

لا للحواجز  
WATCH



נשים למען זכויות אדם  
نساء من أجل حقوق الإنسان  
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## WEEKLY DIGEST: REPORTS FROM CHECKPOINTS AROUND BETHLEHEM

### Introduction

MachsomWatch started its observations in February, 2001 with three women and as of October 2002 numbers 80 volunteers in Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and the Jezreel Valley area. Members include Jewish and Palestinian Israeli women aged from early twenties to over 70. Observations are conducted twice daily and a report is issued after each shift. **When reading them, remember that no Palestinian may enter Israel, nor indeed move freely around the West Bank (and Gaza), without a permit from the Israeli authorities.** Presented here in edited form, our reports give a day-by-day account of the checkpoints. Many of them describe a routine that is devoid of drama, and bloodshed, and perhaps all the more shocking for that. The sights we see, the experiences we undergo, together with Palestinians citizens forced to make their way across these obstacles are those of human heartbreak and the abuse of the most fundamental human rights: the right of freedom of movement, access to medical care, access to education. Full versions of these reports may be obtained from [machsomwatch@hotmail.com](mailto:machsomwatch@hotmail.com)

The checkpoints in and around the Jerusalem area are not primarily security devices for screening out terrorists wishing to enter the city or Israel proper. The Israeli government policy of curfew and closure of Palestinian villages (the closure policy began during the Gulf War of 1990-91), which has intensified over the years, continues to reach ever new heights. Many villages and cities are completely closed off, or, at best, have one small point of entry, inaccessible by vehicles, including ambulances. The policy is aimed at restricting the movement of Palestinians, at curtailing, even crippling, the Palestinian economy and the fabric of Palestinian society. It is about redefining borders, national and municipal. Since we began our observations in February 2002, we at MachsomWatch have witnessed the terrible effects that the checkpoints have on the Palestinian population: the humiliation, frustration, arbitrariness and cruelty encountered there are stimuli to violence for an oppressed population. The effect on the young Israeli men and women who man these barriers is no less disastrous.

In addition to the checkpoints themselves, the closure of the West Bank (and Gaza) is reinforced by a series of bureaucratic procedures. An understanding of these is essential to the reading of our reports.

### The West Bank (and Gaza) is divided into three areas of control:

**Area A** – total Palestinian control – residents hold orange or green identification cards and must acquire special permits in order to cross the checkpoints into Israel, for medical care, work or educational purposes. These permits, as of September 2000, are issued only in exceptional cases, such as medical emergencies.

**Area B** – Palestinian administrative control, Israeli military control – Orange or Green ID's as above; blue Jerusalem resident ID's in some cases. Jerusalem residents who are not Jewish

have limited rights to freedom of movement and access to services, they are not full Israeli citizens. They do not require special permits to enter Israel but may be detained for ID checks in the same way as other Palestinians; in some case they can be denied passage across the checkpoint. Not only this, but permits are required for movement between Palestinian towns and villages, including areas where there are no Jewish settlements.

**Area C** – Total Israeli control –ID's as in Area B

(These distinctions have largely been obliterated by the re-occupation of the West Bank, since April 2002).

### **Bethlehem (Checkpoint 300) and environs**

Bethlehem checkpoint is a major boundary between former Area A and Jerusalem. Situated to the south of the city, it is bounded to the east by a shallow, barren valley and to the west by the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, situated in several acres of orchard and garden. Until April 2002, both the valley and the Institute were used by Palestinians from all over the southern West Bank as "bypass" routes, sometimes in full view of the military, sometimes under chase and fire by the latter.

Pedestrians (almost no cars pass here now) must walk at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  kilometer at each end of the checkpoint to reach transport pick up points. The route is open to the elements and leads to a narrow, metal-roofed covered corridor where ID's are presented for checking. The route is intended both for those entering and leaving Jerusalem so that when the flow of human traffic is heavy, there is jamming and confusion. The main route through the checkpoint, slightly shorter than the pedestrian route, is completely devastated. The brick paved sidewalks, traffic islands and asphalt have been churned up by the tanks. As of April 2002 the checkpoint is virtually deserted, very few blue ID holders pass as well as equally few foreign passport holders (clergy, diplomats, humanitarian agency staff etc.) for this reason, observers have began to tour the area around this checkpoint, accessed via the so-called Tunnel Road (Route 60) to the west (for use by Israelis only). This road is the main route to the southern West Bank where Palestinian villages and illegal Jewish settlements sit uncomfortably side by side. About 10 kilometers along the tunnel road is a major checkpoint leading westwards to a settlement, Kfar Etzion, where the local Civil (Military!) Administration has its offices. This is the body issuing entry permits to West Bankers, if and when it chooses to do so. All the Palestinian villages in this area, as everywhere else on the West Bank, are closed off by blockades of rocks, dirt, cement blocks etc. making passage by vehicles, including ambulances an impossibility.

**Date: 20.10.02 - Morning**

Observers: C O., L E., M R.

**El-Khader** - hundreds of passengers walked into and out of al-Khader or the buses that arrived and at left the junction. One of the drivers, whose route is al-Khader - Ramallah via Wadi a-Nar, approached us and spoke at length about the 'container checkpoint', once a temporary and nowadays a permanent army post in Wadi-Nar relatively close to 'Kedar' and the exit from Wadi-Nar to the main road (leading to Jericho). He says that this checkpoint has become the nightmare of drivers and passengers, who are often made to stop there for hours.

Hussein Najajra, principal of the boys' school mentioned that last Thursday was a particularly tough day - army troops were scattered all through the region, surrounded the school and prevented any non-al-Khader residents, including teachers from entering the junction (and school). This 'mega-siege' was imposed on the entire Bethlehem region on the occasion of the annual celebration of Rachel Imenu's birthday or date of death that brought thousands of prayers from Israel proper and the settlement of Gush Etzion and Hebron (all in armored vehicles accompanied by army jeeps) to the Tomb.

Dhib Najajra, who works as a counselor at both the (boys') elementary and secondary schools showed us two of the IDF's contributions to the well being of the school-children that were yet unknown to us: 1) All window shutters in the western wall of the (secondary) school building were permanently sealed (soldered), so that no light (and hardly any fresh air) comes in 2) a tall metallic fence was erected inside the school compound very close to (almost glued to) the southern wall of the building. Both innovations date from last year (2001).

There are approximately 400 children in the secondary school and more than 800 in the elementary one (together with the girls' schools there are 2500 pupils in the complex). Aggression towards each other and towards teachers is one consequence of frustrated hopes and aspiration, and the problem is that teachers tend to misjudge manifestations of aggression, and take them as an indication of the lack of discipline. Still, all staff members attended workshops on non violence and the non-violent resolution of conflicts.

D. spoke about his village, Nahalin, now surrounded, or rather engulfed by settlements from all directions (Beitar Illit with an ever increasing population (approaching 20,000?) being the most threatening one, and then Bat-Ayin, Gevaot, Neve Daniel and Elazar). Already the settlers (all living on confiscated lands) in this western enclave of the Bethlehem region outnumber the Palestinian residents of the four villages - Nahalin, Batir, Wadi-Fukin and Husan - now trapped in between the ever expanding settlements.

**Bethlehem** – Nagat, border policeman, had made a truck driver with a blue ID wait for two hours (confiscated the ID and let the man dry-up inside his vehicle), and was determined to push us to the edge of our tolerance. We thought it would be unwise to let him succeed and left the place after the ID was returned to owner, but intend to file a complaint.

**Date: 21.10.02 – Morning**

Observers: H.Y., A.K., C.G.

**Bethlehem** - We reached the checkpoint just before the shift change 7:15, a soldier from the outgoing shift asked us to move away. An older soldier, a volunteer, who was part of the incoming shift tried frequently to chat with us, in between trying to make things there more efficient and humane. He was quite friendly to us and tried to intercede with the younger soldiers, with varying degrees of success.

Young Soldiers from the new shift asked who we were. When we explained who we were, one said "Az atem lo chaverim"----"oh, you are not our friends."

As we walked back to the car, 3 soldiers at the end of the walkway motioned for us to come over. They were curious about us, each of the 3 of them having different agendas. We successfully avoided getting into politics with them. One was very concerned that we share information with journalists from outside Israel.

**Date: 21.10.02 - Afternoon**

Observers: TS,NA,HB,YK

**Batir, Hussan and Nahalin**

We visited the road blocks around the three villages Batir, Hussan and Nahalin. We drove through silent, empty countryside under a bridge where villagers climb up and down from the main road (leading west to Zur Hadassa and Emek Ayalon) in order to avoid the curfew. Yellow, Palestinian taxis are not allowed on this road, but ply back and forth between the El KHader crossroads and the entry to Hussan, (about 5-7 kilometers) risking a 500NIS fine if found. J., our taxi driver uses only the permitted, interior route, when it's open. As we drove the huge town of Betar Illit loomed to the north, completely closing off any possibility of development for Nahalin, which bears signs of having been a prosperous township, now somewhat shabby because of the closure and the consequent unemployment. Some

villagers work in Betar, with special permits. We toured Nahalin and saw the earthworks to the north-east, admiring the view over the hills that are, presumably waiting for a developer! Formerly there were three exits/entrances to the village, south to Bethlehem and Hebron, north to Tel Aviv and east to Jerusalem. Now the only traffic route lies through Hussan.

J. drove us back to the bridge and apologised for having to dump us of there instead of at El Khader, because of the curfew on Hussan which he would have had to pass. Since we are all young and fit, we scrambled up the rocky bank, about 20 ft high and climbed over the low barricade to the road.

Nahalin has a population of 6,000.

**Date: 22.10.02 – Morning**

22.10.02

Observers: Y.E., R.M.

6:20. Very sparse traffic of pedestrians and into Israel, and few vehicles in either direction. A volunteer from Kav Hatefer was manning the checkpoint.

**El Khader** - 7:30 There was a busload of about 50 people who were detained to have their id's checked. Delay of up to a half hour.

8:00 at the high school near the checkpoint. Teachers were making a great effort to supervise their students so as to avoid problems with the soldiers. They invited us to the teachers' room. On the wall, were the pictures of two children and three school graduates who were killed by the army. They made two requests of us. Access to the school is very difficult for two disabled children because of the condition of the roads. Y. will check with the physicians for human rights. They showed us the wall of the school that the army destroyed. Because of this, students must sit in classes with the windows with closed windows. The army also blocked up part of the courtyard, closing off the main entrance to the school.

**Date: 22.10.02 – Afternoon**

Observers: R.H., D. P., R. W.

There was very little movement of either pedestrians or vehicles in either direction. Noticed several young men leap over the wall into Tantur. Don't know if they were passing through or just harvesting olives inside the compound.

Spoke to an older man from Kav Hatefer who lives in Jerusalem. He went to great lengths to impress upon us how nicely he speaks to people and how sensitive he is to their needs as he described how he detained an older Palestinian woman for hours and refused to allow her to go to her home because she had crossed over improperly.

A Red Crescent ambulance from Bethlehem carrying a young child arrived at the checkpoint. The child was removed from the ambulance and transferred to an Israeli ambulance to be taken to hospital here. The whole procedure took about 10 minutes. Could not get an answer as to why the Red Crescent ambulance could not proceed, after inspection, so that the child would not have to be removed.

**Date: 24.10.02 – Morning**

Observers: M.H., N.S., I. B.

A lot of blue Police around the city, and near Cinematheque, Derech Hebron and Derech Betlehem.

The checkpoint was on the main road opposite the entrance to Tantur. A police bike, nm: 70-257 with two policemen drove into Tantur. We went in after them, but lost sight with them until they came back after 15 minutes. We tried to stop them but they didn't respond. We reported the incident to the director of Tantur.

The road to the main checkpoint is cleaned up and closed. Just blue Id's that live in Jerusalem and CC/DC and tourists with visa (what kind of visa?) are allowed through. An Italian Doctor and Suisse employee of the Charitas Hospital were not allowed to pass through to Bethlehem.

Yaron Moshe, an officer registered our ID's. he refused to give us his personal information ("I'm from Jerusalem") and left with the jeep nm: 21-899.

A little bit under the checkpoint, where they are building the fence, soldiers held and checked every one who tried to pass. There were also three policemen on horseback. All the soldiers were very tired and fed up. They received two warnings of possible attacks. Near the new fruit shop at the entrance to Bet Zaffafa, seven doctors were checked and released. After an hour we got a phone call that they all arrived at the Hospital on Mount of Olives. One soldier apologized to them for the inconvenience and gave them a written note in case they are checked on their way again.

**Date: 24.10.02 – Afternoon**

Observers: M.Z., J. W., S.H.

A line of about 20 cars going to Bethlehem. The border police take their time between cars, for no apparent reason. We talked to some people in the cars - they waited about half an hour to get through. People in cars and pedestrians who live in Jerusalem (blue I.D.s) were not allowed to pass. There were at least 3 cases of women who just wanted to visit their parents and were sent back. The commander of the checkpoint, Natan, explained to us that these are the procedures. He wouldn't let us get close to the soldiers and not even go through the pedestrians crossing. He softened a little later, said he'd try to see if a women with 4 children could cross to see her father in Bethlehem. By the time we left she was still waiting. A French couple part of a peace mission who came from Bethlehem told us that there were shots on their way into Bethlehem and the crossing south was hard.

On the way back to the car we saw a group of about 30 Palestinian workers at the entrance to Beit Zafafa. They were taken off the bus to Hebron (the bus was told to leave) and the police were checking their I.D.s.

Going back on Derech Hebron there was a sudden checkpoint on the road next to Mar Elias. It took about 8 minutes to go through that checkpoint.

**Abu-Dis checkpoint and environs**

To the south east of Jerusalem was until the beginning of August 2002, a checkpoint situated between the town of El Azariah (Lazarus of New Testament fame) (Area C) and East Jerusalem\*. It lay directly under the Jewish cemetery at Mt Scopus. The checkpoint blocks the route of residents of Palestinian villages to the south and south east of the city which is the focus of all the services provided to the villages in that area – medical, educational, bureaucratic. Many residents hold Jerusalem ID's. **As of August 6, 2002, the checkpoint has been abandoned (its remnants still scar the road) and in its stead has been set up in the heart of El Azaria, with a concrete wall some 150 meters long, 2 meters high, splitting the villages of Ras-al-Amud, Abu Dis and El Azariyeh which formerly formed one integrated, interconnected community. Now families are split, services sundered and access to West Bankers (Orange ID's) totally denied. The wall is part of the "Jerusalem envelope" a proposed fence that will be the "border" between Jerusalem and the West Bank. In reality, this is part of a policy of declaring Jerusalem as a totally Israeli issue, and for minimizing the Palestinian presence in the city. A more detailed report of the situation in Abu Dis can be obtained on request from [machsomwatch@hotmail.com](mailto:machsomwatch@hotmail.com). Since August, 2002 the Abu-Dis wall has**

**undergone, and undergoes, several metamorphoses, which are reported in the daily briefings.** The area of the checkpoint is a crowded and chaotic disaster area, with garbage, dust and a confusion of vehicles, which banned from crossing congregate on either side and wait for the transitees lucky enough to be permitted to cross.

**Date:** 22.10.02- Morning

Observers: Y.Y., M.R., M.A.

Physical changes: some of the cement blocks were moved to allow an easy and quick passage for army vehicle. We asked the soldier whether this is also suitable for Ambulances - the answer is No. A temporary barbed wire was put between the upper ally and the field (on the left side of the checkpoint. Palestinians who used to cross this field were halted by the wire.

Toward 7:30 an extra checkpoint for vehicles was deployed in front of the gas station - according to the soldiers this will create a larger clear area to facilitate their work.

We noticed a larger group of border policemen this morning - around 10 soldiers with 2 jeeps. All were very strict with the passers and only very few could pass without control. One of the commanders was ready to answer our questions and to explain the army standpoints. He was also polite with the people.

5 school teenaged girls were stopped for not having Kushan -- a special permit. Apparently school kids under a certain age carry a specific certificate. We found out that those girls either lost it or forgot it at home - we could not help and they were sent home.

A pregnant woman who did not have a permit could not pass to the hospital.

A number of teachers were also stopped not having a specific permit signed by the authorities. As we understood the regulations concerning school staff, there are constant changes in regulations and we feel that this need to be checked and clarify. The soldiers claim that teachers who do not have a permit by now (2 months after the beginning of the year) might have a problem with the legal authorities. The teachers claims that they are waiting for their permits and it takes over 2 weeks to get them.

One student from El-Kuds University at Abu Dis campus tried to cross to attend a lesson at the Jerusalem campus - again he did not have the specific permit which assures his status.

During the rush hours - 6:30-7:30 - the soldiers were deployed in several points to control the influx of people.

**Date: 22.10.02 – Afternoon**

ObserversNE,AD,LS,EK

When we arrived at the "wall" and saw a bulldozer working there fixing the fence. Many border policemen in the area, a few Palestinians detained at random, but for a short while.

When we approached the mosque we discovered a new, even more terrible version of the passage: a pile of dirt mixed with rocks and no trace of stairs. N. took pictures of many women of all ages, having to climb this humiliating thing. We crossed to the other side where we found 2 border police jeeps. The soldiers insisted on us crossing back and escorted us all the time. They also insisted that we should go all the way back but we refused and finally they left. On the whole, most of them were hostile and our efforts to get Safadi on the phone were unsuccessful.

## **Aram, Kalandia and environs**

**A-Ram.** to the north of Jerusalem, straddles the road to Ramallah, some 7-10 kilometers to the north (with Kalandia intervening). It is a busy checkpoint manned by Border Police, with a booth for the soldiers on the western sidewalk and a watchtower astride the road. The road is lined with formerly prosperous shops, business and cafes, and the situation has caused great economic hardship. The checkpoint cuts the Palestinian-Jerusalem neighborhood of Beth Hanina in half laterally, causes tremendous vehicle jams (its not uncommon for drivers to wait an hour or more in line). Here we find an absurd situation whereby Jerusalem residents must cross the checkpoint to reach their own Jerusalem neighborhood.

**Suny 2002\*** To the west of the checkpoint, on a lower road parallel to the main thoroughfare, there is a permanent jeep patrol of four Border policemen, usually bored out of their minds. There has been at least one case of sexual harassment by these policemen. (June , 2002). Only Beth Hanina residents living on that street can pass along it. As of September 2002, the road is frequently open. \*(Refers to the landmark store opposite a steep, slippery path leading to the parallel road).

**Kalandia** – situated to the north of Jerusalem, 3 km south of Ramallah. The checkpoint bifurcates the area defined as greater Jerusalem by cutting off the Palestinian Jerusalem suburb Kufer Aqeb from the northern Palestinian neighborhoods, Beth Hanina and Shuafaat. The majority of residents of these three suburbs hold blue Jerusalem ID's, many work or study in Jerusalem. To the north of the checkpoint, south of Kufer Aqeb is the Kalandia refugee camp and the area of Semiramis whose status is unclear, and just north of that, Ramallah itself, under intermittent curfew. To the west is the air-strip of Atarot and the eponymous industrial zone, under Israeli control, and to the east and south the village of A-Ram where residents may hold either orange or blue ID's.

The checkpoint itself consists of a strip of road about 500 meters long, divided into four traffic lanes and one pedestrian lane, demarcated by a 4 meter high wire fence. Almost no traffic, except for trucks bearing basic goods, is permitted to pass. The checkpoint is bounded at either end by a series of concrete blocks and sandbags, with a covered hut used by the soldiers, some six or so at each position. There is a lookout post on a hillock to the east of the southern end and again along the eastern course of the pedestrian walk, and another some way along the traffic lanes.

Pedestrians and motor traffic alike, in their respective lanes, must line up some 15-20 meters from the soldiers barricade and await the signal to advance, one by one, from the soldiers. A nominal camouflage net is carelessly stretched over the pedestrian waiting point but gives little shade. A water tank at each end of the checkpoint is usually empty of water. The area is filthy with refuse, and the unpaved road is dusty in summer, a mud bath in winter.

**Tora Bora** a bypass route from the checkpoint to Kalandia refugee camp, half a mile to the north. The circuitous route is somewhat longer and leads via a quarry. Since April of this year, the entrance to the quarry has been blocked by a wall with a narrow gate. Sometimes the site is guarded by an armored vehicle, sometimes by one or two soldiers. Sometimes it is not guarded at all. However, the route can be watched from various military vantage points and patrolled so that even on days when it is open, it is not "safe."

**Jaba'a** is a village some two miles east of Kalandia situated at a crossroads on a road ;leading northwards to Nablus and south-eastwards to Jerusalem. The village, in area C, has been totally closed off by the military by barbed wire, blockades and earthworks. Residents frequently breach the blockade but vehicles cannot enter the village. At the former entrance to the village, at the crossroads, there a frequent mobile checkpoints. We receive many complaints about behavior of soldiers here, and have ourselves witnessed deliberate delays and rudeness towards Palestinians there. |Some of the local taxi-drivers are Jaba'a residents. (See Ada Ushpiz in Ha'aretz, 28.06.02 (Hebrew edition)).

**Date: 23.10.02 – Morning**

Observers: Y.E., N. I., I.M.

**A Ram** - 7:00 – a long line of cars (about 30) going south at A Ram, and many school buses parked along the right hand side, narrowing the way.

**Kalandia** - 7:10 – The checkpoint is manned by soldiers and kav ha tefer volunteers.

It has been shortened by about 20 meters or so. The booth for detainees was taken away, and now it all seems much like a regular border post. There is free passage south for students and teachers (no one checks them) until around 8:15 p.m. All passengers' i.d. are checked until that time, and later – occasionally. The line isn't very long – 10 at the most. Some green and orange i.d. are allowed to go through without the proper permission – thanks to the "kav hatefer" soldier's consideration. A very long line of cars was waiting to go south and was not dealt with for about two hours. Then as we get there (7:20-7:50) it began to move: 10 cars in half an hour, after a thorough check. Taxi drivers at the northern point tell that this has so far been a tough week at Kalandia: a child fell and had to be taken to hospital. The booth was taken away, but now the detainees need to sit on the ground, and so on. There are 10 people at the northern checkpoint who were caught when they passed through the quarry; Y spoke with them and gives them Moked cards. As we started to go south, the "kav ha tefer" elder soldier, who was very considerate to the Palestinians, took extra care to check every detail of our i.d.'s. He said "you only interrupt human rights", "you are suspects to me", "look how you cause a delay for the whole line".

Water: running water at both sides of checkpoint: north – 3 taps, south – 5.

8:44 - On our way back we notice that all school buses at A-Ram are gone, and the cars' line is much shorter. Just before the French hill junction there is a mobile checkpoint: jeep and 3 border policemen.

Date: 23.10.02 – Afternoon

Observers: DH,SM,RH

**Aram** - on our way to Kalandia and back we encountered a long queue of cars **northwards** towards **Ramallah**. Every car was checked and the queue stretched as far as Neve Yaakov. When we asked about the reason for this unusual procedure, we got the answer: "initiative action", a term we did not understand but translated into something like "punishment action" after the suicide attack of yesterday.

**Kalandia** - upon arrival a group of soldiers were confiscating IDs of taxi drivers, who parked in the area opposite the checkpoint. When we told them that this was blatantly illegal, they promised to return the IDs soon, at the checkpoint. But the IDs were not returned and the officer of the checkpoint was not ready to speak with us. We had to call the battalion commander of this unit, **Shadi**. After some 30 minutes the IDs were returned.

The lay-out of Kaladia checkpoint has been changed. The two ends of the checkpoint were moved nearer to each other -- they are now about 75 meters apart. On each side there is a prefabricated booth with 2 windows, where the ID controllers are supposed to sit and check the documents. 2 long lanes for the waiting lead up to the booths and, hurray!, the **concrete booth**, which was used for detaining the held-up, has **disappeared!** (there were rumors though, that detention is now taking place near or at the lonely house on the field close to the checkpoint - please, Wednesday group, check this out!) The fact that the northern checkpoint has been moved southward, has one great advantage. It is now **positioned right under a lamppost**, which gives plenty of light to do the checking also in the dark hours! That would eliminate the main argument to close the checkpoint at 18:00!! We will report this to the Commander!



There was heavy movement of pedestrians and cars. The fact that many soldiers and volunteers participated in the checking process of the pedestrians, shortened the wait for the pedestrians. But the car traffic to the north was extremely slow. About 20 minutes per car. When the checkpoint closed at 6 p.m. many drivers were forced to turn back or to take difficult alternative routes. One truck driver, who came from Acco and transported aluminum merchandise and waited in the line since 4:30 p.m., was extremely worried that his expensive aluminum parts would be stolen, if he left his truck in the vicinity of the checkpoint overnight. We asked Shadi to intervene, but the commander of the checkpoint was not ready to comply with Shadi's request.

At 18:10 the checkpoint was closed. Almost all soldiers and volunteers left and only two were positioned at each side. The usual pleadings and discussions by Jerusalem residents coming from the north - with very little success!

We also had to deal with a lost ID of a resident of a village north of Kalandia. A woman soldier, Orly, was extremely concerned and actively helpful in trying to locate the ID, which was lost 2 days ago, but to no avail!! No one knows anything and no one, of course, takes responsibility. But everybody is "aware" that it is strictly forbidden to confiscate IDs!!

**Date: 23.10.02 – Afternoon**

**Observers: DY, RB, NG, IM**

Kalandia South - There is a change in the checkpoint. In order to reach the place where you line up to be checked, one has to make a big detour or jump over the cement blocks. Men usually can jump but women and children and older people have to make the long walk around. The position of the soldiers' booths has been changed and is now facing the road, has been moved further to the North, and has been heavily covered with sandbags. Two very narrow lanes that force people to stand very crowded in a line have been formed with cement blocks. These lanes are perceived as particularly humiliating and many people complained bitterly that they are treated like animals.

Two volunteers man the checking and although they do it rather quickly and let most people through to the North, the large number of people that needs to cross, (we counted about 100 people at any given point) obligates everyone to wait for up to 45 minutes inside these blocked lanes before they can go through. There was no special treatment for women with children or for older women when we came and demanded that they bring more soldiers to expedite the procedures and told women (with and without children) not to wait in the line and to go through the side. The soldiers obliged with our demand and indeed the plight for women was eased although men continued to wait for very long time. From week to week we now hear mounting bitterness and anger, it doesn't seem that people can take it for much longer. Some voiced their concern that Ramadan will be coming in about a week and then "no one knows what will happen" if people cannot get home on time to break the fast.

A man with a disabled son tried to stand on line but gave up due to the very long wait and decided to go in a car going North. He showed us a document from Hadassah confirming that his son is disabled. We stood by the car lane to see whether the soldiers would cause any problem. In fact, the young soldiers were checking cars quite efficiently and let the people with the disabled boy go through. They saw we were writing and immediately ran towards us and demanded to see what we had written. I showed them "Yeled neche, natnu laavor bli baayot". They were quite pleased with what they saw in my notebook and continued being pleasant to the drivers.

**Kalandia North** - At 5:00 it begins to get dark. At the Northern checkpoint we find a very active couple of young soldiers, man and woman, speaking Russian among them and having much fun at the expense of the people. Their body language is very threatening, they really move their hands as if shooing away animals while they say "Sah, sah" (drive, drive) although these are pedestrians. We see this same movement in one of the older volunteers.

A couple of women came with some document, actually in Hebrew, and the soldier asked us if anyone of us knew Spanish and could tell him what was their case. We told him that the document said their Brazilian passports had been lost and without doubting for a moment he let them through.

We received many comments, usually people at the checkpoint were appreciative of our work, although one man asked sarcastically if we were preparing a paper for the university with all this that we were writing, and how would this in any way benefit them. We met several professionals and university professors who were very appreciative of our work. One Al-Kuds psychology professor told me he would like to hug me but it would not be appropriate in this setting (I don't know if he meant a man hugging a woman or a Palestinian hugging an Israeli). It was very touching.

At 6:00 p.m. the soldiers begin to close the checkpoint with barbed wire and blocks. The volunteers leave and the regular army soldier remained and allowed pedestrians to continue passing, emphasizing that it is a special favor. About 12 cars are lined in the car lane from North to South. They tell us they had been waiting in the line already for over an hour and when they finally reached the checkpoint the soldiers closed it. The people were extremely angry. We called the Moked and told the drivers to wait a little while. We also gave them cards of the Moked so they could call themselves when in need. One told us he wanted no favors from the soldiers and he would like to cut Sharon's head and turned around. At the Moked they told us they had spoken to Peter Lerner and it would take some time.

About 25 minutes later we heard on the radio of the soldiers that they were being ordered to open the car lanes and let everyone with blue IDs go through at both ends of the checkpoint. We left the checkpoint at 18:50.

**Flying checkpoint in Shuafat** - On our way back we found a checkpoint very close to the French Hill junction. They told us they had hot warnings of a car bomb and had a dog sniffing for explosives. When they realized we were Jews the soldiers got very upset and wanted to know what we were doing here. We told them we were in East Jerusalem and they were very upset we were driving through the "Arab" road. They immediately asked the other cars to make place for us to pass and we refused, saying everyone here had a blue ID and we didn't want to go first. They got very angry and said no one would move until we left the place. We left.

**Date: 24.10.02 – Morning**

Observers: N.E., R. E., M. M., and a guest

**Neve Ya'akov junction** - an ad-hoc checkpoint. Border Police Jerusalem with a dog sniffing the cars. About 10 workers of the hospital nearby are detained. We are told there are special warnings to-day (it is two days after the car bomb in the north). One of the soldiers was extremely rude, N called Safadi at the command center who repeated that there are special warnings but added that he would talk with the soldier about his behavior. Apparently he did after a few minutes.

**A - Ram** - the passage is smooth. We asked why there was an additional checkpoint. The officer from Jerusalem explained the necessity of the added checkpoint because people go around the checkpoint at A-Ram through the wadi, so the checkpoint at A-Ram is actually superfluous, but this may be too rational.

On the island south of A\_Ram concrete barriers were erected, so that cars cannot take a U-turn. On the other hand there are big flower pots ready to decorate the checkpoint A-Ram.

**Kalandia south** - the line is quite heavy. It took us 20 minutes to pass. Southward, the line is very short and the passage is smooth.

**Date: 26.10.02 – Morning**

Observers: N.M., V. T., I.K., N.L., and guest

**Kalandia** - much quieter than previous Saturday with much less pedestrian movement. The movement of pedestrians and vehicles was very quick.

**Tora Bora** - was active and we decided to explore its Northern side by going down on the dirt road towards quarry. A long line of transits was waiting for people who came from the South. One of drivers was guarding in order to warn about soldiers. Movement through Tora Bora was very dense - not only young and strong but women with children were going through rubble, some people carried big packages.

People who do not want to be caught run away and then there is a lot of shooting. People who are caught are kept at the area for some time and then moved to detention cage at the checkpoint. Most are released after 2-3 hr, but some stay there for the whole day. Transits also try to run away and we were shown holes of bullets in car bodies. When caught, wheels are emptied or cut with a knife. We were told that soldiers go to check the area about 4 times per day and they expected them at about 11 a.m. On our way back we were approached by a transit driver who told us that he was caught near Beitin with passengers when bypassing nearby checkpoint. An army jeep soldiers ordered him and all the passengers including women and children to go out. This driver was told to lie on his belly and then he was severely beaten, as all passengers witnessed. The driver was told that this is a revenge for a bus attack at Karkur junction. The driver regretted that he did not write a jeep number and he understood that it is difficult to complain without any details about soldiers identity, but he wanted to tell us the story.