

# Das Schweigen brechen

(Breaking the Silence / Shovrim Shtika)

Die Besetzung der Gebiete:  
Zeugnisse israelischer Soldaten 2000 - 2010

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## Geleitwort

Mit *Die Besatzung der Gebiete: Zeugenaussagen israelischer Soldaten 2000-2010* betritt der medico-Partner *Breaking the Silence* politisches Neuland. Bislang dokumentierte die israelische Reservistenorganisation lediglich die Informationen über die alltäglichen Realitäten in den besetzten Palästinensergebieten. Die israelische Gesellschaft sollte aufgerüttelt und das Schweigen über die alltäglichen Erniedrigungen in den palästinensischen Gebieten gebrochen werden. Basierend auf umfassenden Zeugenaussagen von mehr als 700 Soldatinnen und Soldaten, die im Laufe von sechs Jahren gesammelt wurden, unternimmt *Breaking The Silence* jetzt erstmalig den Versuch, die Politik zu durchleuchten, die den anhaltenden Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Besatzung zugrunde liegt. Die Ergebnisse sind bedrückend: Die militärischen Autoritäten suggerieren der israelischen Öffentlichkeit, dass die eigene Armee allein das Ziel verfolgt, die israelische Zivilbevölkerung zu schützen. Tatsächlich dient sie gleichfalls einer immer ausgefeilteren Kontrolle aller Lebensaspekte der Palästinenser. Obwohl der offizielle Sprachgebrauch eben dieser israelischen Öffentlichkeit vorgaukelt, lediglich einen geordneten Rückzug unter Berücksichtigung legitimer Sicherheitsinteressen im Sinn zu haben, entlarvt *Breaking The Silence* die tatsächlichen Absichten der israelischen Administration, die die Armee unablässig zur aktiven Veränderung des Status Quo und zur Verdrängung der palästinensischen Bevölkerung einsetzt.

Die israelische und die palästinensische Bevölkerung leiden unter der unmittelbaren Gewalt von militärischen Operationen und Terroranschlägen. Beide Gesellschaften werden durch die strukturelle Gewalt der seit über vier Jahrzehnten andauernden militärischen Besatzung der palästinensischen Gebiete in Mitleidenschaft gezogen. Die Menschen beider Gesellschaften – in Palästina, wie auch in Israel – sind bei aller Unterschiedlichkeit ihrer Lebensverhältnisse auch Opfer eines Konflikts, der sie längst zu seinen Gefangenen gemacht hat und sie einschließt in jenen ungleichen Positionen und Rollen, die die gegebenen Machtverhältnisse ihnen zuweisen. medico international unterstützt *Breaking The Silence* dabei die eigene Gesellschaft auf diese Verhältnisse aufmerksam zu machen; eine Vorbedingung für die Fähigkeit der Zivilgesellschaft die bestehenden Ungerechtigkeiten auch überwinden zu können. Gerade in diesen Tagen erscheint uns die Unterstützung dieser Initiativen wichtiger denn je.

Die hebräische Originalausgabe von *Die Besatzung der Gebiete: Zeugenaussagen israelischer Soldaten 2000-2010* ist 347 Seiten stark. Im Folgenden finden Sie das allgemeine Vorwort und die Einleitungen zu den vier Buchkapiteln in deutscher Sprache. Dazu ausgewählte Zeugenaussagen in englischer Sprache (Aus Copyrightgründen konnten nicht alle hier wiedergegeben werden). Zum besseren Verständnis hat die Redaktion an manchen Stellen weiterführende Erklärungen in die Zeugenaussagen eingefügt, die durch Klammern [...] gekennzeichnet sind.

*Das Team von medico international*

## Einleitung

Mit der Veröffentlichung des Buches, **Die Besatzung der Gebiete: Zeugnisse israelischer Soldaten 2000 – 2010**, werden die zehn Jahre seit Ausbruch der Zweiten Intifada dokumentiert. Die israelische Organisation „*Breaking the Silence*“ interviewte Hunderte Soldaten und Soldatinnen, die Zeugnisse dieser Männer und Frauen enthüllen die Operationsmethoden der israelischen Truppen im Westjordanland und im Gazastreifen sowie deren Auswirkungen auf die Menschen in den besetzten Gebieten – Palästinenser, Siedler und die Soldaten selbst. Diejenigen, die Israels Mission in den besetzten Gebieten ausführen – die israelischen Streitkräfte (*Israeli Defence Forces* – IDF) – enthüllen hier in nie dagewesener Detailtreue Prinzipien und Auswirkungen der israelischen Politik in den besetzten Gebieten. Die Beschreibungen der Soldaten vermitteln einen Einblick in die den israelischen Operationen zugrunde liegende Logik. Die Zeugnisse lassen keinen Raum für Zweifel. Auch wenn der israelische Sicherheitsapparat in den letzten zehn Jahren tatsächlich mit konkreten Bedrohungen, einschließlich terroristischer Angriffe auf israelische Bürger, zu kämpfen hatte, so können die Operationen israelischer Sicherheitskräfte keinesfalls als rein defensiv bezeichnet werden. Oftmals führen sie durch die Enteignung palästinensischer Häuser und Ländereien dazu, dass systematisch große Gebiete im Westjordanland faktisch an Israel gehen. Die in der israelischen Gesellschaft weitverbreitete Annahme, dass die Kontrolle über die besetzten Gebiete alleine dem Schutz der israelischen Bevölkerung dient, wird durch die Aussagen hunderter IDF- Soldaten vehement bestritten.

In den Medien, in internen Diskussionen und in militärischen Beratungen verweisen israelische Sicherheitskräfte und staatliche Organe beständig auf vier Komponenten israelischer Politik in den besetzten Gebieten: „Terrorprävention“ oder „Schutz vor feindlichen terroristischen Aktivitäten“ (Hebräisch: *sikkul*), „Separation“, d.h. Israel trennt sich selbst von der palästinensischen Bevölkerung (*hafradah*), die Notwendigkeit die „palästinensische Lebensstruktur“ (*mirkam hayyim*) zu bewahren und „Rechtsdurchsetzung“ (*akhifat hok*) in den besetzten Gebieten. Die israelischen Sicherheitskräfte benutzen hier Begriffe, die bestimmte Komponenten israelischer Politik in den besetzten Gebieten definieren sollen, in Wirklichkeit beschreiben sie jedoch die benannte politische Praxis und ihre Auswirkungen nur sehr einseitig und verzerrt.

Die Begriffe, die zunächst beschreibenden Charakter hatten, wurden schnell zu Codewörtern für Handlungen, die nichts mehr mit der ursprünglichen Bedeutung der Begriffe zu tun haben.

Dieses Buch beschreibt Teile israelischer Politik in den besetzten Gebieten, die israelische Institutionen nicht öffentlich machen. Die Schilderungen der Soldaten und Soldatinnen in diesem Buch sind von höchster Glaubwürdigkeit, da hier nicht nur Zeugen israelischer Politik zu Wort kommen, sondern diejenigen, deren Aufgabe es war diese Politik umzusetzen und sie, auf mehr oder weniger ausdrücklichen Befehl, zu vertuschen. Das Buch ist in vier Kapitel unterteilt, entsprechend der vier israelischen Codeworte: „Prävention“, „Separation“, „Lebensstruktur“ und „Rechtsdurchsetzung“.

Das erste Kapitel enthält Zeugenaussagen, die sich auf das Konzept „Prävention - Schutz vor terroristischen Aktivitäten“ beziehen. Die Zeugen führen in diesem Kapitel aus, dass fast jeder militärische Einsatz in den besetzten Gebieten als präventiv gilt. Hinter der freizügigen Interpretation des Begriffs verbirgt sich die Einschätzung, dass jeder Palästinenser und jede Palästinenserin verdächtig ist und eine Gefahr für die israelischen Sicherheitskräfte und die israelische Bevölkerung darstellt. Indem man die palästinensische Bevölkerung einschüchtert, soll die Gefahr verringert werden, dass Palästinenser sich gegen israelische Sicherheitskräfte auflehnen, was wiederum terroristischen Aktivitäten vorbeugen soll. Die Prävention dient als Rechtfertigung von Maßnahmen wie Schikanen gegenüber Palästinensern an den Checkpoints, der Beschlagnahme von Eigentum, Kollektivstrafen, Umbau und Blockaden von Zugangsstrassen (beispielsweise durch fliegende Checkpoints) und für die willkürliche Änderung der Vorschriften (je nach Laune des Checkpointkommandanten). Durch die Anwendung des Begriffs „Prävention“ auf fast alle militärischen Operationen, verschwimmt Stück für Stück der Unterschied zwischen offensiven und defensiven Handlungen. In anderen Worten: Fast jedes militärische Vorgehen gegen die palästinensische Bevölkerung kann als berechtigte defensive Operation bezeichnet werden.

Die Zeugenaussagen im zweiten Kapitel befassen sich mit der Politik der „Separation“. Zu-

nächst scheint das Prinzip "Separation" zu implizieren, dass durch die klare Trennung zwischen dem israelischen und dem palästinensischen Teil der Bevölkerung israelische Staatsbürger in Israel und in den besetzten Gebieten am effektivsten verteidigt werden können. Die Zeugnisaussagen in diesem Kapitel zeigen, dass die Politik der Separation nicht nur eine Trennung zwischen den beiden Bevölkerungsgruppen bedeutet, sondern auch eine Trennung zwischen und innerhalb der palästinensischen Communities. Diese Separation ermöglicht es Israel die palästinensische Bevölkerung zu kontrollieren, die palästinensische Fortbewegung israelischen Kontrollmechanismen zu unterwerfen und neue Grenzen zu schaffen. Die vielen Auflagen und Vorschriften, die Palästinenser einhalten müssen, um sich im Westjordanland bewegen zu können, führen zur Einschränkung der Bewegungsfreiheit von Palästinensern und trennen die Communities innerhalb des Gebietes voneinander. Die oft willkürlichen und unendlich bürokratischen Labyrinth sind nicht weniger effektiv als die physischen Barrieren. Die israelische Politik der Separation entlarvt sich als "Teile und Herrsche" Politik.

In diesem Kapitel sprechen die Soldaten auch über die Trennung der Palästinenser von ihrem Land. Als Form der Separation kann schon die Existenz der israelischen Siedlungen und der sie umgebenden Region bezeichnet werden. Es ist Palästinensern verboten diese Gebiete zu betreten, die oft auch ihre eigenen landwirtschaftlichen Flächen einbeziehen. Die Sicherheitsbarriere [Anm. d. R.: auch „Mauer“ genannt, im Hebräischen in der Regel als „Trennungszahn“ definiert] besteht aus vielen Elementen und hat einen dreifachen Effekt: Sie trennt Palästinenser von Israelis, Palästinenser von Palästinensern und Palästinenser von ihrem Land. Die Grenzziehung wird nicht allein auf der Basis defensiver Erwägungen und entlang der Identität der Bevölkerungsgruppen bestimmt sondern vielmehr an offensiven Überlegungen festgemacht. Überlegungen, die Gebiete betreffen, die Israel gerne innerhalb der eigenen Gerichtsbarkeit sehen würde.

Unter den Maßnahmen, die Palästinenser erfolgreich von ihrem Land vertreiben und damit die Ausdehnung israelischer Staatshoheit ermöglichen, sind zu nennen: Checkpoints, Straßen, die von Palästinensern nicht betreten werden dürfen, Verbote für Palästinenser sich innerhalb des Westjordanlands von einem Ort zum anderen zu bewegen. Die Schilderungen der Soldaten in diesem Kapitel belegen deutlich, dass "Separation" nicht die Politik des Rückzugs aus den besetzten Gebieten meint, sondern vielmehr eine Politik der Kontrolle und der Enteignung und Annexion von Land bedeutet.

Das dritte Kapitel befasst sich mit den Aussagen der Soldaten, die das palästinensische Leben unter israelischer Besatzung beschreiben. Offizielle israelische Vertreter unterstreichen immer, dass Israel weder den Zugang der palästinensischen Bevölkerung zu lebensnotwendigen Bedürfnissen behindere, noch humanitäre Krisen auslöse. Im Gegenteil, Israel ermögliche sogar eine palästinensische "Lebensstruktur" in den besetzten Gebieten. Behauptungen wie diese, wie auch die Behauptung wirtschaftlichen Wohlstands im Westjordanland, sollen glauben machen, dass das Leben unter fremder Besatzung erträglich ist, und dass darüber hinaus die Besatzung kein Hindernis für ein angenehmes Leben darstellt. Auf der Basis dieser Behauptungen beharren die Verteidiger israelischer Politik darauf, dass die Besatzung ein vertretbares Mittel der Verteidigung ist. Wenn denjenigen, die unter der Besatzung leben, Schaden zugefügt wird, so ist das bedauerlich, aber verhältnismäßig, denn es dient der Sicherheit israelischer Zivilisten.

Die Tatsache, dass die palästinensische Bevölkerung auf die Gnade Israels angewiesen ist, um ihr Leben führen zu können, macht das Maß deutlich, in dem palästinensisches Leben von Israel abhängt. Wenn Israel nötigenfalls eine humanitäre Krise im Gazastreifen abwenden kann, dann hat Israel auch die Macht, eine humanitäre Krise zu schaffen. Die Behauptung, Israel wäre in der Lage eine palästinensische "Lebensstruktur" zu ermöglichen, zeigt deutlich wie absolut die Kontrolle Israels über die Palästinenser ist. Die Zeugen in diesem Kapitel beschreiben die vielfältigen Abhängigkeiten der Palästinenser von den israelischen Behörden.

Israelische Behörden entscheiden Tag für Tag welche Güter von Stadt zu Stadt transportiert werden, welche Gewerbe eröffnet werden, wer die Checkpoints und die Absperrereinrichtungen passieren darf, wer seine Kinder zur Schule schicken kann, wer erfolgreich an die Universität gelangt und wer angemessene medizinische Versorgung erhält. Israel hält immer noch das Privateigentum von zehntausenden von Palästinensern unter seiner Verwaltung. Dies wird manchmal mit vorgeblichen Sicherheitserwägungen begründet, manchmal mit der Annexion von Land. In vielen Fällen scheint die Entscheidung palästinensischen Besitz zu konfiszieren völlig willkürlich. Häuser, landwirtschaftliche Flächen, Fahrzeuge, elektronische Geräte, Nutzvieh – alle diese Dinge können auf Anweisung eines regionalen Befehlshabers oder eines einfachen Soldaten beschlagnahmt werden. Manchmal "konfiszieren" IDF-Soldaten auch Menschen für Truppenübungen. Soldaten stürmen mitten in der Nacht ein Haus, verhaften einen Bewohner und lassen ihn dann wieder frei – um die Verhaftung von Menschen zu trainieren.

Dieses Kapitel dreht sich um Willkür und die befristete „palästinensische Lebensstruktur“.

Das vierte und letzte Kapitel des Buchs dokumentiert Zeugenberichte, die das duale Regime in den besetzten Gebieten beschreiben. Während die palästinensische Bevölkerung in weiten Teilen militärischen Verordnungen unterliegt, sind die Siedler israelische Staatsbürger. Folglich unterliegen sie wie alle anderen Bürger in erster Linie der zivilen Gesetzgebung, die eine demokratisch gewählte Legislative passieren muss und von Polizeikräften durchgesetzt wird. Die palästinensische Bevölkerung, die durch israelische Militärverordnungen beherrscht wird, die von Soldaten durchgesetzt und stets verändert werden, unterliegt nicht einer gesetzlichen Instanz, die sie und ihre Interessen repräsentiert. Vielmehr ordnet sie sich unter angesichts der Bedrohung durch eine überlegene militärische Übermacht.

Aus den Berichten der Soldaten in diesem Kapitel wird auch die Rolle der Siedler deutlich, die teilweise aktiv dazu beitragen, dass die palästinensische Bevölkerung unter militärischer Herrschaft leben muss. Siedler besetzen öffentliche Posten und sind permanente Partner in militärischen Beratungen und Entscheidungen, die das Leben der Palästinenser in den Siedlungsgebieten betreffen. Siedler, die im Verteidigungsministerium als Koordinatoren für die Sicherheit in den Siedlungen arbeiten, legen die täglichen Pläne vor und bestimmen, wo die Grenzen der Siedlungen verlaufen. Sie beteiligen sich sogar an militärischen Briefings für Soldaten in den Gebieten. Der Status der Siedler ist in den Augen der Sicherheitskräfte so hoch, dass gewalttätige Übergriffe gegenüber Palästinensern nicht als Gesetzesbruch geahndet werden. Die Sicherheitskräfte sehen die Siedler nicht als Zivilisten, die sich dem Gesetz unterordnen müssen, sondern als mächtige Gruppierung mit übereinstimmenden Interessen. Selbst wenn die Interessen der Siedler denen der Sicherheitskräfte entgegenstehen, so sehen sie sich doch am Ende des Tages immer noch als Partner in einem gemeinsamen Kampf. Die Gewalt von Siedlern gegenüber Palästinensern ist nur ein weiteres Mittel, mit dem Israel Kontrolle über die palästinensische Bevölkerung in den besetzten Gebieten ausüben kann. Wenn es zu Konflikten zwischen Siedlern und Sicherheitskräften kommt, werden diese meist durch einen Kompromiss aus dem Weg geräumt. Tatsächlich kommen die Sicherheitskräfte den Wünschen der Siedler, zumindest teilweise, im Normalfall entgegen.

In Kapitel vier werden die zwei Regime – militärisch und zivil – in den besetzten Gebieten be-

schrieben. In ihren Berichten schildern die IDF-Soldaten wie diese Regime sich gegenseitig beeinflussen und welche Auswirkungen sie auf Siedler und Palästinenser haben, die sich ihrer Autorität unterordnen müssen. Aus den Zeugenaussagen geht hervor, dass die Unfähigkeit Recht und öffentliche Ordnung durchzusetzen nicht an der Unfähigkeit der Polizei liegt. Der Grund für die mangelnde Rechtsdurchsetzung sei vielmehr darin zu suchen, dass die Sicherheitskräfte Siedler nicht wie normale Bürger behandeln sondern als Partner, wenn es darum geht, die palästinensische Bevölkerung unter Kontrolle zu halten. Im Gegenzug stärken die Sicherheitskräfte die Siedler in ihren politischen Anliegen: der Annektierung großer Teile der besetzten Gebiete zum tatsächlichen Nutzen der Siedler.

„Prävention“, „Separation“, „Lebensstruktur“ und „Rechtsdurchsetzung“ sind beispielhafte Begriffe, mit denen israelische Behörden bestimmte Elemente israelischer Politik in den Palästinensergebieten besetzen. Diese Begriffe vertuschen jedoch statt zu erklären, sie verpacken israelische Politik in eine defensive Terminologie, die mit der Realität nicht viel zu tun hat. Die IDF-Soldaten schildern in den hier zitierten Berichten, dass die israelische Herrschaft in den besetzten Gebieten nicht nur der Sicherheit israelischer Bürger nützt. Sie zeigen auch, dass das Ziel israelischer Aktivitäten in den Palästinensergebieten nicht die Aufrechterhaltung des Status Quo ist, sondern im Gegenteil seine Aufhebung.

Israel enteignet mehr und mehr Land und seine militärische Überlegenheit erlaubt ihm alle Ebenen palästinensischen Lebens zu kontrollieren. Israelische Regierungsvertreter versuchen den Eindruck zu erwecken, dass Israel sich langsam, mit der angemessenen Vorsicht und unter Berücksichtigung der Sicherheitslage aus den palästinensischen Gebieten zurückzieht. Im Widerspruch dazu sprechen die IDF-Soldaten vom unermüdlichen Bestreben Israels seinen Zugriff auf die besetzten Gebiete und die palästinensische Bevölkerung immer weiter zu verstärken.

Wir bestehen darauf, dass die Codewörter, die die öffentliche Diskussion in Israel sterilisieren, durch Begriffe ersetzt werden, die die israelische Politik im Gazastreifen und im Westjordanland zutreffender beschreiben. Wir rufen alle Israelis auf, sich diesen klaren und zugänglichen Informationen zu stellen, den Blick direkt auf das eigene Tun zu richten und die Frage zu stellen, ob unsere Handlungen mit unseren Werten übereinstimmen.

Prävention

## Kapitel 1:

# Einschüchterung der palästinensischen Bevölkerung – “Prävention”

Seit Ausbruch der Zweiten Intifada im September 2000 sind mehr als 1.000 Israelis und 6.000 Palästinenser getötet worden. Die erhebliche Eskalation der Gewalt zwischen Palästinensern und Israelis, sowohl in den besetzten Gebieten als auch in Israel, hat dazu geführt, dass der israelische Sicherheitsapparat neue, aggressivere Methoden entwickelt hat. Mit diesen neuen Methoden sollte die palästinensische Opposition unterdrückt und tausende Angriffe auf israelische Zivilisten und Soldaten auf beiden Seiten der Grünen Linie [Anm. d. R.: Die Grenze von 1967, die zwischen Israel selber und den besetzten Gebieten trennt] verhindert werden.

Dieses Kapitel befasst sich mit der offensiven und aktiven militärischen Vorgehensweise der IDF-Soldaten in den besetzten Gebieten in den letzten zehn Jahren. Die hier vorliegenden Zeugnisse bestreiten jedoch die Behauptung der israelischen Sicherheitskräfte, dass ihr Vorgehen der Terrorismusprävention gilt. Es wird deutlich, dass der Begriff „Prävention“ von Seiten der Sicherheitskräfte sehr großzügig definiert wird, er wurde zum Codewort, das alle Offensiven in den Palästinensergebieten begründet und rechtfertigt. Die Schilderungen in diesem Kapitel zeigen, dass viele offensive Handlungen von Seiten der IDF keineswegs die Prävention bestimmter Terrorakte zum Ziel hatten sondern vielmehr der Bestrafung, der Abschreckung oder der erhöhten Kontrolle über die palästinensische Bevölkerung dienen. „Terrorprävention“ ist ein Freibrief für jede Offensive der IDF in den besetzten Gebieten. Die Unterscheidung zwischen der Anwendung von Gewalt gegen Terroristen und der Anwendung von Gewalt gegen Zivilisten schwimmt dabei völlig. Die IDF rechtfertigt so jedes Vorgehen, das dazu dient die palästinensische Bevölkerung einzuschüchtern und zu unterdrücken. Die Zeugenberichte in diesem Kapitel zeigen auch, welche katastrophale Auswirkungen auf das Leben, die Würde und den Besitz der Palästinenser das Ausblenden dieser Unterscheidung hat. Die Militäreinsätze, die dieses Kapitel beschreibt, beinhalten Verhaftungen, Beschlagnahme von Wohnhäusern und vieles mehr.

Die Zeugen enthüllen auch Prinzipien und Überlegungen, die für die Entscheidungsträger vor Ort und auf hoher Kommandoebene ausschlaggebend sind. Schon vor Beginn der Zweiten Intifada hatte die IDF die Doktrin „Bewusstsein einbrennen“ entwickelt, ein Leitfadensystem für neue Formen des Kampfs gegen die palästinensische Opposition. Diese Doktrin geht davon aus, dass der palästinensische Widerstand schwinden wird, sobald die Palästinenser sich durch und durch darüber bewusst sind, dass Opposition zwecklos ist. Die Berichte in diesem Kapitel demonstrieren, dass die Doktrin „Bewusstsein einbrennen“ nichts anderes bedeutet als Einschüchterung, das Erzeugen von Angst und willkürliche Bestrafung der palästinensischen Bevölkerung. In anderen Worten, die Schilderungen zeigen, dass Gewalt und Kollektivstrafen gegenüber der Zivilbevölkerung zum Einen mit der Doktrin vom „Einbrennen in das Bewusstsein“ gerechtfertigt wird und das beides Ecksteine der IDF-Strategie in den besetzten Gebieten sind (siehe Zeugenaussagen 1 und 2).

Eine der Methoden der IDF in den besetzten Gebieten, die sehr häufig mit „Prävention“ in Verbindung gebracht wird, ist die Politik der Tötungen. Die IDF hat wiederholt behauptet, dass sie sich Tötungen als letztes Mittel gegen diejenigen vorbehält, die Terrorakte planen und durchführen. Die Zeugenaussagen der Soldaten machen jedoch deutlich, dass die Aktionen des Militärs in den letzten zehn Jahren nicht mit den offiziellen Statements gegenüber Medien und den Gerichten übereinstimmen. Mehr als einmal wurden Einheiten ausgesandt um Tötungen durchzuführen, obwohl es andere Optionen gab, wie zum Beispiel die Verhaftung der Verdächtigen (Zeugenaussage 10). Außerdem wird in diesem Kapitel deutlich, dass zumindest ein Teil der Tötungen der Rache oder der Bestrafung dienen und nicht notwendigerweise der Verhinderung terroristischer Aktivitäten.

Ein Zeuge beschreibt die „Tötung“ unbewaffneter palästinensischer Polizeibeamter, die in kei-

ner Weise unter Terrorverdacht standen (Zeugenaussage 55). Laut Breaking the Silence war der Grund für diese Tötung die Rache für den Mord an Soldaten am Tag zuvor, der von palästinensischen Aktivisten aus der gleichen Gegend begangen worden war.

Andere Zeugnisse beschreiben das Prinzip „den Preis zahlen“. Dabei handelt es sich um Missionen deren Ziel es ist, mit einem Kommandanten zu sprechen um „Leichen heim zu bringen“ (Zeugenaussage 55).

Ein weiterer elementarer Bestandteil bei der „Terrorprävention“ in den besetzten Gebieten sind Verhaftungen. Im Laufe des letzten Jahrzehnts wurden Zehntausende Palästinenser während der militärischen Einsätze verhaftet, die fast jede Nacht tief in palästinensischem Gebiet durchgeführt wurden. Die Zeugenaussagen von Soldaten beschreiben die Methoden, die bei solchen Verhaftungen angewandt wurden: In vielen Fällen sind Verhaftungen begleitet von der Misshandlung gefesselter Gefangener, die von Soldaten und Befehlshabern geschlagen und erniedrigt werden. Die Soldaten schildern in ihren Aussagen auch die verschiedenen Ziele von Verhaftungen und dass in vielen Fällen den Verhafteten der Grund für die Verhaftung unklar blieb. Beispielsweise wurden im Zuge der vielen Operationen der IDF in palästinensischen Dörfern und Städten alle Männer gefangengenommen und auf einem bestimmten Areal versammelt, ohne dass es irgendeinen Hinweis auf Vergehen gab. Die Männer wurden nicht über ihr weiteres Schicksal informiert und mit verbundenen Augen stundenlang gefesselt festgehalten. So wird im Namen der „Terrorprävention“ zum einen Angst unter der palästinensischen Bevölkerung geschürt und zum anderen die militärische Kontrolle Israels verschärft.

Die Verhaftungen sind oft begleitet von der Zerstörung palästinensischer Infrastruktur und palästinensischen Eigentums oder seiner Beschlagnahmung. Die Zeugen schildern, dass Zerstörung in vielen Fällen das Ergebnis von Fehlern oder von militärischen Notwendigkeiten ist. In anderen Fällen wiederum werden Zerstörungen mit Absicht von Soldaten oder Befehlshabern durchgeführt oder von höheren Kommandoebenen angeordnet. In jedem Falle ist die Zerstörung von Infrastruktur und Besitz zu einem Werkzeug geworden, um die Palästinenser in den besetzten Gebieten zu kontrollieren.

Das Eindringen in und die Kontrolle über die palästinensische Privatsphäre wurde in den letzten zehn Jahren zur gängigen Praxis. Fast jede Nacht dringen IDF-Kräfte in die Häuser und

Wohnungen palästinensischer Familien ein und bleiben dort über Tage oder sogar Wochen hinweg. Dieses Vorgehensmuster läuft unter dem Namen „Strohwitwe“, Ziel ist es Stellungen zu erobern und zu halten sowie Aussichtspunkte zu schaffen, um die Kontrolle der IDF in den Palästinensergebieten zu verbessern.

Die Zeugnisse belegen, dass das Ziel bei der Übernahme eines Hauses oft nicht die Verhinderung von Gewalt ist, sondern die Schaffung von Konflikten. Einige der Zeugen berichten von „Köder“-Missionen, deren Ziel es ist, bewaffnete Palästinenser aus ihren Verstecken auf die Straße zu locken, damit die bewaffneten Kräfte sie anschließend angreifen können. Die Aussagen der Soldaten machen deutlich, dass es bei den Aktivitäten der IDF-Einheiten oft nicht um die Verhinderung von Auseinandersetzungen geht sondern, im Gegenteil darum, Konflikte bewusst zu schaffen.

Außer Tötungen, Verhaftungen und Zerstörung berichten die Soldaten in diesem Kapitel auch über die Methodik der Einschüchterung und der Bestrafung, die unter dem Slogan „Präsenz zeigen“ praktiziert wird. „Präsenz zeigen“ ist eine der gängigsten Vorgehensweisen der IDF um die Angst in der palästinensischen Bevölkerung zu schüren. Eine der offensichtlichsten Formen des „Präsenz-Zeigens“ in den besetzten Gebieten ist das nächtliche Patrouillieren in palästinensischen Städten und Dörfern. Während der Patrouille werden die Soldaten durch die Gassen und Straßen eines palästinensischen Dorfs geschickt, um dort auf verschiedenste Art „ihre Präsenz zu zeigen“: Sie schießen in die Luft, werfen mit Knallkörpern, schießen mit Leuchtkugeln und Tränengas, fallen in Wohnhäuser ein und verhören Passanten. Feldkommandeure nennen diese Patrouillen „gewalttätige Patrouille“, „Einschüchterung“ oder „Störung der Normalität“. Die Zeugnisse besagen, dass das „Zeigen von Präsenz“ in den besetzten Gebieten häufig und anhaltend praktiziert wird, ohne dass es Informationen von Geheimdiensten über spezifische terroristische Aktivitäten gibt. Die Befehle „Präsenz zu zeigen“ machen deutlich, dass die IDF in jedem Mitglied der palästinensischen Bevölkerung – ob er oder sie in oppositionelle Aktivitäten verwickelt ist oder nicht – ein Ziel für Einschüchterung und Schikane sieht.

„Scheinoperationen“ sind ein weiteres Beispiel, sie haben „die Störung der Normalität“ zum Ziel. Militäreinheiten dringen in Wohnhäuser ein und verhaften Palästinenser zu Übungs- und Ausbildungszwecken. Sie nehmen palästinensische Dörfer ein, um die Soldaten für den Krieg

unter urbanen Bedingungen zu drillen. Die verhafteten Palästinenser, deren Dörfer von der IDF eingenommen wurden, haben keine Chance zu sehen, ob es sich hierbei um Scheinoperationen handelt oder nicht. Solche Scheinoperationen dienen laut Definition ausschließlich zu Übungs- und Ausbildungszwecken, und nicht dazu, gesuchte Personen festzunehmen oder Angriffe zu verhindern. Die Aussagen der Soldaten besagen auch, dass diese Scheinoperationen immer häufiger wurden seit weniger Gewalt von Palästinensern ausgeht und die Angriffe auf israelische Soldaten und Zivilisten zurückgehen.

Der Missbrauch des Begriffes „Prävention“ findet seinen Ausdruck auch in militärischen Aktivitäten, die darauf abzielen unbewaffnete Opposition gegen die Besetzung der Palästinensergebiete zu unterdrücken. Im Laufe der letzten Jahre haben sich einige palästinensische Basisprotestbewegungen in den besetzten Gebieten entwickelt, oft in Zusammenarbeit mit israelischen und internationalen Aktivisten. Diese Bewegungen leisten in unterschiedlicher Form gewaltfreien Widerstand. Etwa in Form von Demonstrationen, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit oder auf gerichtlicher Ebene. Die so genannte „Prävention“ der IDF dient auch dazu, diese Bewegung zu unterdrücken. Dabei wird gegen Protestierende mit Gewalt vorgegangen: Politische Aktivisten werden verhaftet, und in Dörfern, in denen politische Aktivitäten stattfinden, werden Ausgangssperren verhängt.

Die vielfältigen Ziele und Phänomene, die dieses Kapitel behandelt, sind Teil der Logik, die den Aktivitäten der IDF der letzten zehn Jahre in den besetzten Gebieten zugrunde liegt. Das gesamte Vorgehen der IDF basiert auf der Überzeugung, dass es nicht notwendig ist zwischen feindlichen Kombattanten und feindlichen Zivilisten zu unterscheiden. Die Konzepte „Bewusstsein einbrennen“ und „Präsenz zeigen“ machen diese Logik am deutlichsten: Allen Palästinensern gleichermaßen systematisch Schaden zuzufügen macht die palästinensische Bevölkerung gehorsamer und leichter beherrschbar.



Soldier standing at a post in a Palestinian house. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Hebron,



Soldier preparing for a 'demonstration of presence' Batir, 2004



Palestinian detainees during 'Operation Defensive Shield' Photo by S. Bloomberg, Ramallah, 2002



Palestinian detainee on a military base. Nablus, 2004



Palestinian detainees in an IDF vehicle. Nahal Brigade, 80th Battalion

## Ausgewählte Zeugenaussagen

# 01 I didn't know what a "demonstration of presence" really meant

unit: Paratroopers • location: South Hebron Hills • year: 2001

They gave instructions to do some patrol inside I think it was [the Palestinian West Bank city of] Yata.

### Is that what's called "a demonstration of presence?"

A demonstration of presence.

### Was it an order? Would you do it all the time?

No, that's it...I didn't get to do it a lot. There were a few specific cases. Meaning I got to do a demonstration of presence once or twice, but that specifically I know it wasn't OK, I'll explain right away. When we went in, we went in with that officer and another officer, and us. I personally as a soldier knew that there was an order to do a patrol, to do a "demonstration of presence." I didn't know what a "demonstration of presence" really meant. They went in, like basically all of us went in...we had an APC [armoured personnel carrier] and a security patrol jeep if I'm not mistaken, and they fired rounds. Like the officers were... one was on the APC, you know, he aimed the APC so he had a MAG machine gun. We also fired our weapons sometimes...the officer would fire some more.

### Fire in the air? Live rounds?

No, at houses, at garbage cans, things like that.

### Shooting at home means at the walls, the windows?

Both. Garbage cans, water heaters, things like that. Now the thing is, what became clear after the fact, we later heard on the radio, someone reported that he heard the shots from Yata or the village that we were in, I don't remember. So, no one knew... meaning they knew we were there, and they asked if I saw something, so the officers said: "No." Apparently, I wasn't near the radio at that point, but when we returned after the fact they said, the deputy company commander asked: "What, how could it be you didn't hear anything there, they fired off a rounds like crazy". So they said they didn't hear anything. And basically it seems that they

weren't supposed to fire a single bullet, it was really meant to be a patrol with the APC, you know, just for show.

# 02 Stun grenades at three in the morning

unit: Paratroopers • location: Nablus District • year: 2003

We had all kinds of situations of very dubious work in Area A [i.e. under the control of Palestinian Authority]. If that means going in on Friday, when the market is packed, in [the Palestinian West Bank city of] Tubas for example, to make a check-post – a surprise checkpoint – in the middle of the village. One time, we arrived to make a surprise checkpoint like that on Friday morning, and we started to spread out as if at a checkpoint: inspecting vehicles and every car that passed. 300 meters from us a small demonstration of kids who were throwing rocks started, but they went maybe ten meters, and weren't hitting us. They starting cursing us and everything. At the same time people start gathering. Of course it was followed with the aiming of weapons at the kids, you can call it self-defence.

### What was the point of the checkpoint?

To show the presence of the IDF inside the village. Inside the village, where the women go shopping, where the children play, just to show presence, and to enter a fire-fight, which within a second we didn't know if we would get it there. In the end we got out without a scratch, without anything happening, but the company commander lost it. He asked one of the grenade launchers to fire a riot control grenade toward the demonstrators, the children. The grenade launcher refused, and afterwards he was treated terribly by the company commander. He didn't receive a punishment because the company commander knew it was an illegal order, but he was treated really disgustingly by the staff. In the end that's how it ended. Another story was going into Tubas at three in the morning in a Safari, with stun grenades and just throwing in the street. For no reason, waking people up.

**For what purpose?**

"We are here. The IDF is here." In general, they told us that some terrorist, if he were to hear the IDF presence in the village then maybe he would leave. He never left. It seems that the objective was just to show the local population that the IDF is here, and it's a policy which repeats itself: "The IDF is here, in the territories, and we'll make your life bitter until you decide to stop the terror." The IDF have no problem with it. We, the ones who were throwing the grenades didn't understand why we were doing it. We threw a grenade. We heard the "boom" and we saw people waking up. When we got back they said to us: "Great operation," but we didn't understand why. It was every day. A different force from the company each time, part of the routine. Not an especially positive way of life...

# 10

I couldn't believe how an order to kill someone could be carried out in a minute

unit: special forces • location: Gaza strip • year: 2000

The story which brought me here, happened in Gaza. After these two incidents, I think there was a period at the beginning of the intifada where they assassinated people with helicopters, a huge media frenzy because sometime it would miss and kill other people. They decided to send people in, ground forces, and we started to get ready.

**This was at the beginning of the intifada?**

Yes, it was at the beginning of the intifada. Until then there were a few assassinations with the help of helicopter missiles, from a media perspective...I remember there was a mess because there were offense and the hit others and they informed us they were going to do a "ground elimination operation".

**Is that the terminology they used? "Ground elimination operation"?**

I don't remember. But I do know that we knew in was going to be the first operation of the in-

tifada. That was very important for the commanders and we started to train for the operation, the plan was to catch a terrorist on his way to Rafah, block him in the middle of the road and eliminate him.

**Not to stop him?**

No, a straight elimination, targeted. The operation was cancelled and a few days later they informed us an operation was going out but we were going on an arrest-operation. I remember the disappointment that we were going to arrest him instead of something revolutionary, out of the ordinary in combat, changing the phase – instead we were going to arrest him. The operation was planned... Can I have a pen and paper?

**Yes.**

(Drawing) this is the road, here is where the APC regularly sits. We were supposed to relieve the guys in the APCs and when the car arrived, then intelligence from the drone, cross here with an armored truck, crossing the road, there are also dirt paths here from the bases, and inside the armored truck there is a hole on top and there is a step for the soldiers to pop their heads out of the truck like in the A-Team [US TV series], and basically block the road here, he'll stop here and shoot at him from here.

**To shoot at him or to arrest him?**

I'm now talking about the first plan – to arrest him. When everyone goes out (of the truck) like that with their weapons to stop him, to say "get out of the car" and that's it. Very simple. When there are jeeps here, they're meant to be security jeeps and something pretty massive. And that's it, we went out on the operation, when I...

**Which force are you in?**

I'm in this force, two soldiers and the operations commander – here.

**Do you have a sharpshooter's rifle?**

No, M16. There is another vehicle which I don't remember where it was located.

**What kind?**

A jeep or an APC. In the end, we were waiting inside the APC, we have Shin Bet [Israel's internal security services] agents with us and we hear updates from intelligence and it was amazing: "He's sitting in his house, drinking coffee, he's going downstairs, saying hi to the neighbour", all kinds of stuff like that. "He's going back up, coming down, saying this and that, opening the trunk," really details, "opening the trunk, picking up a friend" – he didn't drive, someone else drove, they said his weapon was in the trunk. We knew he didn't have the weapon with him in the car, which made the arrest much easier. At least it reduced my stress,

because I knew that if he would run to the trunk to take out the weapon, they would shoot at him. It was reasonable to assume he wouldn't do it.

**With which force did the Shin Bet agent sit, with the jeeps?**

With me. In the APC. He didn't see. Maybe there was also a Shin Bet agent here, I don't remember. We were in contact with command and they informed us that in he would arrive in another five minutes, another four minutes, another minute, then a change in order, apparently from the brigade commander: elimination operation. A minute before. They didn't prepare for it. The prepared for a kind of unexpected if maybe he didn't have a weapon – a minute before it's an elimination operation.

**Why do you say apparently from the brigade commander?**

I think it was the brigade commander. Thinking about it after the fact the whole operation seems to me to have been a political trick by our commander trying to get the extra point of the first elimination operation and the brigade commander trying...everyone wanted it, everyone was very "hot" for it. The car enters, and not according to plan, really their car stopped here and before it another car here. This is the car we need, and another car comes into the section. From what I remember we had to shoot, he was three meters from us. We had to shoot and after they stop the cars, I fired from three meters through the scope and there were crazy amounts of noise from gunfire, crazy. And then this car, the moment we started shooting, starting running in this direction.

**The car in front?**

No, the terrorist's car started running, apparently when they shot the driver his leg locked and the gas and it started flying. The gunfire increased and the commander next to me is yelling "hold your fire, hold your fire" and I see they're not stopping. The people get out and run from the cars and from the security jeep, they shoot some rounds and go back. Crazy bullets for a few minutes. "Hold your fire" and then they stop. In that car, the car before it, they fired tens, if not hundreds of bullets.

**Are you saying it because you checked afterwards?**

Because we carried the bodies. The Shin Bet brought the bodies. There were three people and nothing happened to the person in the back. He got out of the car, looked around, raised his hand and the two bodies in front of him were hacked to pieces. He sat in back.

**In the car with the suspect?**

Yes. I checked afterwards, I counted how many bullets I had left – I shot ten bullets. It was so terrifying: more and more and more noise. It happened within a second and a half. And then

they took out the bodies, we carried the bodies with us, I have no idea why. We went to a debriefing, I'll never forget when they took them out on the base, I don't remember which one, and we're standing two meters away in the shape of a Het [Hebrew letter – meaning surrounding a point from three sides], the bodies are full of flies, and we're having a debriefing. The debriefing was "Great job, we succeeded. Someone shot the wrong car and we'll do the rest on the base." We went back to base, I'm in total shock from the bullets I saw, from the crazy noise that was there. We looked at the video, everything was documented on video for the debriefing. In the debriefing I saw all of the things that I told you, the people running, it's clear, the minute of gunfire, I don't know if it was 20 seconds or a minute, but it was hundreds of bullets and it was clear that everyone died but the gunfire continued and the soldiers ran from the security detail, fired a few bullets and ran back. They showed it during debriefing and I see a group of blood thirsty men firing crazy amounts of bullets, at the wrong car too. The video was just awful and then the unit commander gets up who we'll still be hearing a lot from.

**What does that mean?**

He'll be a General Officer Commanding a region or the Chief of Staff (one day) and he says "The operation was not carried out perfectly, but the mission was accomplished, we received a call from the Chief of Staff, the Security Minister and the Prime Minister" – we're all happy, we're getting compliments, it will raise the unit and the operations it'll get and "great job." The debriefing was just cover-up after cover-up.

**Meaning?**

Meaning they don't stop everything and say "three innocent people died." Maybe there was no choice with his driver, but the other two?

**Who were they really?**

During that time I had a friend in a course at the Shin Bet, I remember he told me about the jokes that the terrorist was a nobody. Apparently he was active in the shooting, and the other two were just unrelated. What shocked me, was the day after the operation in the newspapers, (it said) that "a secret unit killed four terrorists", and for each one there is a story, where he came from, what he was involved in, what operations are in his past. And I know that in the Shin Bet base, the jokes are spreading about what a nobody they killed and the other two aren't even connected and in the debriefing itself, I'm going back a bit, they didn't even deal with it.

**Who did the debriefing?**

The unit commander. They didn't deal with it. That's the first thing I thought I would hear, that

something bad happened, that we went on the operation to eliminate one and we eliminated four. I thought everything would stop and he would say "I want to know who shot at the first car. I want to know why A-B-C ran from the vehicle just to take part in the bullet party." And it didn't happen at all. At that point I understood that it just doesn't bother them. These people do their own thing and it doesn't bother them. The next day, when the operation was published in the newspapers – I was in shock.

#### **Did the guys talk about it?**

Yes. With the exception of two others with whom I could talk to and tell them that I don't understand how it happened... (...) The second guy was really shocked but it didn't bother him to continue. It also didn't bother me to continue. It was only after I was released from the army, I understood. No, even in the army I understood that something very bad happened and I didn't know how it would affect me. When I was released from the army, I couldn't believe that I got to the point of shooting at people. It's not practical and it's field security but I couldn't imagine myself taking an order to kill someone with knowing who it is. I don't know how I got to that point. And today I'll even say, even if it was Osama Bin Laden I wouldn't shoot him. I couldn't believe in shooting other people. On our way back the Shin Bet agents were happy like kids who came back from camp.

#### **What does that mean?**

They were so pleased, hi-fiving and hugging. Lost in themselves. Smiling, they didn't even participate in the debriefing it didn't interest them. I couldn't believe how an order to kill someone could be carried out in a minute. What exactly was the politics of the operation? How did my commanders, no one admitted that the operation failed? It failed so much that the gunfire was so widespread that those who were in the truck got shrapnel from the bullets. They just shot at them, at the truck itself. It was a miracle we didn't kill each other. They didn't mention it.

## 11 A death sentence for an unarmed man

unit: Paratroopers • location: Nablus • year: 2002

We grabbed a controlling house, made posts, one of the sharpshooters identified a man on the roof, two roofs away, I think it was between fifty and seventy meters from him, unarmed. I looked at the man through the night vision, he was unarmed. It was two in the morning. An unarmed man walking on the roof, walking around. We reported it to the company commander. The company commander said: "Take him down." (The sharpshooter) fired, took him down. The company commander, \*\*\*, decreed, decided on the radio, a death sentence for that man. An unarmed man.

#### **You saw he was unarmed?**

I saw it with my own eyes the guy was unarmed. The report was also: "an unarmed man on the roof." The company commander declared him a lookout, meaning that he understood there was no threat from the guy, and he gave the order to kill him and we shot him. I personally didn't shoot him, my friend shot and killed him. And basically you think, if you see in the United States when there is a death penalty, for every death sentence there are like a thousand appeals and convictions and they take it very seriously and there are judges and learned people and there are protests and whatever. Basically a 26 year old guy, my company commander, pronounced a death sentence on an unarmed man. Who is he? What do you mean a lookout? And even if he was a lookout? So what, you have to kill him? And how did he know he was a lookout? He doesn't know. He received a report on the radio about an unarmed man on the roof, and he gave the order to kill him, which I think is an illegal order, and we carried out the order, we killed him. The man died. And listen, to me it's murder. And that's not the only case. He would laugh about it, we had code names: "The lookout", "The drummer", "the woman", "the old man", "the boy", and what was the other one? I'll remember later.

#### **And these are all people you killed?**

They are people we killed. Oh, "The baker".

## 13 He took down an eleven year old boy

unit: paratroopers • location: Jenin • year: 2003

Some take it like this and some like that. There are people who...OK, I killed a kid, OK. They laugh. Yes, now I can draw a balloon on my weapon. A balloon instead of an X. Or a smiley (soldiers draw an x on their weapon for every kill). Some people take it hard. I remember that during squad commander training I was in Jenin, let's say, we were in a "Straw Widow" (a house which soldiers secretly took control of), and everyone who climbs on Israeli APCs or armoured vehicles – shoot to kill. And the aim of all this was to have people climb. Because you have APCs under the house all the time. They tell us of course that the aim is to make the wanted men come out. But what wanted man would shoot at an APC just like that? They also say that if they jump on the APC and take the machine guns...shoot to kill. And then a friend of mine came with his M24, a sniper's weapon, and a kid just climbed. He shot, all happy – I took someone down. And then they told him he took down an 11 year old kid or something like that. He took it very hard.

**He killed someone, so he was happy. Why?**

Yes, because you prove yourself. You're a man.

**Do they know he is unarmed?**

He's unarmed for sure and he climbs it...No one asks you why you have two Xs on your weapon and if they were armed and this was done by procedure. It can be two Molotov throwers and it's still two Xs.

## 14 Her limbs were smeared on the wall

unit: Givati • location: Gaza strip • year: 2008

There was an operation of the company next to me in which they told me that a woman was blown up by a "fox" [explosives that are used to break through doors and walls] and her limbs were smeared on the wall it and it wasn't on purpose. They knocked on the door a lot and there was no answer so they decided to open it with live ammunition. He [one of the soldiers] placed a "fox" and right at that moment she decided to open the door. And then her kids came and saw her. I heard it during dinner after the operation, someone said it was funny, and they cracked up from the situation that the kids saw their mother smeared on the wall. That's an example. I was also screamed at by my platoon in the heavy APC when I thought about giving the detainees that were with us in the bridge of the heavy APC water, from the platoon's water container, the field kit water, a large 24 litre canteen. They said to me "what, are you crazy?" I don't know what their reason was but they said: "diseases, seriously." In Nahal Oz there was an incident in which [Palestinian] kids whose parents apparently sent them to try and infiltrate Israel because the families are hungry in order to try and find food or I don't know what. Everything like that, is a pursuit, fresh turkey. We did a patrol at Nahal Oz. There were I think 14-15 year old boys there, I remember a boy sitting blindfolded and then someone who is known as an idiot came and hit him here. On the legs. And he spilled some oil used to clean a weapon on him, I don't remember where.

**Did something happen with it?**

He did it in the center of the company but no officer saw it. I said something to him at that moment, but I didn't scream at him and I didn't tell my officer that he did this and that. Theft was very common. Souvenirs, flags, cigarettes.

**The commanders and the officers didn't pay attention even though it was common?**

I think they did and if not, my company commander knew because I told him.

**And what did he say?**

That it's good I brought it to his attention.

**And did it end?**

I don't think so. It didn't end.

**You mentioned before the issue of slaughtering animals.**

It was during one of the operations in the heavy APC, even in the first one I think. The company sergeant major of the company, was the commander of one of the APCs, and there were horses and sheep there, maybe even donkeys and he also sprayed bullets at the window with the MAG machine gun and maybe even ran over, I don't remember. He shot the animals.

**Did anyone ask questions?**

No it wasn't in my APC but I know about it.

**How do you know about it? Can you repeat the story?**

The whole company was in the APC in the area there, in the homes where the operation was – first of all I think we saw dead sheep, things get mixed up in my head. Someone told me that someone shot them. During the operation we talked about what happened and he told me about the shooting of the sheep. It wasn't something that I needed to verify, it didn't seem illogical that it happened.

**Was it a onetime occurrence?**

I think so.

## 29 The investigator gave him a deadly beating

unit: Nahal • location: unspecified • year: 2001

At the beginning we had prisoner interrogators from \*\*\* [intelligence unit], they were at the beginning of the incidents. They were very patriotic reservists. Yeah, and they were on our team. What did they do? They beat people up. A lot. Terrible slapping, hard shakes, yelling, scaring. To us they were the Shin Bet agents and they knew what they were doing. Sometimes they crossed the line in my eyes.

**Like what?**

Like some ear ringing slaps to someone claimed they have no idea about something, about where his brother is. Crazy slaps. Crazy. He broke his jaw, I think. Really, in my life I had never seen it, and I've seen a lot.

**Where did it happen?**

It happened at the end of 2001. I really don't remember. We were searching for his mwanted brother, and he didn't know where he was. The interrogator took him to a side room and gave

him a deadly beating. Crazy slaps. And he argued that he didn't know. So either he survived the interrogation or he really didn't know. One of the two.

**Did you encounter things like that a lot? Was it routine?**

Yes, it was pretty...it was dependent upon the interrogator. There are more violent interrogators and there are less violent interrogators. There are interrogators who speak quietly and frighten and there are interrogators who yell like crazy. The Arabists on the team didn't serve as interrogators, meaning they wouldn't apply moderate physical force on the one being interrogated. They spoke with them in Arabic, made announcements in their home, spoke Arabic, trying to understand the situation.

**Not beyond that?**

No. We are an ethical army.

## 33 Moving human shield

unit: Civil administration • location: Bethlehem district • year: 2002

I'm not getting into the description right now of the day to day, because if you spoke with soldiers who served in the field you certainly know all the games of there is/there isn't electricity in the village, and shooting at the water containers and "hours on exit" at the checkpoints [i.e. detaining Palestinians at the checkpoints for offences which are not reported to the police] and other things like that. That every soldier who served in the territories knows and knows that it has become a kind of norm. What I will [talk about] there are two incidents which upset me, A because they were very serious in my eyes, and B because they were done by officers in the paratroopers. One was done by captain \*\*\*, and the other a first lieutenant, when the captain was a company commander in the paratroopers. The majority of the complaints came to us in the end, they flowed to us. I'm talking about a complaint that came to us one day that at the entrance to the [Palestinian] village Tuku', an entrance that we weren't at and because of it, it happened, because we weren't at the entrance. They went in without telling us, the

soldiers, which is completely against the directives. A totally unbelievable complaint: IDF soldiers tied a Palestinian to the hood of the jeep and drove with him through the roads of the village. The complain just seemed so illogical. We turned to their operations room, they said: "We'll look into it and get back to you." It never happened. We said to them: "it never happened." They said to us: "yes, it happened, look into it." It was illogical, but a complaint like that, you can't make it up. You can make up a complaint about a delay at a checkpoint, but this is such a seemingly outrageous complaint, that apparently it happened, it can't be they made something like that up. My commander, a lieutenant colonel, together with another officer went out there.

#### **Were you there?**

I was at the DCO [District Coordination Office of the Israeli Civil Administration of the oPt] and I was in the investigation and I know the guy that did it and everything, and in the end he admitted it. They went there, and again we got the response that it never happened. We started investigation, started speaking with soldiers. Apparently that captain went out to Tuku', which is a pretty hostile village, they threw stones at the jeep. He just stopped a 40 something Palestinians, passing by, tied him to the hood of the jeep, the guy was just lying on the hood, and drove with him into the village. No one threw rocks anymore.

#### **A human shield.**

Yes. But not a human shield – a human shield is from the start a terrible word – a moving human shield. He tied him to the hood of the jeep and drove with him. He drove with him through the village which is terrifying. That officer, by the way, a month before we went out into that village, Tuku', gave an instruction to his soldiers to stand on the hilltop, again the same captain, I don't want to screw him personally but all of the incidents are written and recorded, it's recorded and documented at the DCO and it got to the newspapers, at least the story with the jeep. He admitted it and he was sentenced to two weeks incarceration and he was dismissed from his command position.

#### **Which battalion was it?**

I don't want to just say. It was a battalion that sat in [the Israeli settlement] Beitar Ilit there, I don't remember which battalion exactly.

#### **When was this?**

In the middle of my service, something like that, March-April. But it was a captain in the paratroopers, it was an incident that made it to the media, to the newspapers. I'm almost sure 101, but I don't want to just say. I remember I worked with them the most, they were there most of

the time. But in any case, that same guy, a month before we went into Tuku'. And you have to understand they go out on patrols in Tuku', it's legitimate. Both to locate vehicles and to demonstrate presence. He gathered everyone and said: "Guys, I'm putting three snipers on the hilltop, and I'm stopping with the jeep in the heart of the village." What he tried to create was for everyone to congregate around him and start throwing rocks. He said "I don't respond to rocks. When enough people gather, the soldiers on the hilltop will take out their legs." The Palestinians didn't know there were soldiers behind them and the soldiers would just spray their legs (with gunfire). It was only prevented because I was there and another officer was there and we just prevented it. We reported it but it was smoothed over. It was just shocking. His entire goal was to lure Palestinian children, just to cut off their legs. It was also terrifying. It's the same captain who led the incident we were talking about.

## 40 They threw a grenade at him, and then they put a bullet in his head

unit: Paratroopers • location: Nablus • year: 2002-2003

In Ramadan of 2003, or 2002, it was one of the Ramadans, we went out for an arrest. There were normal commands to open fire for a suspect arrest procedure, etc. etc.

#### **Who gave them?**

The company commander, during the briefing. Again, it's all about mood. The commands to open fire, the sector brigade commander creates them. He has one or two battle procedures and he gives the command for opening fire as he sees fit. Sometimes it's, in the best cases it's the brigade commander. In the more urgent cases it's the battalion commander. He decides. There is no clear procedure as to the commands to open fire.

#### **But what were the commands to open fire during this incident?**

Rules of engagement – procedure for a suspect arrest. The procedure for a suspect arrest is:

“Stop, stop or I’ll shoot,” Shooting in the air, blah, blah, blah...it’s never used during operations. The procedure for a suspect arrest is an expedited procedure for a suspect arrest, which is “Waqf [Arabic] – Stop,” Boom. If in the second during which you yell at him to stop he doesn’t stop and put his hands detailtreueup, shoot to kill. Meaning there is no shooting at the legs? No shooting indetailtreue the air? Stop, boom. When many times the “Stop” is for protocol.

#### **Boom, stop?**

Something like that. In short, we went in for an arrest, it was during Ramadan. There was some confusion, one of the teams took up position incorrectly, we only knew this afterwards, in the debriefing. An arrest is four teams who surround the house, and there is an operation team which comes to the house. The operations team identified a man in the alley there, a man with an object in his hand. Yelled him “Stop”. The man started running, they started shooting at him, chasing him. The man ran to the alley where one of the teams took up the wrong position, and basically a situation of friendly fire was created, where one team chased after the man and shot at him, and basically, when it shot at him it shot in the direction of another team. Now, this team, the team that wasn’t chasing, basically thought they were being shot at, and saw the image and shot at it, that guy. They shot at him. Again, there was a verification of the killing with grenades.

#### **They shot at him, where were you at that time?**

I was in the other team.

#### **And you know this from the debriefing, and from the fact that they were on your team and you spoke about it afterwards?**

Yes. And I was a few meters away. I didn’t see it with my eyes, I was looking at the corner of the house, but the incident happened in my presence.

#### **They shot at him accidentally because they thought...**

That the fire was at them. And they also saw an object in his hand, so they were afraid it was explosives. They shot at him, and did a verification of the killing.

#### **Who did the verification of the killing?**

Guys from the team, according to the procedure known to them of verifying a killing – they threw a grenade, after that they put a bullet in his head. The guy had a drum in his hand. What did it turn out to be after the fact? That there is a custom during Ramadan, that at four in the morning people go out, and drum, in order to wake people up before the fast. We didn’t know it. If we had known it, if someone had, you get it? Not only did we, simple soldiers, not know, no one in the platoon knew it. No one in the IDF took the trouble to tell us that at such and

such an hour people will go around with objects in their hand, with drums in their hand, and maybe you need to tone down the commands to open fire, and maybe need to be more careful. No one took the trouble to tell us, and because of that this man died. Because of our ignorance.

## 55 We killed unarmed policemen

unit: Corps of Engineers • location: Ramallah district • year: 2001

During that time there was an attack on the six people on route 443 [highway for Israelis only from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem via the West Bank]. Six engineers, some terrorist came one of the checkpoints, and by some stroke of dumb luck he killed all of them. He just came inside the whatever and shot them all, he killed six. That night we were in one of those villages and we weren’t doing anything. They deployed us to their base, they gathered us all into some room, we didn’t have so much to do. All of a sudden our team commander comes from some two minute briefing and says “listen this is the briefing...we are doing...the operation is a revenge operation. We are going to eliminate six Palestinian police from some checkpoint in revenge of the six they took from us” that’s the story I want to get at. It was, on 443, if you, if you cut towards Zone A [zones in the civil and security jurisdiction of the Palestinian authority] there are, there are like four transfer posts, like, those who are responsible for them are Palestinian police, and everyone from those posts they sent us, us, the paratrooper patrol company, like I know, or the paratrooper auxiliary company and someone else, to just like eliminate all the Palestinian police that are there. Right? And the briefing was maybe two minutes. It was defined to us as like revenge, and when I even hesitated at the moment, like I asked the whatever “what did they do? Who are they?” They said to me: “What did they do?” They said: “There is a suspicion that the terrorist who killed the six went through that checkpoint.” There is a suspicion, like, but they don’t know for certain. And it could be that it’s one of those but they said to me “it doesn’t matter they took six of ours, we are going to take six back.”

**That was like the statement?**

That was the statement, that was like the statement. A revenge operation. The day after in the newspapers it was also published as “a revenge operation.” They didn’t hide it. It was published as a revenge operation and it was...a crazy halo of “proper blood revenge.” And we went down into...it was a very, very long walk, we got there on foot at four in the morning, when at night there is no one there, they like...the checkpoint is closed at night, there is some building which they live in...

**And during the day they go down to the checkpoint?**

During the day they go down to the checkpoint itself and they are there.

**And you like sat in an ambush?**

We sat in an ambush until...until they arrived. And the idea was – the idea was that we would just kill all of them, like they would arrive and we would take them out, regardless of whether they had weapons or not...like – is it a Palestinian policeman? You shoot him. And we sat there and the night passes and the night passes like...it’s freezing... I’m trembling from fear, really, but from cold, I was the radioman. When we left three men who were supposed to, who had telescopic sights, and they were supposed to fire first and then we would charge in from the side. And they [the Palestinian police] arrive. And we catch them doing some search, they are like 5 meters from me, they are standing five meters from me, they were only three and another one far away and we go up I get on the radio to get permission and no one answers me. I get an answer from some...

**Female operations sergeant?**

Some like girl answers me. And there is no permission and no permission and they can’t find the battalion commander, they can’t find the battalion commander and my unit commander takes the radio. They are right next to us. He yells, he says, like yelling “we’ve encountered, encountered, encountered” [we were attacked by terrorists] we weren’t encountered and or anything. Those guys [the three soldiers on the sight] gave a burst of gunfire and didn’t hit anything.

**The moment they heard the yelling they like opened fire?**

No “engage, engage, engage.” At that moment I gave the order to the guys to open fire but he like yelled to the battalion commander, he yelled “engagement” when we didn’t encounter, like we didn’t have permission to fire...

**They were close to you? He decided it was...he did it at his own discretion?**

He did it at his own discretion.

**He decided...?**

Yes. Like we didn’t have to go out to...like we basically didn’t have permission to act. There was a procedure of permissions that you have to go down. Which is permission to go to the place, and then you need permission to remain there, I think and then you need permission to open fire, the permission to open fire we didn’t have...so we yelled.

Separation

## Kapitel 2:

# Kontrolle, Enteignung und Annexion – “Separation”

Auf den ersten Blick scheint die Trennung zwischen Israelis und Palästinensern darauf abzielen, israelische Bürger zu schützen und den Palästinensern größere Unabhängigkeit zu zugestehen. Alle Berichte in diesem Kapitel machen jedoch deutlich, dass die unterschiedlichen israelischen Mechanismen der „Separation“ in erster Linie dazu dienen, die palästinensische Bevölkerung zu kontrollieren sowie palästinensisches Land zu enteignen und zu Gunsten Israels zu anneklieren.

Die meisten der Hindernisse, die die Bewegungsfreiheit der Palästinenser im Westjordanland einschränken, findet man nicht entlang der Grünen Linie sondern innerhalb der besetzten Gebiete. So versetzt sich Israel in die Lage, jede Bewegung innerhalb der Palästinensergebiete zu kontrollieren. Der Mechanismus der „Separation“, den Israel in den letzten zehn Jahren installiert hat, hat die palästinensische Abhängigkeit von Israel nicht verringert sondern vertieft. Trotz des „Abzugs“ aus dem Gazastreifen – zweifellos eines der deutlichsten Beispiele für Separation – hat Israel die Kontrolle über die Bevölkerung von Gaza behalten und dies gilt, wenn auch oft indirekt, auch für das Westjordanland. Israel behandelt Gaza und Westjordanland wie zwei voneinander unabhängige soziale und politische Einheiten: Der Großteil des letzten Jahrzehnts war geprägt von einem Transitverbot zwischen Gaza und Westjordanland, das Israel verhängte und damit eine Politik vorantrieb, die Palästinenser von Palästinensern trennt.

Die Trennung innerhalb der palästinensischen Bevölkerung hat schon in den 1990er Jahren begonnen, als die besetzten Gebiete durch das Osloer Abkommen in drei Zonen unterteilt wurden: Zone A wurde rechtlich und verwaltungstechnisch den palästinensischen Autonomiebehörden unterstellt, in Zone B wurde die Sicherheit den israelischen Behörden und die Verwaltung den palästinensischen Behörden unterstellt, Zone C, der Rest des Westjordanlands einschließlich der Siedlungen, wurde ausschließlich unter israelische Kontrolle gestellt.

In der Praxis kontrolliert Israel aber auch Zone A, vorgeblich palästinensisch kontrolliertes Gebiet, mit Hilfe von Checkpoints, offensiven Operationen und häufigen militärischen Bewegungen innerhalb palästinensischer Städte und Dörfer.

Teil der israelischen Politik der „Separation“ ist ein Netzwerk von Checkpoints und anderen physischen Hindernissen, die über das gesamte besetzte Gebiet verteilt sind, manche permanent und manche vorübergehend. Die verschiedenen Barrieren und Hindernisse trennen Palästinenser von israelischen Staatsbürgern, jüdischer und palästinensischer Herkunft, die innerhalb der Grünen Linie leben (Zeugenaussage 21). Sie dienen auch der Trennung der Palästinenser von den israelischen Siedlern in den besetzten Gebieten (Zeugenaussage 19) und der Trennung zwischen Palästinensern, die in den verschiedenen Teilen der besetzten Gebiete leben, voneinander (Zeugenaussage 17). Neben den physischen Hindernissen betreibt Israel ein bürokratisches System, das die palästinensische Bewegungsfreiheit durch Genehmigungspflichten einschränkt. In diesem Kapitel beschreiben die interviewten Soldaten wie Israel die Kontrolle über das Leben der Palästinenser durch drei Formen der Behinderung verstärkt: Barrieren, Hindernisse und Genehmigungen. Dieses „Regime der Genehmigungen“ ermöglicht es Israel die Bewegungsfreiheit der Palästinenser in dem durch die Armee und andere israelische Institutionen kontrollierten Gebiet zu erlauben, einzuschränken oder zu verhindern.

Das wichtigste Symbol der „Separation“ der letzten Jahre ist die Sicherheitsbarriere, mit deren Bau 2002 im Westjordanland begonnen wurde. Diese ist zum einen Teil eine Mauer, zum anderen Teil ein ausgeklügeltes System von Zäunen und Gräben. Bestimmte Segmente der Sicherheitsbarriere befinden sich nahe der Grünen Linie, andere befinden sich jedoch weit innerhalb des Westjordanlands. Die Palästinensergebiete, die auf der einen Seite der Sicherheitsbarriere und auf der anderen Seite von der Grünen Linie eingeschlossen sind, werden

„Nahtbereich“ genannt. Palästinenser, die in diesem Nahtbereich leben, leiden unter einem zusätzlichen System von Genehmigungen, Lizenzen und Übergängen durch Tore und Zäune, die zu den allgemeinen Maßnahmen des Separationssystems hinzukommen. In vielen Fällen befindet sich innerhalb der Trennzäune eine hohe Konzentration an Siedlungen, die einen breiten Gürtel um diese Gebiete bilden. In diesen Fällen ist für Palästinenser der Zugang zu Land, das an die Siedlungen grenzt, stark eingeschränkt oder gar untersagt. Der Zaun schlägt dieses Land dann den Siedlungen zu. In anderen Worten: Der Zaun trennt nicht nur Menschen voneinander, sondern auch Menschen von ihrem Land und von ihrer Existenzgrundlage. Der Grenzzaun trägt direkt zur Enteignung palästinensischen Landes bei, dass dann Teil der israelischen Siedlungen wird.

Das System an „Umfahrungsstraßen“ stellt ein weiteres Element in der Separation dar. Die Gebiete in der Nähe der Siedlungen sind für Palästinenser nicht zugänglich. Die Zufahrtswege sind mit Schildern mit der Aufschrift „Nur für Israelis“ gekennzeichnet. Auch der Bau der „Umfahrungsstraßen“ begann in den 1990er Jahren, um den Zugang Israels zu den Siedlungen zu verkürzen und zu erleichtern und es den Siedlern zu ermöglichen, palästinensische Siedlungen und Städte zu umfahren. Aber im Lauf der letzten zehn Jahre hat Israel die Nutzung der Straßen im Westjordanland für Palästinenser eingeschränkt beziehungsweise es den Palästinensern völlig verboten sich auf Straßen nahe der Siedlungen und auf den Straßen, die die Siedlungen miteinander verbinden, zu bewegen. Mittels vorläufiger sowie permanenter physischer Barrieren an den Ein- und Ausgängen palästinensischer Städte und Dörfer verhindert Israel die Nutzung vieler Straßen durch Palästinenser. Damit wird die Separation innerhalb des Westjordanlands weiter verschärft.

Im Westjordanland hat Israel im Laufe der letzten 10 Jahre häufig auf eine als „Isolation“ bezeichnete Politik gesetzt. Diese Politik untersagt es Palästinensern, ohne von der Armee ausgestellten Genehmigungen zu reisen. Den Behauptungen der israelischen Regierung zufolge soll dadurch verhindert werden, dass sich Terroristen von einer Stadt in die andere bewegen. Die hier vorliegenden Berichte der Soldaten besagen jedoch, dass diese Politik vielmehr dazu beitrug die Kontrolle Israels über das Gebiet zu intensivieren. Zum Beispiel hat Israel den nördlichen Teil des Westjordanlands, in dem die Städte Jenin und Nablus liegen, von den palästinensischen Städten und Dörfern des Südens abgeschnitten. Die Großstadt Nablus war zeitweise völlig isoliert, und die Armee verhinderte jede Ein- und Ausreise, sogar zu und von

den angrenzenden Dörfern. Die Politik der Isolation hat schwerwiegende Auswirkungen auf die palästinensische Wirtschaft sowie auf die sozialen und familiären Lebensstrukturen. Sie hat über einen langen Zeitraum Familien voneinander getrennt und Geschäftsbeziehungen sowie zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen zwischen Palästinensern, die in unterschiedlichen Städten, Dörfern und einzelnen Regionen leben, verunmöglicht.

Schließlich geht aus den Zeugnissen in diesem Kapitel hervor, dass das israelische Prinzip der „Separation“ in den besetzten Gebieten zwischen israelischen Juden und Palästinensern, die israelische Staatsbürger sind, unterscheidet. Aussagen von Soldaten, die an den Checkpoints gedient haben, offenbaren die unterschiedliche Haltung der Soldaten gegenüber jüdischen und palästinensischen Staatsbürgern Israels. Letztere müssen drastische und fortdauernde Inspektionen über sich ergehen lassen. Obwohl israelischen Staatsbürgern der Zugang zur Zone A [Anm. d. R.: sprich vor allem die palästinensischen Städte] des Westjordanlands verboten ist, dürfen Palästinenser, die israelische Staatsbürger sind - im Gegenteil zu jüdischen Israelis - die Zone A betreten.

Außerdem gibt es Siedlungen, die selbst bestimmt haben, dass palästinensische Staatsbürger Israels die eigene Siedlung nicht betreten dürfen. In manchen Fällen hilft die Armee den Siedlern, diese Politik umzusetzen. Es scheint, dass die Streitkräfte diese Siedlungen als ausschließlich „jüdisch“ begreifen und damit jeden Zugang von Palästinensern untersagen, egal ob es sich um israelische Bürger handelt oder nicht.

Die Aussagen der Soldaten und Soldatinnen in diesem Kapitel zeigen, dass „Separation“ eine Politik ist, die die Kontrolle über die palästinensische Bevölkerung vertieft. Dazu wirkt sie unterstützend bei der Enteignung von palästinensischen Land und der damit einhergehenden de facto Ausdehnung israelischer Souveränität.

Seit 2008 wird über eine Lockerung der internen Einschränkungen der palästinensischen Bewegungsfreiheit, z.B. durch die Verringerung der Checkpoints, diskutiert. Den Berichten zufolge hat dieser Wandel in der Politik keinen Paradigmenwechsel zur Folge, und das Streben nach totaler Kontrolle über die Bewegung der Zivilbevölkerung geht weiter.





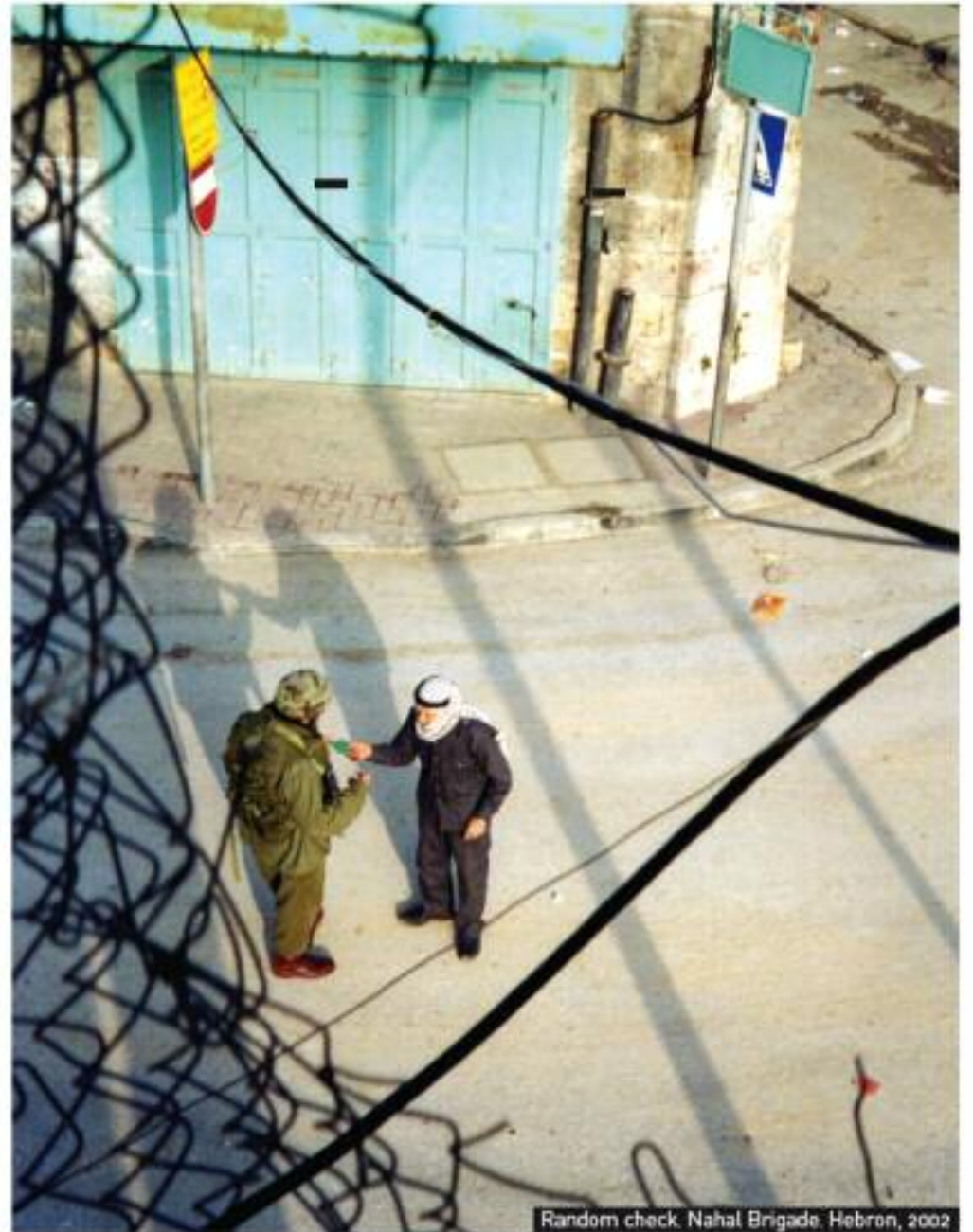
Soldiers at a road block. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Tul Karem, 2005



DCL checkpoint. Tank Corps. Jericho, 2003



DCL checkpoint. Tank Corps. Jericho, 2003



Random check. Nahal Brigade. Hebron, 2002

## Ausgewählte Zeugenaussagen

# 01 Until then I didn't know there were roads only for Jews

unit: Artillery (Reserves) | location: Jordan Valley | year: 2002

The whole thing with the Jewish roads is a pretty shaking experience. There is no intentionality, there is no general policy. You drive on a road, you have no instructions of where to make the checkpoint. In principle it is forbidden for Palestinians to drive on the road.

### What road are you talking about?

The Allon road. A long road.

### Parallel to Baqaa [Jordan Valley], right?

Yes. It is forbidden for Palestinians to drive there. In principle, if you see a Palestinian vehicle you are supposed to stop him, check his ID. You radio all the numbers, they check if there is someone wanted. I go over things that were written, you tell him he is forbidden to drive, that he should turn around and he turns around. You stop at a random point on the road. A hypothetical situation – generally there is one jeep, but say there are two jeeps, you tell him to turn around, and then catch him another time.

### Did it ever happen that they said to you “they told me there to turn around”?

I don't remember because I was the driver. The function of the driver is to always stay inside the jeep. It was because of that I agreed to go, it was part of the discussion. I spoke with the company commander beforehand, and he said to me that I would be the driver and I wouldn't have to do operations. I drive them and they do everything: They make the checkpoint, even if something happens, you stay in the jeep. There was also an APC team... They would do all kinds of operations. Ambushes... He said to me that I wouldn't even come near it, I just drive. I don't know what their conversations were, I can only guess that there wasn't much logic to it. Beyond that they were surprise checkpoints. Nothing happens – you find a spot, an intersection or something, you stand on the jeep on the side, you put up a stop sign and spikes and the road is blocked.

### The Allon road is blocked?

At the point where you are standing. At another points it's open. If you arrive here, you stand. Generally the attitude of the forces is shocking: you stand, a twenty year old boy, and you see people sitting there (sometime some Sheikh), sixty year old men not moving. I'm reading the book *Lords of the Land: The War Over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories*, it's exactly like that. The Lords of the Land decided: “This one you don't let cross, and he'll wait until we decide.” When we go to eat, they fold up the checkpoint and everyone leaves.

### For how long was it?

From the outset they are forbidden to drive there, so the objective of the checkpoint is to demonstrate that we are enforcing it, to demonstrate there is a ruler of the road and that they can't do whatever they want. Another thing, we were the second reservist battalion in a row. And you know how reservists are... they look the other way more, they don't stop every car that passes.

### You also didn't stop every car?

No.

### They are unmotivated?

Yes. In principle, the order is to use discretion and demonstrate presence. If you see a car, for example a taxi with women, you say: “there is no terrorist here.” If you see young men, you stop them. If the commander is forgiving, he'll let it slide, and if it's a commander who is bored, and his political opinions are more extreme – he'll stop [them]. I couldn't point to a logical program.

### How long would you sit in the jeep and do a patrol?

A shift, most likely 8 hours. I don't remember.

### Unmotivated (stops) are neither here nor there, he lets it slide meaning the group of women for example, a terrorist can dress up as a woman. So basically what were the orders? You went for a briefing and what? Was there a briefing before you left?

There is no mission. You have a shift of patrols. The patrols go up to the settlement points, one of them is definitely not legal because there were three caravans there, its parent settlement, which was legal [Whereas most Jewish settlements are legal according to the official Israeli position, unauthorized settlements - called settlement points or outposts - are illegal not only according to International Law, but also according to the official Israeli position] had our soldiers there guarding. You drive through them, you see everything is OK, you go around and go on patrols all the time. The thing was that if something were to happen, the jeep would always be in the area,

so it would be closer.

**Who told you what the rules were in the sector? Is there a briefing before each time you go up?**

It was five years ago, and if there was it was definitely superficial...definitely a jeep commander and not a company commander or something...going over the commands to open fire, if there were incidents. It was during the intifada. He would tell about incidents in the sector or in the neighbouring sector, what happened in the previous days.

**When you arrived, there was already an order forbidding Palestinians from traveling on that road.**

Yes.

**By the way, was it only on the Allon road?**

That was the only main road we travelled on.

**Were they allowed to drive on the side roads?**

Yes. That's like the justification, there was a main part which I also wrote you about, about the day that we got up and they told us we were securing a tractor. The tractor took dirt, it blocked all the paths with earth, the way from the road down to the villages.

**A military tractor?**

No, a civilian tractor. We secured it.

**That was unmotivated?**

No. Where did it come from? – I don't know. It was coordinated with us, we were the military part. Blocking everything. Even though it was forbidden to them, the Palestinians would go up on the road. You drive along the road, you drive along the road, you see every way up to the side roads is blocked with a mound of dirt and you can't cross it. You ask "What happens if someone has to drive?" because the road connects [the two Palestinian West Bank cities] Ramallah and Nablus. They say "Don't worry, there are side roads, they drive through the villages." They drive on those roads, for example instead of taking 20 minutes it takes at least an hour. That's the road they can use.

**What side roads?**

The roads that lead to the settlements.

**You couldn't drive on them, do you remember which village?**

Right after I got home at the end of my reserve duty, there was an article published in [the Israeli quality daily newspaper] Haaretz a week later by Amira Hass called "Now even the water is under closure," exactly about how they blocked access to the villages. I'm not sure if it was in our sector or further North, but right in that same area. She wrote the water containers

couldn't enter, they don't have running water they just leave them and their sheep without water, the goats already died from thirst and there is also a problem of water for humans, and the price of a container of water jumped fivefold. We saw a settler who was working in the quarry with Palestinians, you know, a right wing settler and everything, who said that something isn't right here...you can't deprive people of water and don't be surprised if it comes back like a boomerang. He was also talking about the whole thing with the blockades, he said there isn't a day where his workers don't call him and say to him they are stuck somewhere on the road even though they have permits. Whoever lives or works there receives a detailed permit.

**According to individual or occupation or location?**

I don't know according to what, but he has to hold [the permit] in his hand. If he doesn't have it in his hand he isn't worth anything. I told you earlier, a lot of times they just stop for no reason; they don't make it to the checkpoints.

**They don't check and then pass them along?**

Nothing.

**They just stop them.**

No movement on the road. He stands. He can wait there for half an hour for no reason.

**How long was the reserve duty?**

A month.

**Patrols, ambushes, arrests?**

No, I didn't do that. They did. They had a team that I don't know what they did there. What gave me a crappy feeling at the checkpoints, [was] that the road was forbidden for travel [for Palestinians], it's trivial but it's terrible. There is a checkpoint and it's only for a specific nation. How did you decide? They have their own license plates and they stop, the owners of those license plates stop. There are two lanes on the road – in one there are cars that are stopped and in the other, an empty lane, every once in a while (there is) a jeep or a settler driving fast. It's clear to him that the checkpoint isn't for him. He doesn't even slow down. He slows down when he gets to the checkpoint itself, but he goes around all the cars, either he waves or he passes all the cars and continues. It also doesn't make sense operationally, because a terrorist who steals a car with yellow plates [Israeli cars have yellow plates, Palestinians in the West Bank have green plates] then "see you later" because there is basically no order to stop [him]. From an ethical standpoint it also looks disgusting, in the heat of August, there is a row of cars standing in the sun...

**How long do they stand there?**

Up to a half hour.

**And after that they turned around?**

No, after that that's it, the checkpoint is finished. A total lack of logic, that's the whole idea, I think it's just to be a burden on them, to cause them not to want to travel on that road. A. Delay them, take them off of the road. B. Physically block the road. C. These checkpoints, dirt embankments, but it's clear that from the standpoint of operation logic it's nothing. A terrorist with an IQ higher than 40, this is not what's going to stop him, this isn't what's going to stop terrorists, it just to make the civilians miserable. If I were to go to the first briefing of the reservists, what would I hear there? For most of us it was our first service after the intifada broke out, so the first thing you think about are what are the dangers, is there a chance they'll plant explosives on the road? During the briefing, the battalion commander said that we don't have anything to worry about because it's forbidden for the locals to travel on the road, you'll barely see Palestinians here. It immediately set off a red light for me because I wasn't aware of the fact that there were roads only for Jews. I asked him if him if they were aware of it. "Yes, they are aware of it, whoever doesn't know – he sees the jeep and turns around, they understand on their own."

**It really happened like that there?**

Yes. If we stopped at an intersection, then definitely. Or they stop and wait, the trucks for example would stand there. Because there are quarries there. In the briefing they told us to stop the trucks because there are quarries there. They couldn't turn around, they stood in place. That was another aspect that I mentioned before, of the subservience. You are there and you show power. People are willing to take it in stride, it was at the height of the intifada.

**I just got back from the Jordan Valley, there is a high level of obedience. You can sit on a chair, call for them and they come, stop them from afar? No one would argue?**

Once in a while. If it was the afternoon and the heat would get to them, then they would start to scream and waive the permit from afar and there was always a soldier who would say: "Don't come close..."

**Were there instances of violence?**

No. I'm sure they freak out, you know what can happen, you stand in your Jellabiya [traditional Arab dress] in front of four guys with guns, you know where the border crosses. I'm telling you even the screaming was rare. 90 percent of the cases were total obedience. The screaming was really rare.

## 03 The city is hermetically sealed

unit: Paratroopers • location: Nablus • year: 2003

The story on that front was runaways in Elon Moreh [Jewish settlement near the Palestinian city of Nablus, the largest city north of Jerusalem]. There were runaways. There were people everywhere, tons of paths, dirt paths.

**Illegal aliens?**

It's not illegal aliens because illegal aliens are in the area of the seam line, and there is far from the seam line. The thing about Nablus is that there is a siege on Nablus. The IDF's tactic regarding Nablus is to separate Nablus from the surrounding villages. Meaning there is absolutely, positively no passage at all- at all – at all of people from Nablus inside and out. You have to understand the proportion: A person between the ages of 16 and 35, who lives in Nablus, has not left Nablus in the last 4 years even to go to a village next to Nablus. He could only be in that city. And because of that it creates a very large culture of smuggling. And the majority of the things smuggled into the city because it's sealed hermetically also go through the checkpoints. Whoever wants to pass things [into Nablus] not via the checkpoints, which is faster, creates all kinds of dirt paths there. There is a valley there that is totally plowed with paths, millions of paths, every day is a game of cat and mouse. You close the paths and you bring a bulldozer and it blocks the paths, and they open the paths. And on that deployment in Elon Moreh you separate between the valley and Nablus. So there are trucks that come from the valley and want to enter Nablus, and there are people who want to get out of Nablus, and there are people who want to go out and work and go to university, and they all flee, some on foot, and you can't stop them because there is no wall around Nablus. There are a million ways to get out. And there is a patrol there called the runaway patrol, and it chases after people all day, trying to stop things and it's really funny, because you stop someone...

**When they catch a runaway so what do they do?**

So that's it, there is a possibility of detainment, there is the possibility of telling them to just go back to Nablus, and if you catch the same runaway a few times then you can take him to that temporary prison camp, that same one (an improvised prison camp set up by the company to which detainees from the checkpoint we brought, and remained handcuffed there for a day or

two). That also happened. The most problematic period for the company-in-training, because again, the company-in-training normally works according to accepted practice, because the majority of the time the commanders are with the soldiers and they maintain the ethical code. But the most problematic period was when we were given some kind of unclear permission from the deputy battalion commander, like half permission, to shoot tires of cars, because it really became an unbelievable situation.

#### **In the valley of the runaways or in general?**

In the valley of the runaways. When catching a car, after you catch it you flatten the tires. It was permission, which I personally had a problem with. There were other commanders who had a problem with it and not everyone did it.

#### **The deputy battalion commander instructed you?**

He like gave some kind of permission to the company commander. After some two weeks they said: There was no such permission given, and they stopped doing it. But for two weeks the captured cars and the soldiers went wild. They shot the tires, they took a knife and perforated the tires of a truck... It really went to the level of pulling out the plugs from the cars. Abusing cars. And they defined the line, they said: Don't break windows. Don't vandalize the car but take it out of commission.

#### **And what caused them to stop the procedure?**

An order came from the battalion commander. In the end it was illegal the whole story with shooting the tires.

#### **And how did they deal with the fact that they did do it?**

They didn't deal with it, you don't deal with things in the army, you don't talk about it, you just move on. It was allowed, not it's forbidden, it's over. That's how things work in the army, like everytime there is some kind of breach, someone puts on blinders, exploits some kind of ethical breach, does something, OK, smoothes things over, it's over. It never happened, let's forget it, it doesn't go forward. They treat it lightly. The fact that a few people shot at the whole car, and perforated it and destroyed it, no one cares. They are just things that happened. It happened in the valley of the runaways. The valley of the runaways was a very problematic point because you play cat and mouse every day, it's very exhausting, you feel like an idiot. You are also chasing after innocent people in the end. They want to work. It's very difficult for soldiers there to do it, the job stinks. It really stinks. It was, and you live it and it's shit. That's it, it was also a really difficult period, 8-8 three months between the two checkpoints and the valley of the runaways, eating a lot of dust, living inside the APC. A really disgusting place. It's

also like a wilderness. That's it, afterwards it ended. I had enough because of that period of those five months, they really broke me, 8-8 (hours of duty/rest). And I decided I was going to the auxiliary company to be a soldier. It wasn't right for me to be a commander anymore under those conditions.

## 08 The ringing slap: Hebron

unit: Nahal • location: Hebron • year: 2004

This is biggest frustration in Hebron [The largest city in the south of the West Bank. Several Hundred Jewish settlers live among some 160.000 Palestinians]. If we were in Gaza for two weeks...Right before we were in Hebron we were in Gaza, so there was an operation, and a soldier from the battalion was killed there, and there really was a feeling that you were there because it is a kind of situation where you need to be a soldier. Hebron was the exact antithesis of that, the ringing slap in that respect. You are there to serve a certain status. One of the most frustrating things in Hebron is that the settlers don't care even from a meter away. They'll do whatever they want. The first week there were a lot of us, there is a road, the Tnuva road, which leads from the Avraham Avinu neighbourhood to the Cave [of the Patriarchs]. Now it was exactly during the time of I don't remember if it was a Jewish holiday, there was some holiday, Jewish or Muslim, I don't remember. I think it was during the period of some Muslim holiday. So they made partitions in the middle of the road, the Palestinians would cross on one side and on the other side the Jews would cross. Now, significantly the number of Palestinians who cross the road was not two or three times, but ten times greater than the number of Jews who crossed during that period. I'm talking about hundreds every morning, each prayer. And they went to their side. If one, there was one Palestinian woman who (made trouble) just to do it and whatever, and her group started yelling at her, I said to her: "Ma'am, cross and it's..." I had a weapon. At a certain point she quieted down and crossed.

#### **Who yelled at her, the Palestinians?**

They said to her: “Yes, Yes, enough, enough, come back, come back.” They didn’t want her to make a mess. And that same day a family of something like 10-15 Jews comes and they walk on the road “free style.” And I go to them, I say to him “Sir, listen, we made a separation here on purpose, it’s a certain period, I’m asking you to wait.” “Who are you to tell me that?”

#### **That’s what he said to you?**

Yes. “Who are you to tell me? This is my road, this is my city. I do what I want here.” I said to him: I came here to protect you, please, if you are willing. “No, I’ll do what I want. We are giving in to them, you are too easy with them, you aren’t hard enough, you aren’t whatever enough.” It was like, from that moment on I, there was a period where I said I would separate, like this whole thing of the issue of taking or not taking coffee from them. I said: “I don’t want them to feel legitimacy for the fact that I’m there, for them to feel good about it.” From that moment the settlers and me were at odds, until the end of my service. I wouldn’t take anything that they would give me, to help me. I said I didn’t want it. They annoyed me. Those were a few examples. There was that, and there was, there was a situation where a Palestinian father, again, everything is on the Palestinian road, he was walking with his son on his side, and then four settler children came. What a story, what a story. They picked up a rock, threw it at the Palestinian boy. I yell at them, and the father comes to me, says to me “Here, look, we aren’t doing anything”, and he comes [to me] frustrated, “Look at what they are doing to us.” And other than put my head down in shame I can’t do anything. Because I can’t lift my hand against the settler children. I can’t threaten them with my weapon. If the situation was the opposite I don’t know what would happen there.

#### **What would happen?**

If an Arab boy would pick up a rock (to throw) at a Jewish boy then presumably we would have to immediately handcuff him, blindfold him, send him to whatever, according to orders.

#### **Those are the orders?**

It’s in the rules of engagement, situations and responses.

#### **The suspect-arrest procedure?**

The procedure for arresting a suspect, right. If a boy would pick up a rock. Forget about it, if a Palestinian boy were to go, and start doing things contrary to what I tell him (to do), like the Jew, saying to me, who are you, what are you, and whatever, I would have to start by shooting in the air, then at his feet, all kinds of things like that. Incidents happened in Hebron, there were all kinds. The company that relieved us told us about it. There was some crazy, not crazy, slightly retarded person who didn’t understand what they were screaming at him. In the end

he got a bullet in his leg. It happened to the 931st Nahal battalion.

## 12 I’m embarrassed by what I did there...

unit: Combat Engineering Corps – NBC Unit (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical) • location: Elkana • year: 2005

During the time when I was a commander at the company-in-training and I moved to operations, we were at a checkpoint whose name I don’t remember.

#### **Where?**

It was in [the Israeli settlement] Elkana, it’s a fence that separates the Jewish from the Palestinian houses and there is one Palestinian house on the Jewish side, they put the fence up incorrectly there and because of it they put a checkpoint. All of their access...They had family on the other side so they had to cross there, so they put up a checkpoint. There were rules that whoever crossed, I don’t remember, it’s forbidden for people to enter if they don’t have documentation or a permit for such and such, a work permit. There was someone there who returned from outside (from the Israeli side of the fence) and he pretended like he didn’t understand that he couldn’t enter. He had a bag in his hands, and he was asking why, why and he knew very well why. After two hours he came back again and he said he was the other guy’s twin, I don’t remember if he brought a permit, I think not. He really annoyed us...It’s not pleasant for me to talk about it... He really annoyed us and we decided to punish him so with his bags and everything we put him in a corner, blindfolded him and restrained his hands and he sat there for 4-5 hours. Just like that, like, that’s like something I am embarrassed about. I’m embarrassed. I don’t know...

#### **Why?**

Because it’s, wow, a totally different world with totally different rules. In this world here, that story is unacceptable, in my eyes it’s unacceptable...There it’s so natural. The rules are so

different. No one can understand unless he is there. If I tell it to my friend...It's a small story from among shocking stories, it's something small that I feel uncomfortable about. If I were to tell my friend who didn't do the army and she has an ideology- I don't know how she would respond.

**You never told anyone?**

No.

**Were you embarrassed at the time?**

No.

**How many people were you there?**

Three.

**What did they think about it after? Or today?**

I don't talk to them today.

**But did you talk about it after if it was ok or not? Maybe he deserved more?**

I remember that at some point, one of my soldiers said he would bring him water or he would go out to release him. Yes they felt a little...But we really didn't talk about those things, what happens – happens.

**When did you start thinking about that incident?**

When I was released, only after, also, some time after.

**How did it suddenly pop up?**

All of a sudden, a picture. A powerful image I have when you talk about "What did you do in the Army." I saw a documentary on channel 8 about female soldiers. A lot of images came during the movie. Images that I didn't have a chance to think about at all.

**Were there other incidents like that? Similar to those?**

All kinds, yes.

**You don't remember?**

I have pictures in my mind, but I don't remember details. I really repressed that period. I couldn't stand it there or I have trauma, but I finished the army and I started a new and totally different life. I'm telling you, the most banal concepts, I don't remember the terms. I know what you are talking about, but you have to remind me.

## 17 The gate duty of the Palestinian village

unit: Nahshon infantry battalion • location: Deir Ballut • year: 2001

Our line of duty was in a settlement called Aley Zahav, in the Yakir sector. The battalion that sat in [the Israeli settlement] Yakir and us got Aley Zahav, Magen 50 - this checkpoint is in a very picturesque village, it's the [Palestinian] Deir Ballut village on its western side.

**What's picturesque about it?**

There is like a path going towards it. Everything is level but the path twist, like it's Oz, without any connection to the conditions on the ground. It's a checkpoint which basically prevents Palestinian vehicles from crossing onto the new road which connect [the Israeli settlements] Aley Zahav and Peduel to the trans Samaria road. So the checkpoint is there to prevent Palestinian vehicles from crossing onto the nice road they made there. Once the road went through the [Palestinian] villages there. It's called an "only road" in military terminology. And the road would cross through the [Palestinian] villages there, A-Dikh, and Berukin, which are across from [the Israeli settlement] Aley Zahav. But as a result of the throwing of the stones they made a bypass road, and on the bypass road, of course, Palestinian vehicles are forbidden to drive. The checkpoint is there to prevent the arrival of Palestinian vehicles.

**It was forbidden for them to travel from the beginning?**

When we arrived, it was forbidden for them to travel. The company didn't change anything. Aside from not allowing Palestinian vehicles, they also checked all the vehicles that passed. It was basically a gate to Deir Ballut, because from that road...

**That's the only road to Deir Ballut?**

Yes, that's the road to Deir Ballut from which you get to the villages, you have a left turn, if they come from Deir Ballut you have it, you can travel in the direction of the [Palestinian] villages, Refet and then Bidiya, Misha and everything, or a right turn towards Rantis. At first they didn't allow the right, later they did. In short you really had the feeling that you...At a certain point we knew everyone from the village. It's a very small village. Just like someone with gate duty stands in a settlement, so like that they had a kind of gate for the people in the village who even if they travelled, the inspection itself, if you were to stop and think about it, is unnecessary, since he can only get to neighbouring Palestinian villages. It's a road without any

Jewish traffic, and there also isn't really access from it. So it shows how you really just make a checkpoint there every day for no reason. To prevent hostile terrorist activity. Like during the briefing before going up to the checkpoint they'll tell you: [It's] to prevent hostile terrorist activity on the "just road" which is the Jewish road. And really they prevent the Palestinian vehicles from going up on it, and they examine Palestinian vehicles to prevent the trickling of hostile terrorists into the sector.

#### **Was anyone caught there?**

No, there is nothing there. There is nothing to check, there is no incentive to cross. There isn't. Bottom line it's a Palestinian checkpoint, there is nowhere to run. If he continues, he can drive on the road as much as he wants. He'll encounter another checkpoint or another concrete block, he won't connect with anyone, he won't find Jews. The Jews he'll meet are soldiers. Like, there aren't any there. In any event, it's a very unnecessary checkpoint which is why they gave it to a track company in the Nahshon battalion, which is a small, not so well known battalion. It was only established in '98, they didn't give it such a hot sector, certainly not to the company that just went up to the front. So at the checkpoint there very quickly became an atmosphere of like...I know that I was at the checkpoint so generally I would just let the vehicles pass. Because again, the inspection was pretty unnecessary. There was even a dirt road which could bypass the checkpoint.

#### **And you let them bypass?**

You could see that there were vehicles traveling there, and whoever cared about their car and didn't have anything to hide would come to the checkpoint. But still...you know, stubborn people...they check who comes to you and doesn't travel on the dirt road – because the dirt road, people traveled on it to show you the absurdity of the whole thing. But it doesn't matter, that's not why we gathered here. That's from a philosophical standpoint, how retarded it is.

## 19 Every Friday: A Closed Military Zone

unit: Kfir Infantry brigade • location: South Mt. Hebron • year: 2004-2005

#### **So how do you remember your time in Susya [a Jewish settlement beside a same-named Palestinian village]?**

In Susya there were a few things. There is an area between the settlement and the post, the post isn't too far from the settlement itself but there is a two kilometre or so road that had a few [Palestinian] families in tents, that's the first thing. There were a lot of encounters with left-wing [Israeli and foreign] activists in that area. All kinds of complaints about Jews bothering them while they are harvesting olives and things like that. It was a period during which every Friday the army would more or less declare the area near Susya a closed military zone.

#### **So how did the settlers get home?**

Of course not the settlement itself and not the access road to the settlement. I'm talking about the area between the post and the settlement, which is a distance of about 2 kilometres. Where a few Palestinian families lived and that's what started the whole mess. Because the Jews were suspicious of the proximity on the one hand and on the other hand the Palestinians complained that they were always bothering them in their farming and wouldn't let them get to their grazing areas with their sheep. The left-wing activists came to support the Palestinians and went with them to their grazing area, and the Jews on their side called the army to move the Palestinians away from there because they were getting too close to the settlement.

#### **Then what happened?**

What would happen normally is that we would move the people away. Each encounter wavered between more and less extreme where the less extreme is that we stood there dividing between the area that was close to the settlement and where the Palestinian shepherds and the left-wing activists were and separate between them. Those were the more minor cases. The more serious cases was a patrol removing the Palestinians from a certain area where there were, once or twice we arrested leftwing activists on the basis of their being in a closed military zone, which is forbidden to them. Beyond that...I remember one afternoon when there was an argument with one of the...We returned with the company commander's vehicle for access and we saw a Palestinian shepherd in an area where he wasn't supposed to be close to our access road, we stopped to talk to him. I don't know what the conversation was and how it started, more or less he refused to move away. The men from his family arrived in our area, some kind of violent struggle broke out...

#### **What does that mean?**

In simpler language basically at some point someone said a few wrong sentences and they started fighting.

**One of the Palestinians said a few wrong sentences?**

It started with the basic refusal because it was really after a period of a few months, we knew him, he knew us, he knew exactly where he was allowed to be and where it was forbidden for him to be, and for some reason that same day he decided to stand up for himself and say: "This is my grazing area and I'm allowed to be here." What I remember is that his family arrived very quickly and too late, after that confrontation left-wing activists came to the area.

**Wait, but what happened during the confrontation?**

The confrontation was the first stage. It was only our company commander's jeep, later another patrol Hummer arrived, meaning about 7 or 8 people in total, on the other side there were 4-5 people, and there was a violent confrontation. If I remember correctly it made it to the media. There weren't serious injuries or something like that for either side, but there were blows. There is no other way to describe it.

**And later?**

Afterwards those guys dispersed, at some point they ran away to their tents. More forces came to our side. On their side they ran to their tents. There was one guy, the one who started the whole thing, that shepherd who stood up for himself as it were, the police also came to the area, we decided we were going to get close to their tents to look for him. At some point, one of the guys, we were walking around with a policeman from Hebron, and if I remember correctly, the guy saw him from a tent 50-70 meters away from us and the company commander together with the policeman decided they would try to chase after him. They took off most of their equipment and started running after him as fast as possible. There was also a funny thing, somewhat unrelated. A policeman drew his weapon, a dog came, one of the dogs that went around in the area there with one of the families it seems, it was barking which apparently threatened the...it started running in the direction of the policeman, the policeman shot near the dog in order to scare it. That's it. In the end, the guy at that point managed to run away, the chase continued more or less all night. A confrontation kept going quite intensely on the access road, constant, between the left-wing activists, the army and the settlers. On an almost weekly basis. There was almost no direct contact between the settlers and the Palestinians. Normally what they did was that they saw the Palestinians too close for their liking to the settlement, or in the areas which they declared from a certain point were too close and it was forbidden for them to get close, the moment they got too close they would call us.

**Now that time there was that confrontation, generally it's not acceptable for a Palestinian to hit a soldier, like here you are talking about a situation where they actually hit?**

Yes there was definitely a hand raised, that I remember, the first hand raised was actually on the Palestinian side, from there it all went downhill, everyone tried to help their friends. One the one hand we weren't concerned to the point of using weapons, shooting in the air or something like that for example, it wouldn't help. So everyone's first instinct was as soon as one of the Palestinians would hit, raise his hand at one our guys was to come and help, on the other side there was the same thing from their side, and then we started to call for backup because presumably as you said it's not an acceptable situation and you cannot allow it. The response was very...I don't know if I should said sharp, but yes, people came there and as fast as possible in order to suppress the thing.

## 21 We played Tom and Jerry

unit: Lavi battalion • location: ??? • year: 2005

There was the whole thing with the trucks transporting the marble. There are quarries in the Bani Na'im area and all the factories in [the largest city in the south of the West Bank] Hebron, in South Hebron. And none of the [Palestinian] drivers have a permit to drive on the road, they drive on the Mamila road and bypass all of the blockades. The battalion commander and the brigade commander went crazy. The battalion commander gets up in front of you: "Why are there Palestinian vehicles on the road?" He would go crazy. And you can't stop them. It got to the point where we would take keys, IDs – by the way, taking someone's ID is illegal. Taking someone's keys is also illegal. And you just can't stop the traffic. They majority of the people are just innocent people, who want to make a living, right? There was some meeting, the brigade commander came to speak with the staff and I said to the brigade commander "I'm receiving an order that I cannot fulfil. If you really don't want any traffic here, give me one magazine of ammunition, live rounds, permission to destroy two trucks and to shoot someone in the leg, that's the price." He said to me: "What? How can you do something like that, it's unethical." I said to him: "Yes, that's right, it's not ethical, but that's what we need to do if you

don't want there to be traffic. Give me the means, you are giving me an order without the means to do it and that's the price." That's after I was there, like I know, 8 months, when I understood what was going on, right, he said: "You can't do that." I said: "OK, don't give me the order or don't get annoyed when you see trucks." At least he was shocked, like I wasn't seriously suggesting it, right. I don't want to shoot anyone, I wanted to shake him up a bit, that what you need to do if you really-really want to, you have to use force, a relatively large amount of force. And he said: "OK, we won't use force." There still was the order, but OK.

#### **It ended there?**

Listen, the whole thing with Palestinian traffic on the road that surrounds Hebron is a game of cat and mouse, it's really like that. It's really like you are in a Tom and Jerry cartoon. Someone go out from here, so you go, and he goes like this. And it got to the point where we trying to stop the truck from working. As far as I know it didn't get to the point of destruction of property. Why? Because you stop a truck, you take the persons, keys, you take his ID, you remove all the air from the tire you don't puncture it, you just take out the air, right? You even take the person.

#### **To where?**

Sometimes you take a guy to the base...handcuffs, blindfold, you put him at the gate so he'll "dry off"...

#### **A truck driver transporting marble on route 60?**

Yes, sometimes marble, all kinds of things. Whoever bypasses the blockades and travels on the road without the necessary permits etc. etc., a Palestinian. Sometimes you just bring the guy to the gate, put him in the booth and he sits there, sometimes for an hour, sometimes half an hour, sometimes for a day, from morning to night, but it doesn't matter what, even if you take the guy, you pass where the truck was on the side of the road where you stopped it, an hour later, sometimes even five minutes later – there is no truck. It got up and left. Always. It doesn't matter, you take the keys, lock the truck, a truck without air in its two front tires, and they have some kind of compressor, right. And you take out all the air from the air compressor, you don't cut the wires, there is just some tap, you just open the tap and all the air goes out, and the cabin is locked and the motor is off, meaning there is no way to create more air – you come back, ten minutes, half an hour, an hour, the truck disappears. Amazing, it's just amazing. Listen, when someone is in trouble and he needs to make a living, OK, he'll do a whole lot of things. Until it gets to the point...if he'll be afraid that they'll just burn his truck or he'll be afraid that they'll shoot it – then he won't drive it. It's too much of a risk. But if they take his ID? OK,

let them take the ID, who cares. If they take his keys? OK, he has another 10 keys at home. Or sometimes you start it with a screwdriver, those old Mercedes', a screwdriver, or a nail, the same thing. His motivation is high.

## 42 The farmers burst into the area in tears

unit: Artillery • location: Qalqilya district • year: 2002

The operation was routine, the operation was to go out on a patrol with vehicles to the nearby Arab villages. They were a lot of excavations there. And it's really a heartbreaking place, the whole separation fence. We were exactly at the point when they dug the fence, residents whose fig or olive groves you were uprooting and it was personally difficult for me to see.

#### **Are you a farmer?**

No, but you know...Someone comes and says to you: "OK, your home – is mine. Your land – is mine. Everything you invested in for forty years." You know, older people, farmers. People for whom, this tree is food. And you say to them: "Forget about it, get out of here, now it's not yours."

#### **Did you oversee the work?**

No, but I guarded. There weren't violent incidents there. Again, because of how close it was to Israel. And if there were – then there were various operations of other more combat units when actually went into the city.

#### **Do you remember the encounter with these people whose trees they basically uprooted? Did they go there?**

Yeah, you meet them. You get to...It's hard, because a person comes to you in tears.

#### **Do you remember a specific incident?**

Specifically I remember one incident. It gives me goose-bumps just thinking about it. Someone whose olive grove they uprooted came in tears, I'm sorry his fig grove, and he said to me "I

planted this grove for ten years, I waited ten years for it to bear fruit, I enjoyed it for one year and they are uprooting it." The guy had worked already 30 years, and he says to me "I worked for 30 years to buy the land, I planted for another 10 and I just waited for the trees to bear fruit." Only a year had passed for him to enjoy the tree and the IDF back hoe comes and says: "Forget about it". Best case – you encounter a back hoe which is prepared to plant his tree somewhere else.

**There wasn't a procedure of replanting?**

No, really not. The back hoe operators were Arabs and anyone who still had some kind of relationship...whose heart still broke, then he would take the hoe, dig and plant it on their side of the fence. It was rare that a professional like that...It costs a lot and his boss says to him "why are you playing, stop playing." So it happens on that same day and that's it, afterwards they are already digging.

**When you are there, this work started or it was already happening?**

It started. The very first time we went into the field.

**With the surveyors?**

Yes, our main duty was to protect the surveyors. When surveyors come, they get someone with a radio who walks kilometres.

**The surveyors don't see even before the back hoe arrives that there is a tree you know on the land?**

Yes, but the landowner doesn't realize the guy is walking on his land, he only sees the back hoe. And even if he were to see – so great...

**They didn't speak with them beforehand?**

I don't think so. I don't know. I imagine...They don't have mail or cell phones for the most part...Another authority comes and takes you...It's as if I were to come and take your cell phone...who would care? "Get out of here...if you want sue me." You, as a citizen of the state [of Israel] with a blue ID and all of the privileges, you try and get money from the National Insurance Agency and they tell you "yeah, good luck with that"...Like, so who is he? You know it's going to happen. You know that even if he sues and everything – he'll just get lice.

**The people there didn't argue, or did they stand in front of the back hoes?**

Trees, you know. You can't give it back. There is no compensation for something like that. They promised them they would give them money or something...different land. There is a law that if the state takes more than 40 percent you are entitled to full compensation. They can take up to 40 percent and you have to remain silent. For the 41st percent you get full

compensation. Which is a general rule in the state, it doesn't interest them if it harms them or what's on the land. I was unsure if they would take it. There is nothing to do. What do I mean there is nothing to do? It sucks to see it, because they promised him – your sense is that he won't get anything.

**How long did the uprooting and the work last there?**

When I left it was still...

**So it took time.**

Building a fence is a lot. Because you are talking about mountains...you dig the land, measure.

**So the people didn't resist at all?**

In the first stage when the back hoe came to uproot the trees, farmers burst into the area in tears, trying to stop the back hoe or standing on the side crying.

**There is no physical resistance, protests, even a sign?**

Yes, I saw them standing on the side with a sign, but you are talking about farmers, not political activists. One man, who really has bad luck. You can't say you are harming an entire population. Because a single person controls 40 dunam (1/4 acre) and until you get to the next 40 you don't find another person. Each time is per person. It's not like you come to a university and then it's full of people. You don't hurt a single sector that is full of a lot of people, each time you encounter a single person. And then he has no power – he can [only] stand on the side and cry. There is no union of farmers. That was heartbreaking itself, it's not fair. You know with the idiocy of this country – they took his land and tomorrow they'll say they're stopping the fence. Which happened more than a few times. Where they decide the fence would cross here – inside the guy's land, in the courtyard, on his private house, but tomorrow they decide, after there are already roads and they destroyed, that the fence isn't good "Let's get it out of here. Get it out, it's not good."

**Did they move the fence in your sector?**

A change in route.

**No, in your sector – where you were.**

A change in route. They started digging, then all of a sudden they decided it wasn't good.

**What's the whole thing with the surveyors?**

A surveyor gets an order. The surveyor is the cheap part, where are the hours of the excavator?

**But the surveyor checks before.**

OK. It works on a delay for us in the country. First they do and then only afterwards they check why it's not good.

#### **To where did they move the fence?**

Sometimes 10 meters, sometimes they decided to cancel it or go around... Because what's the fence? It's going around settlements. Once the settlement was included in the Green Line [international border between Israel and the oPt], and once not. If they decide to go around the settlement or they decide not to go around the settlement. And what is its distance from the settlement, they dealt with crap, in other words.

## 44 The battalion commander's driver said: "I beat them up"

unit: Paratroopers • location: A-Ram Checkpoint • year: 2001

There are a lot of incidents for which I can go into deep detail, another incident that's ingrained in my memory, is the straw that broke the camel's back, there was a protest in [the Palestinian Jerusalem suburb of] A-Ram on Friday of Palestinians and Israelis, I was with the security patrol jeep. We were on a base in A-Ram, a small base, half of the company was there. This was an emergency deployment. We went on a Friday afternoon. It was a calm protest, walking on the road, full of children and families. A protest against the occupation. It was before the separation fence, in 2001. The commander and myself are standing and the protest starts walking and my commander kindly says to them: "Please don't cross this line," it was on the main road in A-Ram. They cross the line. There were hundreds of people. They went from the Qalandiya checkpoint [at the north of Jerusalem] inwards. He let them pass and then he sent me, and 100-200 meters behind were the border police and I arrive and say to them that the protest is coming. They get excited and start taking out their crates of stun grenades and tear gas, they go outside and start throwing. And I'm on my way from them to my commander, we were all full of gas. Immediately they started throwing stun grenades, an elderly woman fell

on the floor, a stun grenade exploded near her and she fainted. My commander sent me to the medic, the Palestinians said not to touch her, I go to my commander and ask him why they threw the gas, nothing happened, people were walking on the road, everything was under control. We were there and the jeeps were on call. And a few Israelis [from the peace movement] yelled at us "Nazis, Nazis..." I was really upset and I said to my commander that I'm not prepared to participate. The border policemen started, they were the ones who threw everything. Immediately it developed into stone (throwing) and within a few minutes, other security patrol Jeeps arrived. Do you remember they shot 0.25? In Lebanon they shot at the lamps and in the second intifada they shot them at kids throwing stones?

#### **What's 0.25?**

An M16 [gun] which fires very small bullets.

#### **0.22?**

0.22. My battalion commander told me to fire them and I didn't agree. He gave it to someone who likes to shoot. The security patrol jeeps arrived, they see people are throwing stones and they have no idea what happened beforehand. They immediately start breaking up packs of rubber bullets and fire single rounds (a single round of a rubber bullet is lethal). I tell them "I've been here since the beginning, they didn't do anything, the border police started it." I tell it to my friends, they know I'm not bullshitting them. They say to me "What different does it make? You bleeding heart!" They start firing. The battalion commander arrives with his driver and I got into the security patrol jeep and I said I wasn't going to do anything. My company commander brings me tear gas and tells me to throw it. I say that I won't throw in. In the end I throw it, I open the window and in front of me there are three cameras. I threw it at them, with force. I told the driver to stop and I got out and said "sorry." The battalion commander's driver came and said to me "I beat them up." He brought his weapon the butt of which was full of blood, he just beat people up with the butt of his weapon. The next day there was a picture in [Israel's most popular daily] paper Yediot Ahronot. The medic who was with me got hit the head with a stone and fainted. The border police threw the tear gas, they started throwing stones, one stone hit the medic and they raised the level of violence and immediately all the patrol jeeps arrived.

#### **How many patrol jeeps?**

3-4, I don't remember exactly.

#### **What was the level of violence?**

They shot directly from the moment they fired the 0.22.

**Live rounds.**

Correct. They brought backup, they beat up 33 people in a few minutes. I saw the beginning and it wasn't relative. That very day I lost it, I went to my commander and said "Take my weapon."

**You said that you went into houses and took Masbaha prayer beads. What was different this time?**

You see people beaten up without blood on their hands. They were walking and they just shot at them. My company commander agreed with me, he was with me and he saw the border police started it. I asked him why was there use of force, he said "what do you want? Your friend was injured". The medic was injured so you can show them they injured him so it seems to them: "you hit one of us..." so everything is allowed. That was the feeling. It was shocking. The next day there were pictures in all of the newspapers. I have the pictures in my album.

**What did they think about it later in the company?**

What did they care? I told everyone what happened; they said to me "what do you care? What difference does it make?" What difference does it make who started.

**Did you feel alone at that point?**

I didn't care anymore. Aside from the fact that no one cared, (they're) simple soldiers.

Lebensstruktur

### Kapitel 3:

## Verwaltung des zivilen palästinensischen Lebens – “Lebensstruktur”

Die Berichte in diesem Kapitel drehen sich um den Einfluss, den israelische Sicherheitskräfte und Behörden auf das Leben der Palästinenser in den besetzten Gebieten haben. Israelische Regierungsvertreter behaupten, dass Israel weder lebensnotwendige Güter zurückhält noch eine humanitäre Krise erzeugt. Sondern trotz seiner Sicherheitsbedürfnisse palästinensische „Lebensstrukturen“ in den besetzten Gebieten ermöglicht. Solche Behauptungen und andere ihrer Art, wie zum Beispiel die von einer florierenden Wirtschaft im Westjordanland, zielen darauf ab glauben zu machen, dass das Leben unter der Besatzung erträglich ist und dass es die Palästinenser keinesfalls daran hindert, ein gutes Leben zu führen.

Auf der Basis dieser Behauptungen beharren die Verteidiger israelischer Politik darauf, dass die Besatzung ein vertretbares Mittel der Verteidigung ist. Wenn denjenigen, die unter der Besatzung leben, Schaden zugefügt wird, ist dies in jedem Fall angemessen und verhältnismäßig. Vertreter israelischer Behörden behaupten zum Beispiel, dass Israel durch Transit- und Einreisegenehmigungen für „humanitäre“ Ausnahmefälle eine normale „Lebensstruktur“ ermöglicht. Aber es ist eben genau diese Abhängigkeit von Millionen von Bürgern von einem riesigen, verschlungenen bürokratischen Apparat, in dem sie keine Rolle spielen und der nicht dazu geschaffen ist, ihre Interessen zu berücksichtigen, die das Maß an Kontrolle über die palästinensische Lebensstruktur seitens Israel exemplifiziert.

Die Soldaten und Soldatinnen machen in ihren Schilderungen deutlich, dass die palästinensische Bevölkerung auf die Gnade Israels angewiesen ist. Palästinenser, die beispielsweise eine Sondergenehmigung benötigen, sind vom Entgegenkommen des Soldaten am Checkpoint, oder dem Mitleid des Beamten der Zivilverwaltung abhängig. Wer als Palästinenser zum Arzt will, an seinen Arbeitsplatz, oder zu seiner Familie, ist beständiger Bittsteller in den unterschiedlichen israelischen Vertretungen, damit er als „Gnadenfall“ und seine Bedürfnisse

als „humanitäre Bedürfnisse“ anerkannt werden (Zeugenaussage 6).

Die für die Zivilgesellschaft zuständige Regierungsbehörde in den besetzten Gebieten ist die Zivilverwaltung, die dem Verteidigungsministerium untersteht. Soldaten der regulären, stehenden Armee dienen in der Zivilverwaltung, wie auch Zivilisten für das Verteidigungsministerium arbeiten. Diese Behörde ist für die Verwaltung und Zuteilung von Infrastruktur und Ressourcen in den besetzten Gebieten zuständig. Dies beinhaltet auch die Feststellung des Status von Land, die Ausstellung von Bau- und Planungsgenehmigungen in Zone C, von Arbeits- und Transitzugenehmigungen an den Checkpoints, die Organisation des Handels, die Registrierung der Bevölkerung und viele andere Dienstleistungen.

Die Palästinenser wenden sich auch an die Zivilverwaltung in Fragen humanitärer Anliegen oder Beschwerden und Forderungen aufgrund von Schäden an Eigentum oder an Personen, die durch IDF-Operationen verursacht wurden. Unter den Berichten in diesem Kapitel sind auch welche von Soldaten und Offizieren, die in der Zivilverwaltung gedient haben. Die Schilderungen erlauben einen seltenen Einblick in die bürokratische Welt auf der anderen Seite der Grünen Linie.

Seit Ausbruch der Zweiten Intifada im September 2000 hat Israel seine Macht über die palästinensische Bevölkerung in den besetzten Gebieten gefestigt. Neben den offensiven Militäroperationen, die breite öffentliche Aufmerksamkeit erregten, hat Israel sowohl physische Barrieren als auch ein komplexes bürokratisches System installiert. Israel hat die Bewegungsfreiheit der Palästinenser immer stärker eingeschränkt, um so die palästinensische Bevölkerung von den israelischen Staatsbürgern, sprich den Siedlern, die im Westjordanland leben, zu trennen. Das führt aber beispielsweise dazu, dass ein palästinensischer Bewohner der

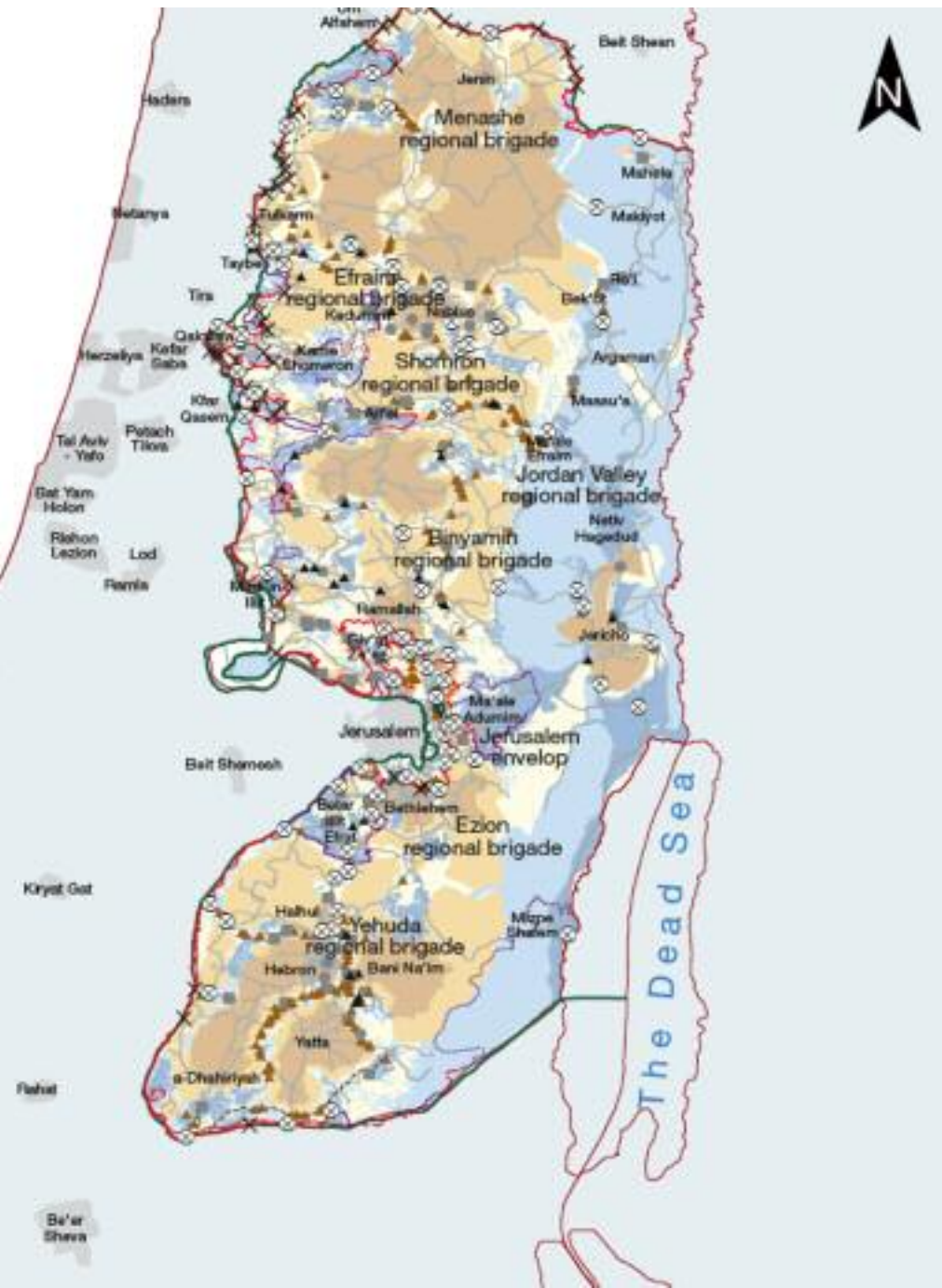
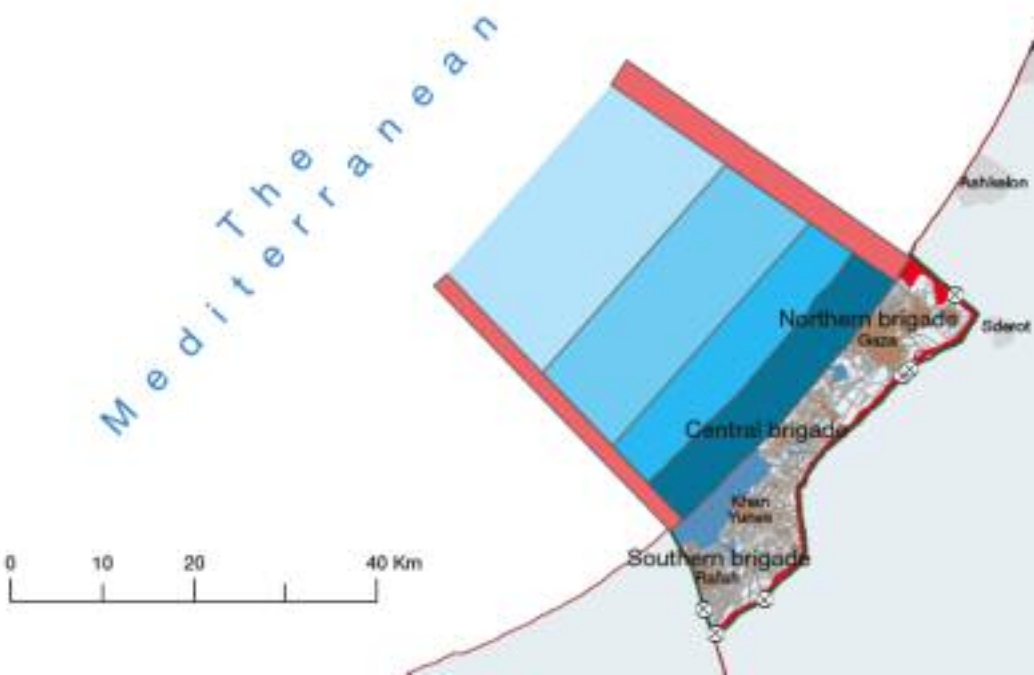
Westbankstadt Nablus, der geschäftlich oder aus familiären Gründen in eine andere palästinensische Westbankstadt, etwa nach Jericho reisen möchte, eine Genehmigung von der Zivilverwaltung benötigt, um seine Reise einzutreten. Die Sicherheitsbarriere, mit deren Bau 2002 begonnen wurde, hat eine neue und noch komplexere Teilung des Westjordanlands zur Folge. Zu den sowieso schon verschlungenen, bürokratischen Mechanismen kamen, im Rahmen dieser neuen Teilung, weitere Genehmigungs- und Bescheinigungsverfahren.

Das „Regime der Genehmigungen“, das heute in den besetzten Gebieten herrscht, hat Auswirkungen auf so gut wie alle Aspekte des palästinensischen Alltags. Die Schilderungen der Soldaten in diesem Kapitel behandeln unter anderem die Unfähigkeit der palästinensischen Behörden, der Bevölkerung ein normales Leben zu garantieren. Die palästinensische Autonomiebehörde hat keine Kontrolle über vielfältige Aspekte des täglichen Lebens in den besetzten Gebieten: Israelische Behörden kontrollieren den Transit von Zivilbevölkerung und Gütern an der Sicherheitsbarriere, die Bewegung von Zivilisten und Gütern innerhalb der besetzten Gebiete, die Eröffnung und Schließung von Betrieben, den Transport von Kindern zur Schule, von Studenten an die Universitäten und von Kranken in Kliniken.

Israel hält auch fortdauernd das Eigentum hunderttausender Palästinenser in seinem Besitz. Beschlagnahmen werden manchmal unter dem Vorwand von Sicherheitserwägungen durchgeführt, und manchmal sind Enteignungen der Grund, doch eine nicht unerhebliche Anzahl von Konfiskationen ist auf pure Willkür zurückzuführen. Es liegt im Ermessen regionaler Kommandanten oder einfacher Soldaten, Häuser, landwirtschaftliche Flächen, Fahrzeuge, elektronische Güter und Nutzvieh zu beschlagnahmen. Soldaten können auch Menschen zu Übungszwecken „beschlagnahmen“: Truppen dringen mitten in der Nacht in ein Haus ein und verhaften einen der Bewohner um ihn dann später wieder frei zu lassen – alles um Verhaftungsprozeduren zu üben.

Die israelischen Streitkräfte benutzen Codewörter wie „Lebensstruktur“ und „Verhältnismäßigkeit“ um verschiedenste Maßnahmen zu beschreiben: Checkpoints, Zerstörung von Wohnraum und Infrastruktur, gewalttätiges Eindringen in palästinensischen Wohnraum und sogar gezielte Tötungen. Die Schilderungen der Soldaten liefern eine genauere Beschreibung der palästinensischen „Lebensstruktur“ unter israelischer Besetzung: willkürlich, provisorisch und

unwürdig, abhängig von den Launen von Wachhabenden am Checkpoint, von regionalen Befehlshabern und den Koordinatoren für die Sicherheit der Siedlungen.





Soldier watching a soccer match in a Palestinian house. Nahal brigade. Ramallah, 2002



Palestinian house turned into a military post



Routine check. Paratrooper brigade, 202nd battalion



Soldiers checking Palestinians. Paratrooper Brigade, 2005

## Ausgewählte Zeugenaussagen

# 06 The mission: disrupt and harass the residents' lives

unit: Nahal • location: Hebron • year: 2005

When we made the rounds in Hebron [the largest city in the southern West Bank with several Hundred Jewish settlers living in the very centre of the city] it was shitty, but I can't say it was anything special. It was Ramadan indeed, and we kept chasing children who threw fire crackers.

### Arabs?

Arabs, yes, Ramadan. The point is I had been in Arab villages inside Israel the previous Ramadan, traveling around, and it was just the same there. It had nothing to do with Hebron in particular, nothing to do with the fact that they hate you there, they simply throw fire crackers, everyone at everyone. It's more fun to throw them at soldiers. But our platoon commander didn't think so, he thought they were all potential terrorists so we chased them. Two whole weeks. Not a kid caught. It was really pathetic.

### You were chasing children for two whole weeks in Hebron?

Yes, and we didn't catch a single one. Now I'm driving around in Hebron, catch a kid... Driving. But we were on foot patrols.

### So what did you do for two whole weeks?

Well, in fact we never caught children. We'd chase them. It always reminds of the tales of Romans [trying to suppress the Jewish rebellions] entering caves with all their gear and getting stuck inside. Like you're with your heavy ceramic bullet-proof vest and all that bullshit, and they hold the fire cracker and run. The fact is we never caught them. I don't remember catching anyone. Perhaps we did one single time. Truth is, I once heard our platoon commander caught a child and had nothing to do with him. He caught him, yelled at him, and let him go. What else could he do. That was our mission in practical terms. By definition. I remember being told quite distinctly: our mission is to disrupt – in these words – disrupt and harass the people's lives. That was our job description, because the terrorists are local residents and we want to disrupt terrorist activity, and the operational way to do that is to disrupt people's lives. I am

sure of this, and I think it's written this way to this day, if the order has not been changed. Disrupt their lives, disrupt residents' lives by definition, because this disrupts the activity of terrorists. That's the whole point.

### How does it work?

You mean what we do, in fact? Hang around the city like... Guys there say they have nothing to do? It's simply like this. You go around the town, enter abandoned houses, abandoned at least by the time we get there, sometimes we'd enter houses that were not abandoned, and carry out totally random searches. Sometimes, say we saw a kid throw a fire cracker, we'd run to there. But this could just be a lie, we could just pick out any house. It's not like there'd be any intelligence in advance. We'd carry out searches in houses and the inhabitants were totally used to it. They were not surprised, not stressed. They'd get irritated, depressed, they have no more tolerance for this bullshit, but they're used to it because it's been going on for so many years by now. Soldiers come along, turn the house inside out, make a huge mess, and leave. That's what they do. Sometimes they do all kinds of lookout shifts. There's a cemetery there, so we'd sit in the cemetery and observe all kinds of couples or I don't know, anyone walking by there. That's what we did for a rather long time. Sometimes we'd put up checkpoints for vehicles. Stand at some junction and check cars inside the neighborhood, that's what we'd do.

### What would you look for inside cars?

It's ludicrous, but this was not clear. It's like searching for weapons, I know, but no one really believes you'll find anything there.

### Not even your commander?

I don't think so. It depends which commander. If he was a highly motivated officer, then yes.

### But everyone does this?

Yes, that's the designated mission. The company commander says to the officer who says to the squad commander, in charge of the patrol: your mission is to be there and there for an hour and a half and do this and that.

### You didn't feel asinine doing this?

Terribly. That's what I'm saying. It's one of the reasons I didn't want to be squad commander. I felt to what extent these commanders have no say, they're such little screws in the system, almost like the privates. And then I thought: Why should I bring that on myself?

### You do it and the population suffers.

Exactly, totally fucked. That's just the point. That's what is so bad about this. As long

as we were up north, no one suffered from this, it was the trees we either saw or didn't. But in the Territories it's the population that suffers.

## 10 Three thousand Palestinians at five posts

Unit: Military Police • Location: Qalqilya and Tulkarem districts • Year: 2005

### How does [checkpoint] Reihan work? There's you, the combat soldiers?

The combat soldiers are with us at the checkpoint, then they were artillerymen, there was a certain period when it was one of the units from Kfir. Anyone who came, got a full inspection and it worked more on intelligence, because there were strong and precise intelligence warnings. They said that a blue pickup would arrive with weapons and there really were weapons there. The intelligence was exact, it was a quality inspection and more sensitive. Now, in the Eyal area, it's like at the mall – they check the trunk and you drive in... That's why there was bitterness...

### Some of the soldiers were in the vehicular terminal and some were in the pedestrian?

Yes.

### Let's talk about the pedestrian terminal with the glass box, because that's the newest part of the way the checkpoints work today. A guy comes, what process does he go through?

He goes to the crossing himself, he goes through an inspection on foot – a large magnometer which identifies weapons and bomb belts with a beep so there won't be a threat at the crossing itself. Afterwards he comes to the x-ray and at the magnometer there he removes all of his equipment down to his change and then crosses there. All of his equipment is examined through the x-ray, he gets dressed again, he goes on to the ID check and he crosses. There was a lot of pressure in Reihan, once in a while the Palestinians would cross three at a time and they didn't wait a long time. In Eyal, in the morning, it was a different story because there

was the peak of the morning, three thousand Palestinians for five ID posts. There was a contest, out of boredom, who could allow more Palestinians into Israel, so that the shift would go by quickly. There it was really 5 hours without rest, maybe the last half hour, but you worked and pushed people through. You got up at 2:30am, at 4-5am you are already at the crossing with swollen eyes pushing through Palestinians before you eyes.

### At what time to they start coming to the checkpoint?

Before 4 (am), the checkpoint opens at 4.

### What time does the congestion lessen?

After four or four and a half hours.

### It's like that every day?

Yes. Five days a week and on Friday there is less congestion because the majority doesn't work. Sunday is the busiest day, by far. On Sunday you wouldn't even get a break sometimes until the last minute. I would get a break only after five hours. The shifts there were divided up, there was a possibility of doing 10 straight hours or five hour shift five hour break and another five hour shift. It was crazy because you were stuck in a small box, alone, the directive was no music, nothing. After the hours of the peak you would (want to) commit suicide, silently. The soldiers would slack off and bring mp3s and I even brought a portable DVD in order to pass the time. My head was burned out, I felt things that I never felt in my life. When I was released, I blessed the day that I ran away from that thing because I hated being at the crossing on the level...

### Going back to the pedestrian terminal in Reihan. They go through x-ray screening and there is no human contact?

None. Only through the microphone. You talk with them and it's crazy because sometimes they play it stupid, sometimes they know what they are doing and they just want to annoy you and you go crazy because you can't show them, you have to direct them via the box and you don't always know enough Arabic in order to explain it to them, you improvise sentences.

### Are men and women together at the checkpoint?

Yes, but the moment there is a need for a deeper investigation, removal of clothing, they went to a separate cell where a male or female soldier would check him, depending on the gender.

### If there is an x-ray machine and a magnometer, when is there a need for deeper investigation?

When the magnometer doesn't stop beeping or when the people being checked don't do what you tell them, then you take them aside.

**At the last part you said that there is a check of crossing permits, does everyone need a crossing permit?**

Yes, otherwise there would be no permission for them to cross.

**From what age do you need a permit? Kids certainly don't need it.**

I don't remember the directives there, but a kid crosses with an adult escort or copy of his father's ID to show what city he's connected to or that he's allowed to cross.

**As for baggage, are they allowed to transfer a suitcase?**

They can transfer anything except for electronics, because you couldn't check that. At the x-ray machine there were people who knew how to see but that they couldn't see.

**A person who comes with a car?**

If he has a permit, he can cross in a vehicle.

**Does a vehicle permit allow for transfer of goods?**

There was a list of who is allowed to transfer goods.

**What is the definition of goods? If a person has a vehicle permit but not a merchandise permit and he comes in a vehicle with half a liter of oil can he cross?**

Yes. It's more sheep, sweets, vegetables, things like that.

**It's about the kind of good or the amount?**

Amount. I remember 24 baking dishes for example.

**Everything was defined?**

Yes.

## 15 Taking a Person and controlling his life

unit: Lavi • location: South Mt Hebron • year: 2003

There was one incidents which I think is the most...personally, that I regret the most. The most...during all of my service in the territories, the most not OK thing that I did. It's a guy

who came out from [the Palestinian West Bank city of] Yata, went passed a blockade. He was on his way from Yata to [the near bye larger Palestinian city of] Hebron, to the milk production plant. He had a truck with containers of milk. There was a curfew, I think, in Hebron at the time. In short, he was not allowed to cross. I caught him right as he was crossing the blockade, and it was the third time that week that I caught the same guy, in different circumstances but the same guy, more or less the same place. My fuses jumped a bit, because I took him out – like I asked him to get out of the car, this and that – he he started arguing and yelling a bit, so right away two things: restraints and blindfolds... into the jeep, I brought him to the gate of the post. It was, like I know, ten in the morning, something like that...between eleven and one in the morning I released him. Meaning – it was the summer – meaning, all day. He had some 2000 liters of milk. All of the milk spoiled. It was all day, he just sat at the gate with a blindfold and restraints. When I look at It (now), I feel embarrassed from two perspectives. A: from the standpoint of how I treated my fellow human being. Just taking a man and taking control of his life like that? I physically took him, bound him, brought him to that place, said: "OK, sit here." I took him as a bound prisoner. And no other person was responsible for that act. It wasn't that I got an order, right? No, it was what I decided. And by the way, it was acceptable. From the standpoint of all those in charge of me there was no problem with it. OK, you detained, from the standpoint of treatment of your fellow human being, and from the standpoint of the whole thing with property, meaning, there was milk. It was something of monetary value that was lost. Meaning, I lost the man, who know how many shekels, but let's say the milk was worth at least 500 Shekel [some 100\$]. In Yata that is a lot of money. Really. Fine, so I didn't take the money from his pocket, but my actions caused him to lose it all. And in my eyes that's less important than the whole personal treatment. It's not ok. Because really what's the big deal? He's not a terrorist, he wasn't wanted, he's not someone who approached me physically or threatened me with a weapon. He's a regular guy. From the standpoint of personal responsibility, what was the benefit of my actions? Nothing. Did it contribute to the security of the Sate? No. It just caused someone injustice. And that's not OK.

# 16 “I made him crap his pants”

unit: Border Police • location: Wadi Ara • year: 2003

The work with the population was the entertainment. At least in [the Palestinian village] Katzir, I don't know what was going on at that time in [the nearby Palestinian city] Jenin, but it was entertainment. To work with the people was...

## **Working with the people is a nice turn of phrase.**

Yes. [Rather] Work over. That was what there was to do. Then all of a sudden when they built the fence, so there was no population. There was the Israeli population who you have to be careful with, there is Barta'a which you could still a little...

## **So the operations move to [the Palestinian village of] Barta'a?**

A little more, yes. But again there was the tendency with Barta'a, they kept Barta'a for the IDF, so the work was mostly along the fence.

## **And when they caught someone?**

Then we went in. If you capture someone then you can go in. Really, the majority of the time - when I saw the violence - it was in the period before the fence, when it was just routine. Pouring out the kids bags and playing with their toys. You know, to grab one and to play keep away with their toys.

## **Did the kids cry?**

All the time. They cried and they were afraid. Meaning, you couldn't miss it.

## **The adults cried too?**

Of course, they were degraded. One of the goals was always: I got him to cry in front of his kids, I got him to crap in his pants.

## **You saw situations where people shat in their pants?**

Yes.

## **Why?**

From being beaten for the most part. Being beaten to death, and threatened, and screamed at you are just terrified. Especially if it's in front of your kids, they yell and threaten and scare so you also are scaring the kids. One time, again, there was some man we stopped with his kid, the kid was small, like four or something. They didn't beat up the kid, but the policeman was annoyed that the adult brought the kid, so they would have mercy on him. He says to

him: You bring your kid so they'll have mercy on you, let's show you what that is. He goes and beats him up, screams at him, saying, "what, I'll kill you in front of your boy, maybe you'll feel more..." It's terrifying. Again, there are a lot of stories of honour.

## **Did he piss his pants out of fear?**

Yes.

## **In front of the boy.**

Yes. A lot of stories of honour, like check me out, I got him to crap, I got him to whatever. They talked about it routinely all the time, it's not some kind of...

## **Where did they talk about it, in the cafeteria, in front of the officers? Was it openly?**

It was openly. I think that if an officer says that he didn't know, he's totally lying. At least the officer, the high ranking officers knew. The platoon commanders had less to do with it but the company commander, the assistant company commander, the operations officers – even encouraged it to a degree. Again, not directly, they didn't come and say, yalla [Arabic for "go ahead", adapted into Israeli slang] beat them up, but there was a kind of legitimization, otherwise it wouldn't have happened. Again, it's a fact that it happened less in Jenin and in my opinion not just because there was less work with the population.

# 20 Every two days they are open for 4 hours

unit: Civil Administration • location: general • year: 2002

At the beginning of the Intifada, there was trouble regarding the curfews for example, they would just establish a curfew and that was it. Now, forget when you open, when whatever. The civil administration for example, established regulations for these issues, that every two days it has to be open for four hours, and they made sure it was open for four hours, and they didn't inform the population and they didn't announce on the radio or for example verify at the beginning of the intifada...., they just closed a ton of roads. Verifying that there was no blocked

village, that an ambulance can't enter and that every village has an exit and all kinds of small things like that.

**And how do you know that a village is blocked? How do you understand it?**

Earlier I told you that we make connections with private Palestinians. You just have a man who isn't...he is the contact person, you call him, ask him what's going on in the village, what's this, what's that, what's happening. He tells you. And if he tells you that something is not OK and he always has your telephone number, right? He calls. And if he tells you something is not OK, then it's your duty to deal with it.

**Curfews, how did that work in the beginning?**

In the beginning, this was also in Hebron, there are tables...you can request it from the Ministry of Defense, they'll even give it to you, we did it at the time and it's in the bureau of the Minister of Defense, it was moved to there. But at the beginning, there was an extended period without opening... I think about once a week. I was still in Bet El [seat of the Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank], but at first there were very extended curfews, after that they really did open: every 48 hours for four hours... On Friday, to allow for prayer. Also generally on Saturday, they were open, because there is a lesser presence of IDF in the area. Slowly it worked out.

**Who decided about the curfew?**

The brigade commander.

**There is no mechanism, procedure that you have to consult with the administration?**

No. First of all, he always consults with the administration. But the reason for establishing a curfew is a security reason, there is nothing to do. That's why the brigade commander decides and he has to inform the division commander, but he doesn't...and he has organized rules. There are just rules.

**And how does the administration manifest itself with this issue? If say an administration officer says...**

If for example, after 40 hours...first of all this law has...it's a regulation put out by the legal advisor in the West Bank. The military legal advisor in the West Bank. This is the regulation he put out, it has exceptions. Meaning, if some incident happened, you can bring it up to the General Commanding Officer, and he can approve longer than 48 hours. But these incidents were unusual, really there had to be a very large terror attack, in order to do it. And the administration is meant to remind the brigade commander every 48 hours, or to say "you have to open for four hours, between the hours of x, y, and z." And that's it. They are also things which are said from the beginning, so the population will be prepared and will go out.

**How do you inform them?**

You call the radio, you tell the broadcasters. Even the Fatah radio broadcasters. Then there were no Hamas stations. I think there are today.

**And they put it up?**

Yes.

## 24 We shot at fishermen, cut their nets

unit: Navy • location: Gaza strip • year: 2005-2007

There is an area which borders Gaza, an area called area K which is under the control of the navy. Both before and after the disengagement, nothing changed in regard to the sea sector, everything remained the same. The only thing that changed is that area K between Israeli and Gaza, area M between Egypt and Gaza and in the middle there was another partition which prevented boats from crossing from the Rafiah harbor to the Gaza harbor. This part disappeared during the partition and it returned to be open to them. The only plus. I remember that near the K areas between Israel and Gaza there were kids who would get up in the morning, kids from the age of 4 – 6. Seventy percent of the population in Gaza lives on fishing. For them it's water and bread and everything. If there are no fish – there is no food. They arrived early in the morning, around 4 or 5 every morning to the forbidden areas. They went there because the area is crowded with fishermen. It's a small area and the fish run away to the closed areas because there are no fishermen. They always try to scout it out and cross, and every morning there was the procedure of shooting in their direction to scare them to the point of shooting at the feet of the kids standing on the beach or those travelling in the direction on a surfboard. We had Druze [members of a sect that emerged from Islam, lives mostly in Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, and speaks Arabic. The Druze citizens living in Israel serve in the army as opposed to the Christian and Muslim Arab-Palestinian minority] on the boat who would scream at them

in Arabic and curse them. Afterwards you would see in the cameras the faces of the kids crying, poor kids.

**What does that mean shooting in their direction?**

It starts with shooting in the air, it moves to shooting next to them and in extreme cases it gets to shooting towards their legs. I didn't shoot at the legs but there were other ships in my company who shot towards their legs.

**What's the distance from which you shoot?**

Far, 500-600 meters. You shoot with a Rafael heavy machine gun, it's all automatic.

**Where do you aim?**

It's an issue of angles. In the camera there is a measure for height and a measure for width and you mark with the cursor where you want and it prevents the effect of the waves and hits where it's supposed to, it's precise.

**You aim a meter away from the surfboard?**

More, even 5-6 meters. There were cases that I heard about where they hit the surfboard, I didn't see it. That the shrapnel hit them, the ricochet of the bullet hitting the water. There were cases that bothered me, there is the issue of the Palestinian fishing nets. Their nets cost around 4000 Shekel [some 800:], which is like a million dollars for us. When they would deviate many times they would sink their nets. They leave their nets in the water, the nets stay in the water for something like six hours. The Dabur [navy ship] comes, and cuts their nets.

**Why do they do it?**

As a punishment.

**For what?**

For the fact that they deviated too many times. If let's say a surfboard deviates to a forbidden area, a Dabur comes, circles, shoots in the air and returns. They an hour later they come back and the Dabur returns. The third time it starts with shooting at the nets, at the body and then shooting to sink. Shooting to sink never happened to me but I was at shooting at the body and the nets.

**But how do they know whose net it is?**

The boat drags it. It's always connected to the boat.

**The forbidden area, it's presumably the area that is close to Israel?**

There is the area close to Israel and the area on the Israeli-Egyptian border. The sea border is three miles out, something like twenty miles wide, about 30 kilometres.

**When you calculate the twenty miles between Gaza and Egypt and between Israel and**

**Gaza?**

Yes.

**These 20 miles come on the account of Gaza or Israel?**

What do you think? Of course on the account of Gaza. Not just that, the sea border of Israel is 12 miles and of Gaza is three. The entirety of the these three miles which are in the direction of the Mediterranean sea are for one reason, because they are covetous of the gas and there is an offshore drilling rig something like three and half miles opposite the Gaza short which is Palestinian for everything except that is ours. They work there like crazy and the security is from Shayetet 13 [the navy special forces unit]. Even if a bird comes close to the area – they shoot it. There is insane protection of the thing. If one time there were Egyptian fishing nets which crossed the three miles, we also dealt with them and it was a mess.

**What does that mean?**

They came, these are international waters, we don't have jurisdiction there but we would go out, and shoot at them.

**At Egyptian fishing boats?**

Yes. And that is a peaceful country.

**30** The atmosphere was one where you can slap, you can hit, degrade, and give the run-around

unit: Border Police • location: Wadi Ara • year: 2002

The kids there with the plastic bags, they would freely steal from their bags. "Come here, dump out the bags." Now, we know 100 percent what these bags are. OK, you could say it's a security procedure you could smuggle weapons in the bags. "OK, dump out the bags. Hey, I need batteries," and they take, they take whatever they want.

**What else did they take?**

Toys, batteries, whatever was there. All the knickknacks.

**Money? Cigarettes?**

Yes, Cigarettes. Money, I'm sure, but I don't remember anything specific. But again, they definitely didn't pay for things. There was an incident once when [most popular Israeli television station] channel 2 happened to be around in the area and they video some team doing it, and after that the company commander gathered us all in a square, reprimanded us, like reprimanded the whole company. He said to them: "How did you not think about how you would be seen." Not how did you do this, what were you thinking, "How did you not think about how you would be seen".

**And after that everything we back to normal?**

Yes, the patrol that they caught, there was a summary trial and they were punished, but not really punished...

**How?**

One they moved to a better unit, which is a terrible punishment, and one who was in the regular army was suspended for like a month. That was more or less the level of punishment and it quickly went back to normal. Really, the atmosphere was one where you can slap, you can hit, degrade, and give the run-around.

## 31 One of the senior soldiers just decided to humiliate

unit: Artillery corps • location: Wadi Ara • year: 2001

One of the activities is capturing illegal aliens, just, this was when I was in the senior company. The seam line between [the Israeli city with an Arab-Palestinian population of] Umm al Fahm and another place there. Seeing illegal aliens and whatever, I remember one of the senior soldiers... like every time there was the thing of running after those running away, I never under-

stood what the big deal was. They would catch them, they would sit next to us and they would just humiliate them with degrading talk. Like "shut up" to adults, to young people, to people... and they are the nicest in the world, they spoke to them: "Shut up your ,mouth" and whatever, it wavered between really unbelievable situations. It wavered between like trying to humiliate him and then he is nice to him. And suddenly...he ,brings him popsicles when he comes back and cigarettes and things like that...

**Who, the soldier to the Palestinian?**

No, the Palestinian brings him. And then like all of a sudden it's OK, but...

**The soldiers would take bribes, gifts?**

They would detain them for no reason. You check their documents "nice to meet you and whatever, see you later." Let's say they didn't try to be as humane and professional as possible. I, for example, bought an Arabic conversation book and learned how to say, you cannot walk here and I asked my parents who speak Arabic.

**Wait, they detain people with documentation and everything and they just detain them?**

Just for no reason: "sit here, stay here." And they don't have to. If he cannot cross, then tell him to go back. And if not, then let him cross. But an argument developed there that got to the stripes of... exactly what I wanted to say...that the senior soldier just decided to humiliate this guy. It was just when we were about to leave the post and he just said to the him to lie on the floor, the most like...guy, a 25 year old guy, a student, nice, he just decides to humiliate him. He laid him down on his stomach...

**A soldier or a commander?**

A senior soldier, who had more say than the commanders. The guy was dressed nicely, button down shirt, jeans. He just told him to lie on the floor on his stomach. And he put his foot on his neck, here, and cocked his weapon and yelled at him: "Why are you crossing here, don't cross here anymore..." And this and that...and the guy [the soldier] started telling him to do all kinds of things, telling him to stand, telling him to lie on his stomach, he told him things like that. I yelled at him: "Enough, let go, stop," I was in shock. I was in shock from the situation. I thought he was an animal, not a human being. And he, I think he's a shitty human being. Like I couldn't stand him regardless of this and after it I couldn't stand him even more. But no, I didn't pass in on or anything. I didn't have an ear that would listen.

**Why didn't you tell anyone?**

Because this guy was chummy with everyone. I think even the officers knew about it.

The commander was also there. Apparently the commander didn't see it as something unprofessional.

**An officer?**

A commander, a squad commander. I like at that moment decided that I have nothing to do in this crazy place and this is how they humiliate people who didn't do anything wrong. And even if they did commit a crime, they can't raise a hand, it's forbidden. It shocked me. I don't know if he was a Palestinian citizen or an Israeli citizen. There is a very good chance he was an Israeli citizen. Because Umm al Fahm is Israeli. Another time there was a situation in the same place, where they came upon the car of someone. They started to yell at him. It was always the group of senior soldiers who would do like this thing. And we would do what we had to do. Check documents. For the action, just to pass the time, so they'll have something to talk about at home. For the feeling of killing time. I don't know, I guess. They started dismantling his car. Yelling at him. This and that, the guy said he was a member of the Betzelem organization, a citizen from Umm al Fahm. And that's it and they still continued with it. They don't even know what Betzelem is. They were stupid people. And then it ended. Aside from that, from these two situations, that's what was.

Rechtsdurchsetzung

## Kapitel 4:

### Duales Regime – “Rechtsdurchsetzung”

Die Berichte in diesem Kapitel beschreiben die Umsetzung von Recht und Ordnung in den besetzten Gebieten. Palästinenser unterliegen einer Militärherrschaft: der Kontrolle durch Drohungen, die, gestützt auf Strafaktionen und Angriffe, die Macht der herrschenden Armee demonstrieren. Tausende Befehle, Vorschriften und Anordnungen werden von unterschiedlichen Behörden erlassen: dem Verteidigungsministerium, der Zivilverwaltung, dem Oberbefehlshaber sowie den Kommandanten und Soldaten. Die Anweisungen ändern sich häufig und sind oft widersprüchlich. Es werden beständig neue Vorschriften erlassen, während andere ohne Warnung auslaufen. Ein Soldat am Checkpoint hat die Befugnis „als Befehlshaber vor Ort nach Ermessen vorzugehen“ und hat damit das Recht gegenüber jedem, den er aus wie immer gearteten Gründen als Bedrohung empfindet, Festnahmen oder Verhaftungen durchzuführen, oder Gewalt einzusetzen. Daher unterliegt die palästinensische Bevölkerung, die im Allgemeinen von den Sicherheitskräften als Bedrohung wahrgenommen wird, einer nicht enden wollenden Aneinanderreihung von Drohungen, die auf der totalen Macht israelischer Militärbehörden basieren.

Neben Millionen von Palästinensern, die unter der militärischen Ordnung leben, leben auch hunderttausende Israelis in den Gebieten, die in erster Linie dem israelischen Gesetz unterliegen. Die Siedler, die schon 1967 begonnen hatten mit Hilfe der israelischen Regierung jüdische Siedlungen zu etablieren, unterliegen israelischer Gerichtsbarkeit und Gesetzen, die ihr eigener Staat umsetzt. Die Siedler sind aber nicht nur israelische Staatsbürger, die das Recht auf Schutz durch die israelische Armee und Gesetzgebung haben; in der Praxis sind sie auch Partner in der militärischen Beherrschung der Palästinenser.

Es gibt eine enge Verbindung zwischen IDF und Siedlern: viele Militäreinheiten sind angrenzend an Siedlungen, oder sogar innerhalb der Siedlungen, stationiert. Die Siedler versorgen die Soldaten mit Essen und Kaffee, sie geben ihnen einen historischen, geographischen und

politischen Überblick über die Gegend und laden sie sogar am Sabbat und zu Festessen ein.

Darüber hinaus wird in diesem Kapitel enthüllt, dass Siedler an wichtigen militärischen Aktivitäten teilnehmen: Sie kommandieren und führen Soldaten und nehmen gar am operativen Entscheidungsfindungsprozess teil. Weiterhin sagen Soldaten aus, dass in vielen Fällen die Soldaten in den Palästinensergebieten Anweisungen von Siedlern und den Koordinatoren für die Sicherheit in den Siedlungen ausführen, insbesondere wenn es sich um die Vertreibung von Palästinensern von landwirtschaftlichen Flächen handelt, die an die Siedlungen angrenzen. Mit dieser Methode gelingt es den Siedlern, Palästinenser zu enteignen und die Siedlungsgebiete weiter auszudehnen (Zeugenaussagen 1, 6, 12).

Die Schilderungen in diesem Kapitel demonstrieren den dualen Status der Siedler in den besetzten Gebieten und zeigen was passiert, wenn Siedler die Gesetze oder die Politik, die von den Oberbefehlshabern vorgegeben wird, nicht einhalten. Meist handelt es sich bei diesen Verstößen um Versuche, Palästinenser von ihrem Land zu vertreiben. Handlungen, die unter normalen Umständen unbestreitbar einen Gesetzesbruch darstellen würden. Unter den gegebenen Umständen wird aus Gesetzesbruch eine Meinungsverschiedenheit zwischen Siedlern und Strafverfolgungsbehörde. Diese wird meist durch einen Kompromiss aufgelöst, der im Normalfall auf Kosten der Palästinenser und ihrer Rechte geht (Zeugenaussage 13). Solche Momente der Krise und des Kompromisses zeigen wie tief die Partnerschaft zwischen den beiden Parteien reicht (Zeugenaussage 17).

Die Unfähigkeit israelisches Recht gegen die Siedler durchzusetzen ist nicht Folge der Inkompetenz der Strafverfolgungsbehörden sondern beweist den Doppelstatus der Siedler. Die israelischen Sicherheitskräfte sehen die Siedler als Alliierte im Kampf gegen einen gemeinsamen Feind und als vollwertige Partner bei der militärischen Kontrolle über die Palästinenser.

Außerdem haben die Siedler das gleiche Recht auf Schutz wie alle anderen israelischen Staatsbürger. So können die Siedler in den besetzten Gebieten als Vertreter Israels auftreten, als wären sie Teil der Sicherheitskräfte.

Die israelische Besatzung basiert auf diesem dualen Regime: Die Bürgerrechte der Siedler sind von der israelischen Gesetzgebung festgelegt und geschützt. Die Palästinenser dagegen werden durch Drohungen und militärische Gewalt beherrscht. Die Aussagen der Soldaten beschreiben wie die IDF die Ambitionen der Siedler auf Kosten der palästinensischen Bevölkerung unterstützt, schult und vorantreibt. Die Aussagen beschreiben auch wie Siedler die israelischen Sicherheitskräfte dabei unterstützen, die palästinensische Bevölkerung unter Kontrolle zu halten. Der Doppel-Standard, den die Siedler in den besetzten Gebieten genießen, ist systemimmanent: Siedler spielen eine zentrale Rolle in einem System, das das Leben von Palästinensern kontrolliert und sicherstellt, dass Israel die Macht in den besetzten Gebieten behält.

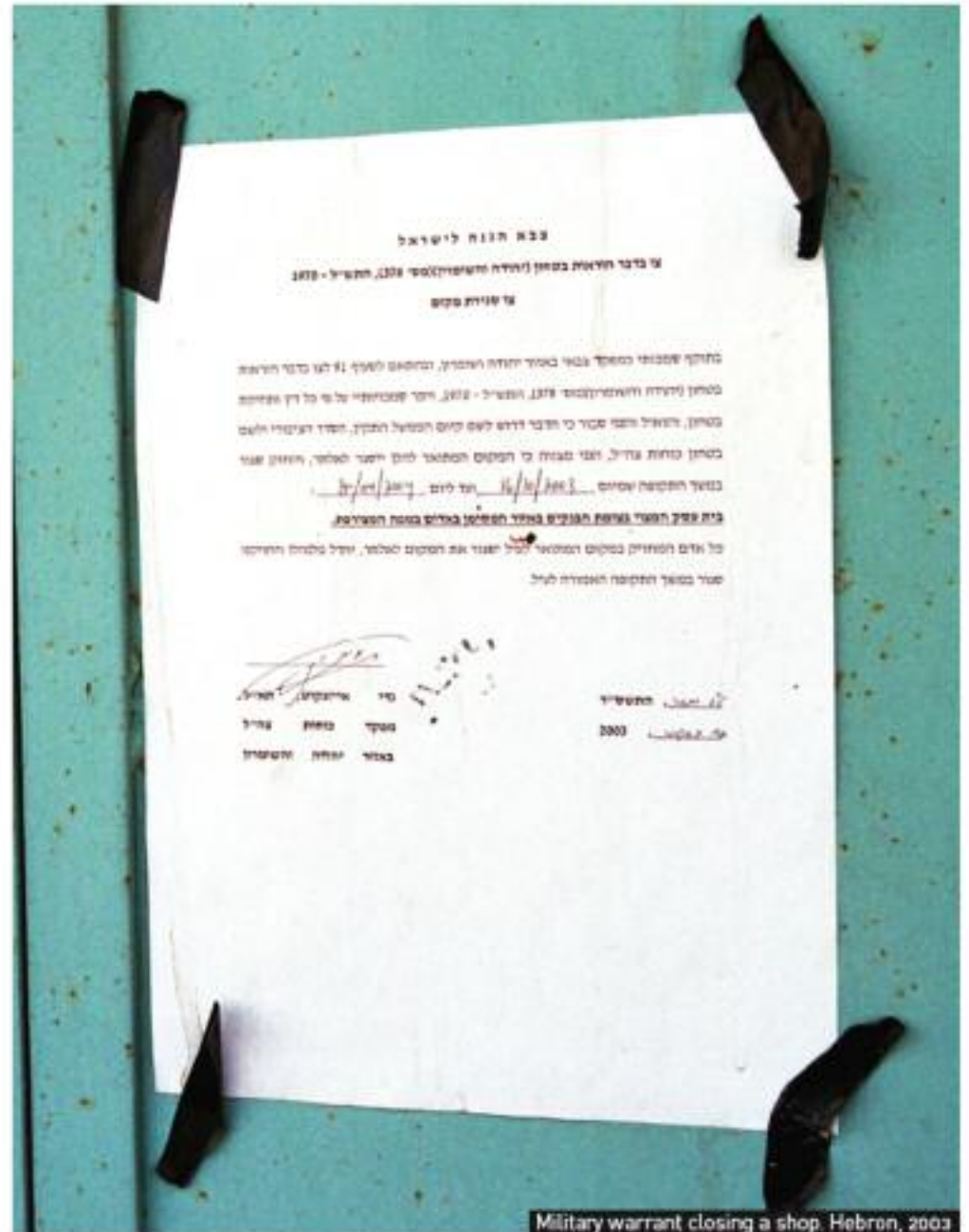




Soldier with a Hebron settler. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Hebron, 2003



Soldiers on patrol in the Casbah in Hebron. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Hebron, 2003



Military warrant closing a shop. Hebron, 2003

## Ausgewählte Zeugenaussagen

# 01 The mission: to provide security for the rampages of the settlers

unit: Armored Corps • location: Nablus district • year: 2000

What was etched (in my memory) mostly was when we were on an operation in Huwwara. It's an Arab village...not particularly quiet, but not [as troublesome as the Palestinian city] Jenin.

### What happened there?

In short what happened, the Jews decided to go on a rampage, in the area of [the Israelis settlement] Tapuach. In the area of Tapuach there are settlements and all kinds of outposts.

### You weren't in the village then...

We weren't in the village. Huwwara was our sector. They deployed us to secure the mess in Huwwara. That's what it was at the beginning, we didn't know what the mess was. We arrived. The settlers decided to attack the residents of the village, and we – we are supposed to protect them so nothing will happen to them.

### The settlers were inside Huwwara?

They came to protest and they started throwing stones into the village, into Huwwara, on the main road and disturbing [the peace]. There was a group from outside Israel who were demonstrating in favour of the Jewish settlement...and they were goading the settlers. I remember that I was on the cusp of hitting one of the...group of fanatical Jews from France who came and were taking pictures of what was going on there...

### And the Arabs, what were they doing?

Nothing. They were scared.

### Did the settlers bring weapons?

They brought weapons, they threw stones...children hurling at adults.

### Were there women there?

There were also women there, but not too many. But there were settler women there. Now we're standing there, the group from outside Israel was bothering us, was bothering the IDF.

### What did you try and do there? To stop the stone throwing or just protect the settlers?

To protect the settlers and make sure that nothing happens to them when they are throwing stones, when they are on a rampage...

### Was that the official order?

What can you do? Mostly security. Security. Protecting the settlers. You get there, they are united, they are throwing stones. You back them up, you provide cover. Now on the one hand there was a gathering of the people of the village at all kinds of points above the houses. You are scared to death because you are exposed to the Palestinians and on the other hand you don't know what to do there because you are protecting the settlers who decided to make a war. It got to the point where we just wanted to stop it. We didn't want to give the settlers access.

### That wasn't the first thing you wanted to do?

No, we waited for the police.

### Meaning you didn't move them in the meantime?

No, but at some point I don't remember who, I think it was one of the officers, tried to stop them from throwing the rocks so they would leave there, so they would get out of there. It came to the point where he was also afraid. We tried to bother them bothering the Palestinians and also protect them and with that protect ourselves...it was an absurd and crazy scene. And they, they didn't care. Not about the soldiers and not the Palestinians.

### And when you come and try...

Hitting.

### You hit the settlers?

Yes. And then the guys from outside Israel came, the French people and they were photographing you, and then you start hitting. They lie down under your jeep, and you want to hit them also. They come with video cameras and you grab an eighteen year old boy and put him into the car and some idiot woman with a video camera comes and video tapes you. And in the meantime the settlers continue on their rampage. You want to slap them and throw them out, the settlers too – one by one, they just come and throw stones! Then come and throw stones and maybe...they start shooting, they would shoot! Throwing stones – at the houses and the people....

### Was someone injured?

Ummm...not too bad. Not that we didn't go and treat them, it was three hours...

### Who was injured? The settlers or the Arabs?

No, no, no...the Arabs.

**Did someone get a rock in the head?**

One?! There were some, I think more than ten got hit with rocks.

**Bleeding?**

They bleed and disappear. Someone in the window of his house...by the way, those same settlers – there was some day where they shot the water tanks. They just succeeded in hitting the water tanks in Huwwara.

**How did it end?**

It ended with us throwing them out.

**You did it?**

Yes, yes.

**You took them physically?**

No, in a car. They came in cars got out of the cars and threw stones. Because of the danger to soldiers in something like that, it was a problem to stop it. At first, for the first hour you protect them, you let them throw rocks freely...

**You let them throw rocks for an hour and no one says that it's...?**

You don't understand what happened, we came on a vehicular patrol, we arrived. We didn't know what was happened. Afterwards we realized that we needed to prevent there from being too many disturbances.

**And they still continued throwing stones?**

Yes. And there were a lot of them and they were doing what they wanted. They have the back up of...they were...eight, nine vehicles something like that, and they stopped the traffic there. And you are fighting with them and then the French group came also...

**They don't try and injure the soldiers? The local population?**

What the hell! They peeked, they peeked and were injured and went back to their houses. Think about the fact that they are in shock. People are living there on their street. When they stick their heads out their window, they get hit with a stone. They come with their goods and they get hit with stones. Their whole routine of daily life at that moment was – their life was in danger.

**And the one who got up and said: "let's stop the settlers"...**

No, our battalion commander, I don't remember his rank...a major...decided it was enough. That it was too dangerous if they would respond and a terrorist group would suddenly come. And it turned over pretty fast. We put them into vehicles and we started throwing out those Frenchmen and dispersing the mess. It wasn't out of humanitarian concern. We didn't start

throwing out the settlers because the IDF was humane all of a sudden, it was just so that there wouldn't be a mess, so that there would be order of some group or something, we were thinking of the soldiers not the people.

## 06 The settlers are on a tour in the Kasbah, we move the Palestinians

unit: Nahal • location: Hebron • year: 2008

**You say that you talked among yourselves, what was the talk?**

Because of our background, we aren't guys who came to cover up and from an ethical and political perspective it was hard for many to be there. It was hard for us with the settlers. We were in the center, on the one hand the center of the Kasbah, and the center of the settlement and a lot of the difficulties were with the settlers, most of the violence we experienced wasn't against the Palestinians because they didn't have a chance, they don't have a lot they can do when soldiers are in front of them, rather it was against the settlers who were violent. During my whole service I would go with a notebook in my pocket and each time the settlers would curse or would act violently, I wrote it down and I also interviewed other soldiers and wrote about it.

**How many of those did you record?**

A lot, I had 23. It was important for me to document things that I saw myself or that close friends told me. I didn't want things that I didn't...it was important for me to document violence of all kinds, whether it's a curse up to a real attack.

**What is a real attack?**

One of the objectives in Hebron is to prevent friction, they divided roads between Jews and Arabs. And our "favorite" thing was the Friday afternoon tour of the Kasbah [the center of the city]. Spitting in someone's face...

**The settlers would go into the Casbah on Fridays?**

Yes, there was a standing tour of one of the tour guides on the settlement and they would go on a tour, we had to guard, beyond the fact that they needed double the people to guard them it was the most degrading thing. Less so us, more what they did... there were curses, we tried to prevent encounters. We had to move an entire street so that this group could pass through.

**What was the procedure in regards to the Palestinian population when there is a tour of the Kasbah?**

There was one force on the roofs guarding there and another force below with the company commander or the deputy company commander in order to surround the settlers, to move all the residents from the street.

**They didn't make a curfew?**

No, they moved them aside. We tried to make it "clean, sterile," to disturb as little as possible, although it was impossible not to disturb. I don't know how long it was going on.

**Did you encounter real violence by the settlers beyond cursing?**

No, I think that even if they would give a slap, by the fact that it's them, it's such a violent act, as I see the world. What difference does it make if he pushed, cursed, or slapped, it's the prevalent [attitude] that's the difficulty.

**Did you get to show the notebook to one of the officers?**

No, at a certain point there was a decisive conversation with the battalion commander. He was a straight and honest man and he said that we had to come forward if you saw things or he did something, he wanted to investigate it and uncover things. He said that the things that he knew about, he clarified. We told him about the story with the settlers, dealing with them. There was always a feeling that it wasn't clear what the army wants from you, where the line is. You aren't a blue clothed soldier, you don't have the privileges of policemen and the settlers don't see you as an authority. When it's convenient for them, they are with you, and when it's not...so he says: "Even if they spit at you or attack you, try and ignore it." He was aware of the fact that it was a problem, but he was pretty limited because it's political.

**What did they say to you about your authority over the settlers?**

They said we had the ability to arrest if something develops, in practice that's very difficult. The general feeling was that it's not clear what had to be done. The police have very limited resources and I want to believe that they wanted to but I know that it was difficult for them with the amount of incidents that there were.

**So normally the only thing you do when you see something like that is you stand****against it?**

No, we went in but we were limited, it's difficult for a 19-20 year old to stand against something like that. I also don't know how much was in our power to do.

**So what did you do?**

We would separate them, the physical friction points were relatively small between people. When things would happen we would try and separate, and we called the police. There were kids who would go up on the roofs in [Israeli settlement and synagogue in the center of Hebron] Avraham Avinu and throw stuff or curse, soldiers would throw them from the post. It's a very dry law, that's my feeling, where it's not clear what they want from me.

## 12 They legitimize throwing rocks

unit: Nahal • location: Hebron • year: 2004-2006

Also seeing those kids in Hebron and being proud that they are afraid. It's like kids, it's really like. I remember also who were they afraid of? Of the Jewish kids. They didn't do anything, but they throw rocks at them and rocks when they pass by, the Jewish kids. The parents don't say anything. The parents stand, you can see a young kid standing, throwing some small stones and yelling something at them, it was already part of the routine. You come to [the Israeli settlement in the middle of Hebron] Tel Rumaïda and you see it everyday. It's already OK. And the parents, they walk around there, I don't know if it's the parents but adults walk around there and don't comment to the kids.

**It doesn't seem strange to you that a kid throws a stone at another kid?**

Because he was a Jew and the other a Palestinian, it's as if it were OK.

**Did you also see the opposite?**

I remember that I would say out loud it was kind of OK, but I would think to myself come on, what is he fucked up? That guy didn't do anything to him. I would think: this, this is what causes all of the mess these small fights, these things that the Jews start. It was a kid who I know his parents educate – it's things that you hear and see on TV – his parents educate him to hate

them, and they legitimize throwing rocks and cursing him. So it's like clear there will be a mess afterwards. And you also, you don't understand which side you are on. I remember that in Hebron it's the strangest, that you don't know which side you are on. I am a female Jewish Israeli soldier, and I'm supposed to be against the Arabs because they are my enemy, but I'm here, next to a house in the post, and I think that they are not OK, that the Jews aren't right. So wait, so no, I have to turn a switch in my brain to keep hating Arabs and justifying Jews. But no, wait, they still are not OK, they are starting it, because of them we are here and because of them this is all happening, because they bother them and they are afraid. Like, it's terrible all of this...

**So why flip the switch?**

Because it's loyalty to your side.

**What age are the kids you are talking about?**

Young, like five-six. The ones who run around outside.

**Were there incidents of violence by adults?**

I remember there was, we were travelling on a bus, it was during the disengagement, I don't remember what the story was, but someone who they said was crazy and her husband or boyfriend was killed by a terrorist, I don't know what, so she was screaming at the soldiers, at one of the soldiers who wouldn't give her a place to sit on the bus. I remember that he controlled himself, controlled himself, and she also hit him I think. He controlled himself, controlled himself, and then at a certain point he yelled at her "Shut up, it's because of you I'm here at all." They hated being there.

**The soldiers?**

Yes. I also think they were mad at the settlers, the residents of Hebron. They were mad.

**They don't bring you pizzas to the post and all kinds of stuff like that?**

They bring, but every so often I would hear "because of these shits we are here at all, they should get out of here, they should leave." On the one hand there is that, again, you are mad at your nation that they are here, at the Jews that they are here. On the other hand you also hate the Arabs, because they kill your friends and make trouble for you.

**So you hate everyone?**

Yes. And then I think that you don't think, you say what pops into your head at that moment: now I hate this so I'll curse him and after that I hate this so I'll curse him, and now I hate him so I'll spit at him.

**You spit on Jews?**

No, why? They didn't do anything to me.

**And Arabs?**

But they are like Arabs...I don't know, it's true, that specific guy that I spit on didn't do anything to me. I think he didn't do anything at all. But again, it was cool and it was the one thing that I could do to, you know, I can't go and make arrests and be proud that I caught a terrorist, and I can't eliminate a terrorist and I can't go on some operation and find some weapon under some tile in their house. But I can spit on them and degrade them and ridicule them.

## 13 We confiscated cars, the settlers vandalized them

unit: Paratroopers □ location: Nablus area □ year: 2003

**What was the issue with the confiscation of cars?**

There were many roads and they are nothing compared to all of the dirt roads that there are, there was an order at some point, when you found someone trying to bypass from a bypass road or trying to go around you and you succeeded in catching him, you confiscate his car.

**What was done with the car?**

You bring it to a lot next to the post, they made a lot.

**Who made the lot?**

I don't know, it was there before us I think, we used it for that. The problem was that there was no guard duty of the cars so people would go down from [the Israeli settlement] Elon Moreh and destroy the cars that you just confiscated to return the next day to its owners, it's a threat from the State so that you don't do it again.

**Did you also look inside the cars?**

Yes. First you take the person for a short interrogation, he goes into detention.

**Where do you take him for the interrogation?**

You bring him to the checkpoint, that's where they interrogate him.

**Soldiers from the company?**

Either from the company, or if need be, you bring him to the central brigade to the interrogators. Not us. Many times we release him after half an hour, he would go on his way and they would tell him to come and get the car after a day or two. Our problem was that the settlers would go down on foot from Elon Moreh and they would destroy the cars. We guarded the cars so that they wouldn't smash the windows and they wouldn't destroy them. The taxis are one of their main sources of income. The guy comes in the morning with the ticket that was given to him. You take the guy; you want to give him back his car.

**It was really organized?**

Yes, he had a ticket and we had a ticket, he signs and you sign and then he comes to ask for his car after a day.

**What was written on the form?**

License number. After an investigation he would get a not with the license number. The ambition was to only confiscate the car for a day. He would drive it to the car lot and we would escort him.

**It was playing cat and mouse with the settlers...**

Correct. You stand there helpless in front of the guy the next day, you go to show him the car and you see that it's broken: cut tires, smashed windowpane. You catch a 13-14 year old settler and it's a problem. You turn to the settlement in Elon Moreh and they don't know anything and a situation is created where the company has to allocate another post just to guard the cars. It was cumbersome. We always fought with these fucked up settlers trying to protect them and they put a stick in the wheels. You catch the car so that terrorists won't hurt them, you are just dealing with them all the time. Young and brazen kids who they didn't educate when they were young. You know the routine, you see them coming. The absurd things was that we would make ambushes in order to catch the kids coming to destroy the cars. You take them, you can't arrest them because they are minors, the police have nothing to do against them.

**They are all minors?**

Yes, the settlers aren't idiots, they send the kids, they won't endanger themselves, if you catch them you have to open a file. And then the higher ups would speak with the heads of the settlement and we were helpless. Who will fix the car now? Sometimes the cars were in a state that it wasn't worth it to fix them. It's a shitty feeling that you protect them [the settlers] and they...

# 17 Stopping the settlers? The army can't do anything

unit: Lavi • location: South Hebron hills • year: 2003

**What about the Palestinian farmers?**

What does that mean?

**I know about arguments over land in South Hebron Hills.**

A, it's not in our sector, so I am less involved, the whole thing with poisoning the sheep. Those are the guys from [the Israeli settlement] Maon, the Jewish guys. Just: "This is my land!" and they throw out by force anyone who isn't Jewish, OK? The army doesn't do anything.

**The army doesn't do anything announced?**

I guess. I don't have the forces, I just imagine that the whole senior command staff in the sector know it's a problem. But how can you deal with the problem? If there is a plan to deal with the problem? No, I think. What, it's like, I was in Hebron, it's like the settlers in Hebron. They throw stones and just stop the Kasbah, and embitter the lives of the Palestinians living there, right? Does the army do something?

**No.**

Correct. It's the same thing, it doesn't want too much confrontation. It's the same thing by the way that's happening now in Gaza. Forget the hotel; the hotel is somehow legal, they allowed the whole hotel, what is that, absorption from Gaza, like I know. OK, let's say, it's legal. But they took control of a house, a private house that was populated, by the Muasi. A Palestinian house, private Israelis just took control of the house. It wasn't an abandoned house, right? They just threw the people out of the house. And what did the army do? Nothing. They were already there for two days. What about the Palestinian family? Why didn't the army just throw them out? What, we don't have units that can go in there? They are holed up in the house, they have weapons. OK, fine. How would they deal with Palestinians who were holed up in a house with weapons? They would take down the house on top of them with a bulldozer. It's the same thing with all of the settlers in the area. A settler does something not right, there is no means of enforcement. And they know it: "what, you are a soldier, you can't do anything. Go get the police."

**They say that to you?**

Yes. They say: go get the police. And also, you know the police there, you call the police, if it's some problem with a Jew – they won't come. Even if it's Israeli Arabs [citizens of Israel who have the problem] I got an answer from the police of "We won't come, release them" [the settlers].

Das Schweigen brechen

(Breaking the Silence / Shovrim Shtika)