

Weekly Focus:
Escalation of settler violence
12 – 18 September

22/09/2011
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Background

The recent rapid escalation in violent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank is alarming. During the last two weeks, Al-Haq's field researchers have monitored and documented 25 incidents of settler attacks against Palestinians and their property, most of them in the north of the West Bank (see [interactive map](#)). The most recent incidents include physical assault, arson and stone-throwing.

(For further analysis of the escalation in settler violence read Al-Haq's recent [Open Letter to the High Contracting Parties of the Four Geneva Conventions](#) and the brief on [The Price Tag Policy](#).)

Physical assault

On 14th September at around 12.20am settlers from Yizhar settlement attacked four Palestinians on a road south of Nablus. After forcing them from their car, the settlers beat the driver and the two passengers severely before setting fire to the vehicle. All three Palestinians suffered injuries and had to be taken to hospital.

On 16th September at 9.30am, nine settlers from the Eish Qodis outpost near Qusra village positioned themselves close to a well on the land of Fathallah Abu-Reida. One of the settlers was armed with an M-16 rifle and another had a large dog. According to one witness the settlers were preparing to swim in the well.

The owner of the land and his three sons approached the settlers and asked them to leave. They refused and threatened to set the dog on Fathallah and his sons. When other residents arrived to help their neighbours, the settlers fired shots into the air. The residents surrounded the settlers in an attempt to make them move towards the road but the settlers released the dog and one resident fell and broke his leg as he tried to escape. The settlers opened fire again and Fathallah was struck in the leg by a bullet that ricocheted off a rock.

At around 10am, six jeeps carrying Israeli soldiers arrived. They fired tear gas at the Palestinians forcing them to move away before removing the settlers from the area. Fathallah was taken to hospital for treatment to his leg (see Al-Haq Affidavits No. 6629/2011, 6630/2011, 6631/2011).

Arson attacks

Six arson attacks were also carried out by settlers last week. In one incident on 12th September, settlers from the Migron outpost attacked the property of Najah Sarma in the village of Deir Dibwan, north-east of Ramallah. Two cars and a truck were set on fire (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 6626/2011).

On the same day, a group of settlers attacked the house of Sayel Ibrahim Ma'tan from Burqa village, east of Ramallah. They set fire to two cars and spray-painted slogans in Hebrew saying "Revenge against Arabs" on the outside wall (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 6627/2011).

On 14th September, a group of settlers set fire to agricultural land between the villages of Kufr Qaddoum and Jet, east of Qalqilya. Hundreds of olive trees were burnt before the community-run fire service were able to reach them and extinguish the flames. Although the area is situated in Area C, and so is under Israeli civil administration, it is not provided with any such public services (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 6628/2011).

Stone-throwing

In a number of separate incidents settlers threw stones at Palestinian cars traveling close to the settlements of Shilo, Qedumim and Hfad Gil'ad on the main roads between Nablus, Qalqilya and Ramallah. Several cars were damaged and two Palestinians were hospitalized after they were forced from their taxi and struck with stones.



The burnt remains of the truck set on fire by settlers in Deir Dibwan - Al-Haq 2010 ©