers prevented the group of people from continue their walk to Tuba village. Shortly after the settlers attacked throwing stones to the first Palestinian house of At Tuwani village, Havat Ma'on side.

Settlement expansion



On January 14, the Israeli Civil Administration planted about 900 trees on Palestinian land close to the Israeli settlement of Carmel.

On January 16, Israeli forces led by a settler built a military tower on Palestinian land just outside Havat Ma'on illegal outpost, Zelega/Old Havat Ma'on hill side.

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 first months of the 2020. Here below there are the most serious cases recorded:

On February 10, in the morning, the Israeli military escort didn't come. OD Volunteers decide to accompany Palestinian children from the Israeli chicken barns in Tuba village side to the school in At Tuwani. Two children did not go to school because they were frightened.

On February 10, in the afternoon, the Israeli soldiers didn't show up. OD Volunteers and young Palestinian human rights activists accompanied the school children at home in the village of Tuba. While they were returning, an Israeli settler from Havat Ma'on outpost prevented them to continue on the road, also with the presence of the Israeli Army that were arrived in the meanwhile. The soldiers asked the ID's of the Palestinian activists, detained them, and released them shortly after. They didn't ask any form of identification to the settler.

On March 3, in the afternoon, the Palestinian children waited more than one hour the Israeli military escort.

PALESTINIAN POPULAR STRUGGLE

On January 3 a group of Palestinian, Israeli and International activists organized a nonviolent action of restoration of the Palestinian ancient water spring of Ein Al Beyda, located near the junction between the Israeli bypass road 317 and the road that leads to the Israeli outpost of Avigayil. At around 7:30 AM the group of activists reached the spring and at 7:59 AM the first Israeli army jeep (#534157) arrived. The group cleaned the area of the spring, putting new signs. At around 8:15 AM, an Israeli DCO car (#8179986), two Israeli army jeeps (#655597, #617006) and one Israeli police car (#42120) reached the spot. The group moved up to the hills to plant 15 olive trees. At 8:42 AM, another Israeli army jeep (#184334) and border police jeep (#655655) are arrived on the spot. At 9:30 AM an two Israeli police cars (#42149, #42125) reached the area. At around 10:30 AM the nonviolent action ended and the activists came back to At Tuwani village. In the following days Israeli settlers damaged the Palestinian signs and uprooted some olive trees as “price tag” vandalism act.