



Christian Peacemaker Teams

School Semester Report January - May 2019

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Contents

Introduction: Access to Education	3
Taleen's Story	4
Incidents during School Time	5
Qortoba School	7
Al-Haj Ziad Jaber School	
Qitoun Checkpoint	8
Salaymeh Checkpoint	9
Checkpoint Privatization	10
Confiscation of Car Keys	
Harassment of Observers	11

Introduction: Access to Education

“When we are still in bed, or we are preparing ourselves for our day and our kids are heading out of their homes to go to school, CPTer’s are standing by the Israeli checkpoints in the early morning to keep an eye on our kids and make sure that they get to school safely.” Palestinian shopkeeper in Hebron Old City

One young Palestinian told CPT: “Every morning I wake up and ask myself, what can I do to make my day? After a while, I found that education is the way for me to feel that I am achieving something in my life. Even if I end up like some other Palestinians who hang their educational certificate on the wall and go work in a factory - at least I have done something.”

A joint statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator, UNICEF Special Representative, and UNESCO on January 30, 2019 said: “From January to December 2018, the UN documented interferences to education in the West Bank affecting 19,196 children, an average of more than two violations every week. More than half of the verified incidents involved live ammunition, tear gas, and stun grenades fired into or near schools by Israeli Forces, impacting the delivery of education or injuring students. Nearly two-thirds of all verified interference incidents in West Bank schools took place in the last four months of 2018.”

Because of the value that Palestinians place on education, along with the human right of access to education, CPT Palestine has an ongoing commitment to accompany students and teachers and document the human rights violations they face. Constant Israeli military patrols, checkpoints, and settlers in the Old City result in daily human rights violations. Members of CPT live in the community of al-Khalil (Hebron) to document these violations, standing in solidarity with Palestinian efforts to resist the occupation and claim their rights, dignity, and freedom.

Christian Peacemaker Teams Palestine¹ has accompanied Palestinians who face daily human rights violations living in al-Khalil (Hebron) since 1995. CPT Palestine documents the human rights violations that Palestinian children face when they walk to school as Israeli forces conduct bag searches, detentions, and arrests.² CPT maintains a regular presence at two military checkpoints in H2 al-Khalil (Hebron): Qitoun / Abu Rish (checkpoint 209), Salaymeh (checkpoint 160). This report documents incidents from January to May 2019, which were witnessed by CPT or given to CPT as first-hand accounts.³



Taleen's Story

“I am scared to go to school sometimes because there are soldiers in the street. Soldiers might attack me, and I might not be able to come back home,”

says 7-year-old Taleen.

Taleen lives in al-Khalil (Hebron) right next to Salaymeh Checkpoint 160, which is an area with significant Israeli military activity. Although the school is not far from Taleen's home, most of the time she is scared to go.

“In her earliest years, Taleen was very normal and carefully observed even the smallest things,” says Taleen's mother. “However, as she grew and developed the need to move and play games, that's when we found the struggle.” Taleen started to talk later than most children, at the age of three. In kindergarten, her teachers noticed that Taleen couldn't understand information in the same way as her classmates.

Alongside developmental delays, Taleen suffers from fear, insecurity, and social anxiety. She struggles to get along with her classmates and focus on her studies. She cannot sleep at night and has frequent nightmares. The only place to play is in the street, but Taleen is afraid to go outside. She keeps watching television and does not engage with people and other children from outside her house.

The Israeli military checkpoint is very close to her house; as a result, Taleen changes her route to school whenever she sees soldiers or hears loud sounds. At times, she will stay at school and not go back to her house. Even if she is at home in her room, she is still sometimes affected by the smell of teargas, causing her to panic.

Taleen's teacher referred her family to Doctors Without Borders, who help children with trauma. Doctors Without Borders provided Taleen with counseling, speech, and occupational therapy. After six months of therapy, Taleen's fears have decreased, and she has started to go out in the street by herself and play with other children.

Taleen's story is not an isolated one. Palestinian children are exposed to violence from an early age and often suffer from emotional and psychological distress, including recurrent nightmares and bed-wetting. Over 77% of Palestinian students in Hebron show symptoms of moderate to severe post-traumatic stress disorder. After the expulsion of TIPH in January 2019, OCHA reported “increased tension in H2 and exacerbated protection risks, including those resulting from human rights violations, facing Palestinian residents, particularly school children.”

In an interview at one of the schools in H2 Hebron, teachers shared some of the struggles that their students face: lack of sleep, feeling insecure, and not being able to focus in class. The following report depicts some of the challenges that students and teachers encounter.



Incidents During School Time

20 March

Salaymeh Checkpoint 160

Child Arrests: 1

Osama was with his friends near the schools in the Salaymeh neighborhood when Israeli soldiers rushed down from the checkpoint, grabbed Osama, pushed him into a military vehicle, and drove away. After almost an hour, the military vehicle returned, and the soldiers released Osama.

7 May

Salaymeh Checkpoint 160

Child Arrest: 1

Israeli soldiers held 15 year-old Wisam behind the side gate at Salaymeh checkpoint as children were leaving their schools in the afternoon. A few of Wisam's relatives and neighbors began to gather nearby, but the soldiers forcibly pushed them back from the area. After 20 minutes, soldiers handcuffed Wisam and forced him into the back of a military vehicle.

16 April

Qitoun Checkpoint 209

Teargas Canisters: 25

Stun Grenades: 25

As students were leaving school, uniformed and plainclothes Israeli military forces were outside Qitoun checkpoint. The plainclothes military personnel were taking photos of Palestinians and human rights observers, and the uniformed military began firing teargas canisters and stun grenades. Teachers hurried students from a nearby kindergarten into school buses, and other schools held students inside until the military left.

8 May

Salaymeh Checkpoint 160

Teargas Canisters: 2

Child Injuries: 3

Adult Injuries: 2

Two Palestinian members of CPT were monitoring for human rights violations at Salaymeh checkpoint when an Israeli soldier started verbally harassing them. The soldier then threw a teargas canister towards the Palestinian human rights observers, which ricocheted off a vehicle and into a Palestinian home.

Due to the thick teargas inside the house, it was difficult for anyone to enter to help, but eventually the father was able to pull out the rest of his family: wife, and three children aged 3 months, 1.5 years, and 13 years old. An ambulance took the family to the hospital where they received treatment for excessive tear gas inhalation, especially the 1.5 year-old child who had asthma.



2 May
Salaymeh Checkpoint 160
Child Arrests: 1
Child Detentions: 1
Adult Arrests: 1
Human Rights Observer
Arrest: 1
Teargas Canisters: 20
Stun Grenades: 5

Fawzi and Saadi had traveled from Jerusalem to visit their family in Hebron and were near schools in the Salaymeh neighborhood as classes were letting out. At the same time, Israeli soldiers began firing teargas and stun grenades at young children in front of their schools. The soldiers then gathered in front of Khadij Beni Khaled school and detained Fawzi and Saadi while the school principal and another community member attempted to intervene. Israeli soldiers handcuffed the Palestinian man who attempted to advocate for the children, pushed him into a military vehicle, drove away, and later released him.

After almost an hour of detention in front of the school, the soldiers took Fawzi and Saadi up the street and through the military checkpoint. Israeli forces did not allow members of CPT and another human rights organization to pass through the checkpoint, and instead questioned them, ordered them not to take photos, and confiscated their IDs. The lieutenant eventually detained one human rights observer and brought her to the area with Fawzi and Saadi. A different commander arrived, interrogated Fawzi, and then released him. The commander subsequently interrogated Saadi, handcuffed him, and pushed him into a military vehicle. Israeli forces transported Saadi and the human rights observer to the police station, and they were both released six hours later.



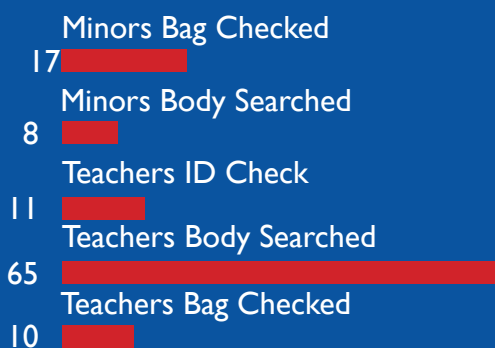
Along with the checkpoints that CPT regularly monitors, school principals from two additional areas requested the accompaniment of CPT this semester. Qortoba School is located in the Tel Rumeida neighborhood in Hebron’s Old City and has 163 students aged 6 to 13. Most children who attend Qortoba School must pass through Tel Rumeida Checkpoint 55 on their way to school. The second school, al-Haj Ziad Jaber School, serves 304 children between the ages of 6 and 13. This school is located close to the large Kiryat Arba Israeli settlement on the edge of al-Khalil (Hebron).

Qortoba School

On several occasions in February 2019, Israeli settlers Ofer Hanna, Anat Cohen, and others invaded Qortoba School to film and harass the students and teachers. These incidents, in combination with the expulsion of TIPH and the withdrawal of EAPPI, prompted Qortoba School and members of the Tel Rumeida community to request CPT accompaniment.

“When I was going to school, Ofer stopped me and harassed me by saying bad words to me,” says Haithman, a 12-year-old student at Qortoba School. “Another day, he drove so fast with his van towards a 6-year-old girl, causing her to fall down. Fortunately, the teacher reached the girl and rescued her. I already feel like my home is a prison, since I can’t play outside because of the settlers, and now my school is another prison.”

The following are some of the incidents that CPT observed at Tel Rumeida Checkpoint 55 near Qortoba School and Shuhada Street Kindergarten. These numbers are incomplete due to the fact that there were some days that CPT did not have a clear view of the checkpoint because of incidents that required members of CPT to stand in different locations around the checkpoint area.



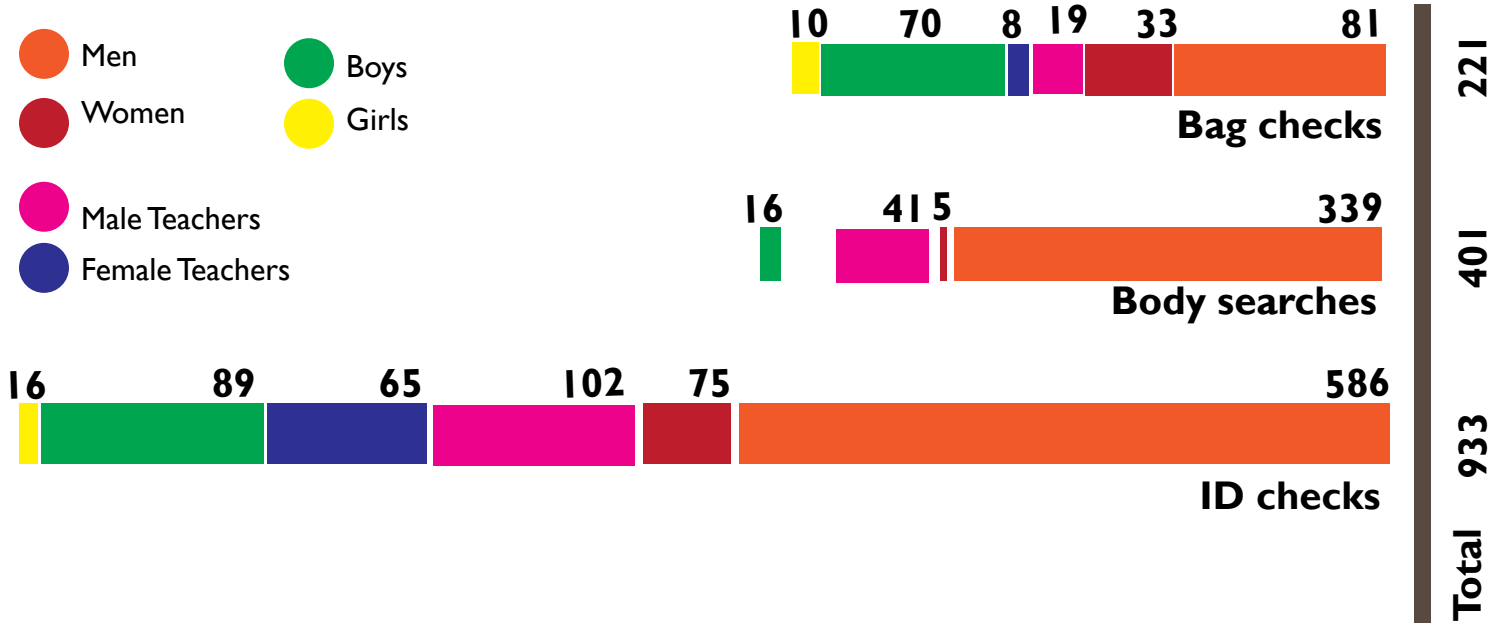
Number of violations by Israeli forces against Palestinians during CPT monitoring

Al-Haj Ziad Jaber School

On 9 April 2019, Israeli soldiers forced their way into al-Haj Ziad Jaber School and captured a 10-year-old boy, claiming that he had been throwing stones. The principal and teachers were unable to intervene for the boy’s release. “The school is very close to settlers and soldiers, so incidents are more likely to happen,” says the principal. “The school built iron nets to better protect the children, but now the school looks like a prison. How could you blame a 10-year-old child when he sees soldiers with their huge guns and jeeps, provoking the children and threatening their teachers, for feeling afraid and sensing the need to defend himself, even with small stones?”

Following this incident, members of CPT met with the principal who stated that the presence of international human rights organizations had an impact in terms of decreasing attacks from Israeli soldiers and settlers. The principal observed that since the expulsion of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), the number of attacks from Israeli forces had increased. At the request of the school, CPT maintained a presence near al-Haj Ziad Jaber School for two weeks in May 2019. No major incidents happened during that time, so CPT concluded their accompaniment and resumed being on-call for any emergencies that the school may report.

Qitoun Checkpoint



Ali, 13 years old, student at al-Khalil Elementary School

“Whenever we hear a strong sound, like the explosion of teargas, we keep asking our teachers: ‘Are there any soldiers outside the school?’ We keep wondering: ‘What if that was teargas? How are we going to leave and go back home?’ Once the teargas went inside the school, so we couldn’t stay inside - we had to leave through the windows. We’re never able to focus on what the teacher is talking about during class.”

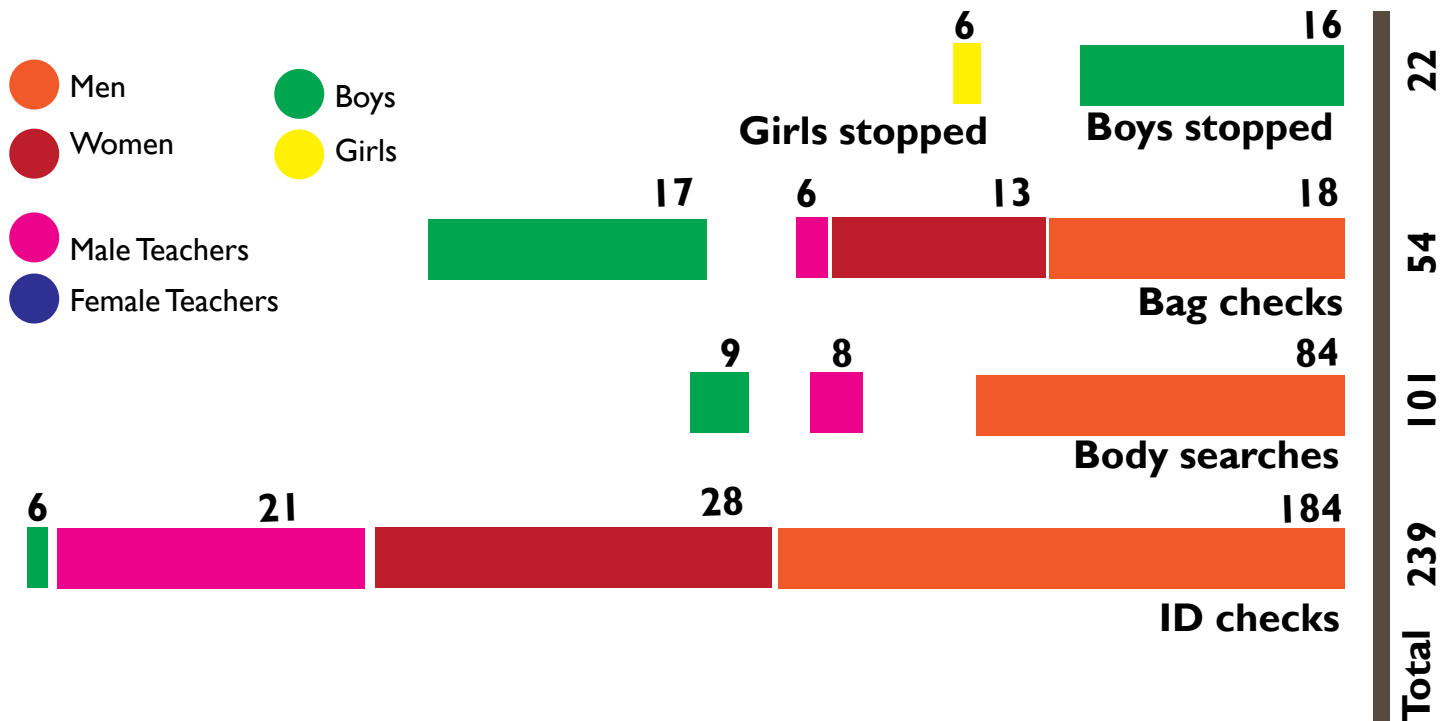
Average number passing through:

Boys - 57	Girls - 39
Male teachers - 3	Female teachers - 5
Men - 24	Women - 7

Use of force - 4 incidents

Stun grenades - 30
 Teargas - 31

Salaymeh Checkpoint



School principal in H2 Hebron

“Teachers have to go through checkpoints every day. Some of the students also pass through the checkpoints, however, most will go to the back entrance of the school from their neighborhoods when the checkpoints are closed. This involves different safety concerns for women and girls.

“The girls would often come to school very tired and unable to learn during Jewish holidays because of the extremely loud music played all night during the festivals, as well as late-night attacks on homes in the neighborhood. Some students reported trying to sleep hidden under their beds out of fear. Sometimes the students would miss school altogether.”

Average number passing through:

Boys - 59	Girls - 45
Male teachers - 2	Female teachers - 3
Men - 34	Women - 7

Use of force - 24 total incidents

Stun grenades - 76
 Teargas - 197
 Rubber bullets - 1 incident
 Live ammunition - 1 incident

Checkpoint Privatization

In April 2019, three major checkpoints (including Salaymeh Checkpoint 160 and Qitoun Checkpoint 209) in the Old City of al-Khalil (Hebron) were surrounded with wooden planks and large signs saying “Welcome to the Crossing” in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. The Hebron Municipality has shared a concern that this is likely a starting point for the privatization of these checkpoints. The danger of these checkpoints being turned over to the private security sector is that they will be treated as official border crossings between two countries, and not as part of the daily route of Palestinians living in one city. There is community concern that Palestinians will be dealing with increased body searches, bag searches, ID checks, and use of force. Read CPT’s full report [here](#).



Confiscation of Car Keys

On three occasions in April, CPT witnessed a distinct tactic used by Israeli forces in which they confiscated the car keys of Palestinian drivers passing through the Salaymeh neighborhood. All three of these incidents took place in the morning as children were going to school, and soldiers were firing stun grenades and teargas canisters towards children and adults. Israeli soldiers stopped between four and eight cars in each case, sometimes checked the drivers’ identification, and either confiscated the keys immediately or ordered the drivers to specifically position their cars before confiscating their keys. The Israeli soldiers then took up defensive positions behind the Palestinian cars and continued firing stun grenades and teargas in the direction of the schools. This continued for 10 - 60 minutes, depending on the incident, before the soldiers returned the keys to the drivers and went back to the checkpoint.

In one of these incidents, by request of a Palestinian driver, a member of CPT asked the Israeli soldiers if they could return the car keys to the drivers. The soldier responded that they would do so, once the children stopped throwing stones. This Israeli military practice of confiscating car keys and using Palestinians as a human shield is also, admittedly, a form of collective punishment, which is illegal under international human rights law.⁴

Harassment of Observers

“I do not care whether you live or die.”

Israeli soldier speaking to CPT human rights observer

While accompanying the Palestinian community and monitoring human rights violations during the times that children were going to and from school, members of CPT endured significant harassment from Israeli settlers and military personnel. Members of CPT experienced 48 incidents of harassment at Salaymeh Checkpoint 160 and 20 incidents of harassment at Qitoun Checkpoint 209 throughout this semester. These incidents ranged from Israeli soldiers ordering CPT monitors not to take photos to Israeli settlers physically assaulting CPT human rights observers.

Israeli forces regularly asked members of CPT to show their ID, and oftentimes took photos of the ID on their personal phones. The Israeli military also attempted to prevent CPT monitors from documenting human rights violations on occasion by ordering them to move away from an incident, not take videos, and delete photos. One member of CPT was also subject to gender-based verbal harassment from Israeli soldiers. Palestinian members of CPT were especially targeted by the Israeli military, facing discrimination that ranged from Israeli forces performing extra ID checks to soldiers firing teargas directly at them.

Particularly in the wake of TIPH's expulsion from Hebron, Israeli settlers have acted more violently towards both Palestinian community members and human rights observers. Settler Ofer Ohana regularly came to the military checkpoints where CPT was monitoring and would drive dangerously close and aggressively film members of CPT. Furthermore, on multiple occasions, settler Anat Cohen physically assaulted members of CPT while they were monitoring during school times.

Notes and Additional Resources:

1- Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Palestine is a faith-based human rights organization that supports Palestinian-led, nonviolent, grassroots resistance to the Israeli occupation and the unjust structures that uphold it. By working with local Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers and educating people in our home communities, we strive to help create a space for justice and peace. CPT Palestine monitors the human rights violations that occur on a daily basis in the Israeli-occupied Old City of al-Khalil (Hebron) and in the villages of the South Hebron Hills.

2- Definitions and Key Terms

CPT defines detention as any or all of the following three circumstances:

1. A delay for more than 20 minutes for an adult or five minutes for a child.
2. When a person is moved without their consent to a military base.
3. When a person is searched, questioned, or physically restricted (eg. with a blindfold or zip ties).

CPT defines arrest as an incident in which the detainee is moved and taken into custody at an Israeli police station.

CPT rejects the Israeli paradigm of security and anti-terrorism and thus we do not use the term Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), but rather Israeli Military Forces or Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF).

3- We recognize that CPT cannot be present for all incidents that occur in the community, therefore, this report details only a sample of violations committed by the Israeli occupying forces and illegal Israeli settlers against the Palestinian community.

Our limitations are as follows: (1) incidents occur across an area of several kilometers and at any time of day, and our limited human resources prevent us from being physically present; (2) Israeli occupying forces maintain hundreds of obstacles and checkpoints throughout the Old City that slow or completely prevent access to areas where incidents occur.

4- Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states: “No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.”