

An-Nabi Salih

2011-2012

Live ammunition shot in Nabi Saleh – 15 year old boy injured with rubber-coated steel bullet

15 year old Waed Bassem Tamimi was today shot in his side with a rubber-coated steel bullet by the Israeli army, during a demonstration in the village of Nabi Saleh, at which at least 30 rounds of live ammunition were also fired.

Protesters today at Nabi Saleh were attacked with skunk water, rubber bullets, high-velocity tear gas and a large amount of live ammunition. Road-blocks were placed at the entrances to the village before the demonstration began, in an attempt to prevent international activists and demonstrators from other villagers from joining in solidarity with Nabi Saleh.

Due to tear gas attacks from the army, demonstrators were forced to retreat from their desired route towards the village spring, Ein al-Qaws, which was stolen in 2009 by settlers from the nearby illegal Israeli settlement of Halamish.

Local youth threw stones at the Israeli military invading the village, culminating in 15 year old Wa'ad Tamimi being shot in the side with a rubber-coated steel bullet. He was treated by Red Crescent paramedics in the village. Following this, at least 30 rounds of live ammunition were witnessed being fired by soldiers guarding the stolen spring.

Resistance to Israeli occupation at Nabi Saleh is still going strong, despite regular arrests of villagers, army invasions and continuing violence from the Israeli military against demonstrators.

On June 22 the IWPS house team attended the weekly demonstration at Nabi Salih. The prior week all entrances to the village were blocked by the Israeli Occupation Forces and we had to skirt the checkpoints by walking in through the mountains. To avoid this today we set off by car at 7:00am and made it into the village without incident. It turned out that this week they did not block off the village, so our early arrival was not necessary. However, we took the time to enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

The prior night the village was savagely raided and most of the villagers had less than an hour of sleep, so we avoided seeking to visit people until later in morning. We were in the quiet village for several hours before people started stirring... plenty of time to contemplate the suffering this small village has endured in their resistance to the theft of their land.

The children suffer the war zone Nabi Salih becomes every time the IOF has nothing better to do than to raid the village through the night, firing sound bombs, tear gas and even live ammunition, raiding homes and imprisoning their fathers, brothers and uncles for no justifiable cause. The violence inflicted upon them has become a way of life for the children of Nabi Salih. All the while we are thinking on these things the tired village sleeps and the rolling mountains of olive groves embrace us.

After a few hours people were up and about and we visited some friends prior to the demonstration beginning. They were obviously worn out by the previous night's raid, but were all strong for the long day ahead. The demonstrations often last for six or more hours, ending with the IOF going through the village shooting off what must be left of their tear gas and skunk water, for no discernible purpose other than attempt to intimidate the villagers and suppress their

resistance. It does not work! The children are of course traumatized by the violence, but their families work with them to understand the situation and express their feelings. I asked a particularly enchanting little girl whom I will call "J", about 6 years old, if she were afraid of the soldiers and the loud noises, tear gas, etc... She immediately said no, though her face changed when she responded. She became introspective and very serious.

The demonstration began as usual with the soldiers using tear gas and skunk water to disperse the crowd. This went on for an hour or so, with most of the internationals watching from a distance just beyond the range of the skunk truck. We then joined a friend in the village to watch the military, who at this point were set up in the junction of the village and firing tear gas randomly.

Suddenly "J", who was dressed in traditional Palestinian clothing that her grandmother had made for her, started shouting at the soldiers from the porch we were on, which faced the soldiers. She yelled, "Get out of our village", "go to your own house" "this is our house" "we are not afraid of you" "we don't need guns" "you have guns because you are afraid" "we will never leave our land"... this went on for about 5 minutes. The soldiers ignored her.

But she would not be ignored. Alone, this little child walked down the rocky escarpment to confront the soldiers to their faces. She screamed at them the same things she had said from the porch. The soldiers tried to ignore her but she was steadfast.

They fired a sound bomb, and she ran back a small distance, but she quickly recovered and returned back the soldiers.

An IWPS team mate took video of this encounter until the soldiers made her leave the area. Then came the lull in the demonstration... the point when it seems it is over and some of the internationals and most of the press leave. But the lull in Nabi Salih is always a farce. Invariably the IOF comes back fully armed and ready for another bombardment of skunk water and tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammo. This day was no different.

From our viewpoint at a friend's home we watched as the jeeps, led by the skunk water truck to clear the path of civilians, made its way back into the village. The skunk water truck sprayed every home up the center road of the village without any provocation. We witnessed a soldier throw a sound bomb into the porch of a house full of women and children, terrifying the young ones inside. One of our team mates was in a house nearby and she witnessed the fear of the young women and children.

We regrouped and were told that there were many soldiers in the village center so we accompanied one of the villagers to that area. There were several jeeps and 7 soldiers in view. They threw a sound bomb at us, presumably to scare us off. The Palestinian we were accompanying told us that earlier the soldiers had 'tried to kill him' and took us to a car that a tear gas canister had been shot into, breaking the rear glass.

He said he was near the car when a soldier fired at him from close range. Luckily, only the car was damaged. On our way to see the car, the soldiers again attempted to deter us by throwing another sound bomb at us. At no time during this period were we engaged in any activity that would warrant the soldiers to act aggressively towards us. Our only weapon was our cameras. Several more jeeps arrived, two of them had mounted tear gas guns on them that can fire 25 or more rounds of tear gas at one time.

They were pointed toward a home where about 10 people were attempting to wash the skunk water away from their courtyard. We feared they would fire on the house. Soldiers were running everywhere, and at one point started to go after the man who owned the car that the tear gas had been fired into. We started to follow them but they turned around. Now we were in the square with numerous jeeps and soldiers. We witnessed two soldiers load their guns while looking at us. We raised our hands in the air with our cameras in full view.

Without further incident the jeeps all took off toward the junction of the village. We started to follow and saw there was tear gas being shot from every direction. Recognizing the danger, we sought shelter until we could assess the situation. It turns out, as it often does, that these final rounds of tear gas over the entire village was the Israeli Occupation Forces calling it a day and saying goodbye to the village.

But, we know they will be back. They will back next Friday when the villagers, accompanied by internationals and Israeli activists march for their right to the land that has been stolen from them. They will be back in the darkness of the night, when the peaceful village tries to sleep and there are no international witnesses, to unleash their vicious weapons on the innocents. They will be back, but as “J” said, “we will never leave our land”. The Israeli Occupation will come back but the people of Nabi Saleh will always be there to greet them. They will remain steadfast, in their homes, on their land!

FRIDAY 8TH June – Demo in Nabi Saleh

On Thurs eve 7th June the IWPS house team spoke on the phone with B in Nabii Saleh. B, whose husband, a prominent member of the Nabi Saleh Popular Committee had been re-arrested three weeks earlier. She mentioned that there had been a lot of IOF activity in the village over the previous fortnight, check points at the entrances to the village morning and evening, and night incursions. Two nights earlier a house raid resulted in the arrest of the son of the head of the village council. A large number of Israeli Occupation Forces stormed the village, breaking windows and attempting to terrorize the villagers.

Given this context, the house team, one LTV and a new STV, set off early by servis, in case check points/blocks might be put in place to prevent outside sympathisers from joining the demonstration.

The journey was uneventful until we had passed the village of Bani Zeid and were on the approach road to Nabi Saleh, where we were stopped by IOF. They asked for our papers and where we were going. We said we were on the way to Ramallah to a Quaker meeting. They politely turned us back from what they said was a closed military zone, and said the road would be open between one and two in the afternoon. We went back up North and approached by another road, also closed by the IOF.

There was no option but to be dropped at the nearest point to the first flying check-point and make our way on foot, down the rocky, thorny side of a valley and up the other side, through the olive trees, though our driver warned us that we could be shot if soldiers saw us in a closed military zone.

After about an hour, we emerged at the top of the village, where some shebab (youths) were already gathering, and where we passed a group of cheery-looking internationals also ‘walking in’.

With time to spare, we visited some of the villagers. B's husband, released only a month previously after a thirteen month sentence (on the evidence of an eleven year old who had been arrested at night at gunpoint and had been under duress to inform against him) has been re-arrested on May 15th at the Nakba demo, and was not due for release until the end of July. Also, their sixteen year old son had been arrested three times in the past three months. Although he had been released, his I.D. was not returned to him. This means that he does not have it to show the soldiers at the check-point which he has to pass daily to and from school in Ramallah. This obviously makes him very vulnerable to further arrest for not showing his ID. His mother said that she was frightened he might be imprisoned like his father, and so worried that she constantly phoned him every school day, just to see that he was all right. In terms of exams, this, as elsewhere, is a crucial time in the academic year.

As many Palestinians have re-iterated, while their lands are being eroded, the most important achievement left is to gain high academic results. This is clearly not just to get a place in university and thus a possible ticket into a higher profession in, or possibly out of the country, but is of great importance to maintain a sense of self-worth and pride. I don't think I have been in a Palestinian home where at some point a parent hasn't proudly presented the school work of their children, or told us of their scholastic achievements and ambitions. When I asked one parent how many young Palestinians went to university, they replied 'Everybody. All of them.' That is certainly the expectation. Even while chatting and laughing with friends and family after a meal, kids of a certain age will be carrying their open school books with them.

On the wall behind us in B's house was a photograph of their youngest son in the blue gown and mortar from the traditional day of graduation from Kindergarten. He looked rather sad; not at all the bubbly happy child the LTV had previously shown me on Facebook.

The graduation had coincided with his Dad's appearance in court, and his Mum had been torn between being there to celebrate her son's big day or going to court to support her husband. She had chosen the latter, but for sure every time she looks at that photograph portrait, she will remember that day, how it was spoilt and who spoiled it. How could that not fuel indignation, deep resentment and anger?

Because there was still a little time to go, we then went to the nearby house of another Nabi Salih community organiser and activist – a man famous for being a proponent of peaceful, unarmed protest against the occupation, and who had also been imprisoned on the forced 'evidence' of two young boys, served a similar sentence, had been similarly released, but has not, as yet been re-arrested. His home, as we were ushered in, was full of another group of internationals – organised and brought from Edinburgh University.

At last it was time for everyone to meet at the starting point of the march.

It was high up and meant that the marchers – Palestinians in front, half as many again of Internationals behind and at least half a dozen Press in protective clothing and helmets - walked down the road past the house of 28 year- old Mustapha Tamimi, who was killed on December 9th 2011 during a demonstration, when a soldier from inside the door of an armoured vehicle, shot him point-blank in the face with a tear-gas canister. The house had a rather fancy double chain festooning above the garden wall. On closer inspection, the chain proved to be made out of hundreds of tear-gas canisters. The windows were boarded up.

The aim of this, like other demonstrations has not changed since it began two years previously. The illegal Halamish Settlement, began in 1977 and occupied nearly half the land belonging to Nabi Saleh, with a settler -only road (465) separating the village from its remaining land. In Dec 2009, to add insult to injury, and to inflict even more damage and difficulties on the village, the settlers, protected by the military, had fenced off that land, burned 150 olive trees, wheat and vegetables on one occasion, 400 trees on another and taken over the village's natural water source, the of Ayn al-Kus spring. The IOF frequently guards against its use by Nabi Saleh. The settlement on the side of the hill is only about half to one kilometre away, facing straight on. You feel that if the settlers came out, there could be a shouted conversation, like a Medieval stand-off between rival armies.

The aim of the demonstrators is to protest against this theft and try to 'liberate' and reclaim the spring. On the way down to the bend where the village road sweeps left and north, while the settlers' 465 comes up on the right and curves up into the Settlement, there is a petrol station (which has apparently flourished and expanded and modernised, perhaps partly to do to international and tourist trade – what one Palestinian described as ' Demonstration Tourism.')

Just below it as we marched down chanting, people started building barriers of rocks and stones behind us to stop the army vehicles following us back up.

Watching us approach, about two hundred metres below, were parked several armoured vehicles, one identified as belonging to the border police, one carrying soldiers, one capable of firing quick rounds of tear –gas, and one being the infamous 'skunk wagon' – a foul-smelling waste and chemical water cannon, whose stench (especially on your hair, person and clothes) can last for days.

The action was very swift. The skunk-wagon roared into action immediately and swept up the road.

Internationals fled, stalwarts fanned out to the sides, stones and slings appeared.

This was followed immediately by volleys of tear-gas, choking and burning the eyes, nostrils and chest. I personally got 'skunked' and gassed – not a fun experience – before eventually being pulled into B's house by one of her daughters. The army were not into games. The wagon and tear-gas and soldiers came straight up into the village, spraying the streets and houses, the soldiers fanning out and appearing from all directions.

The marchers didn't make another coherent attempt, but for a few hours, young men and boys practiced their sling skills, and soldiers retaliated with tear gas.

It was difficult to see what could be done in such a tight siege situation. Eventually the soldiers and jeeps and skunk wagon went back to their original stand-by positions; then the skunk-wagon left and the four remaining jeeps turned their attention to manning the road-block. All incoming and outgoing traffic was stopped in what has become a routine hassling and intimidating of inhabitants and visitors.

Later we had a beautiful meal with B and her daughters. Then we went to the other household. The difference was striking. In the first, B was expressing impatience with the immediate situation. In the second there seemed to be a more long-term view, stressing the slow, gradual changing of people's minds, and the need to wait to see what would happen in neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

Teargas, Rubber Bullets and Peace Songs

Nabi Salih April 13

IWPS team mates went to the weekly Friday demonstration in Nabi Salih, a demonstration we have been a part of since it began in December of 2009. We arrived early enough to beat the military closure imposed on the village by the Israeli Occupation Forces, who attempt to thwart internationals and Israeli activists from participating in solidarity with this small village of less than 400 people.

The drive to Nabi Salih is picturesque, once past the illegal industrial settlement of Barkan, which pollutes the surrounding villages with its poisonous waste. We ask our taxi driver to stop along the way to take photos of the hillsides of terraced olive groves, but even our photos cannot capture the majesty.

One must see it for oneself. (Do please come!)

We arrive in the village in the morning quiet. It is hard to imagine that in a few hours this peaceful hamlet of antiquity will become a war zone when villagers don their flags and kaffeyias to march toward the springs stolen by the illegal settlement of Hallamish.

Warmly greeted by friends who we haven't seen since last year, and treated to a breakfast which ought to be followed by a day of relaxation, we head to the village square where the march begins after midday prayers. Today's demonstration is in honor of the many Palestinian prisoners who are on hunger strike in protest of the illegal practice of administrative detention, whereby arrestees are held without charge for up to 6 months at a time; that 6 months often extended for years.

Naji Tamimi, who was just recently released from prison having spent 13 months in the Israeli Occupation jail, led the demonstration. He is a gentle man of peace. Today is particularly poignant for him, not because he has just been released from prison, but because his 16 year old son is in prison now, arrested for the 3rd time in as many months on the basis of a photo of a youth throwing a stone which twice the Israeli court has decreed the photo is not of him!

The march went through the center of the village and down into the wadi that would lead to the spring if it were not blocked by Israeli Occupation Forces.

Without provocation, the IOF begins firing tear gas at the unarmed protesters, and the infamous skunk water truck shoots its vile sewage water into the wadi.

We hear later in the day that at the very beginning of the tear gas volleys, a 16 year old was hit in the eye with a tear gas projectile and evacuated to the hospital. As well, several Israeli activists were hit in the stomach and torso by tear gas projectiles, though their injuries were not serious. The 16 year old who was hit in the eye was released from the hospital though will remain under close observation as there remains internal bleeding in his eye.

The protest continued on for at least 7 hours- IOF soldiers firing round after round of tear gas and young village boys returning the fire with small stones. The soldiers are afraid of these young boys. Each time they would advance toward the village, they would first order the skunk water truck to clear the area by shooting its foul (an understatement) smelling liquid ahead of them to clear demonstrators from the scene. Only then would they advance to fire more tear gas, and later in the day, rubber coated steel bullets.

The previous day there was a lavish wedding in the village of Deir Istyia, where IWPS resides. I am always reminded that every simple task of daily life and every celebration in Palestine is an act of resistance to the dreadful occupation. I remember thinking that in 3 years, I had not known of a wedding in Nabi Salih. Weddings are traditionally held on Fridays. Of course, there has not been a wedding in Nabi Salih on a Friday. Fridays are a day of active resistance via demonstration. I asked a Nabi Salih friend about this, “When will the weddings be?” After all, people must still get married. She said there will be weddings in June. I asked, “But what about the demonstrations?” She replied, “No problem, we will have our wedding on another day.”

This is Palestine. Peaceful and steadfast in spite of being under daily attack by the most militarized regime in the middle east.

[Mustafa Tamimi Mic Check.](#)

[New York City](#)

House Report: 4 December 2011

Army violence at Nabi Saleh Protests is on the Rise

December 3, 2011

We arrived early in the village of Nabi Saleh this Friday, because the last couple of Fridays the Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) declared the village a 'closed military zone' and prevented international activists from entering.

We visited couple of friends and talked about the recent night raids when three villagers were taken, two of them witnesses at the ongoing trial of Nabi Saleh activist Naji Tamimi. It was good to hear that all of them have now been released.

Just after midday we started marching with a group of villagers as they came out of the Mosque. Internationals - and Israeli activists in particular - were present in large numbers.

As we reached the main village junction, the demo turned to the right up the hill, not going the usual way down the street, where army jeeps were ready and waiting just around the curve.

We walked near the top of the hill and could see in the far distance a group of people frantically running from the Nabi Saleh spring towards the main street leading to the Halamish illegal settlement. Two years ago this spring was taken over by the Halamish colonisers, triggering the Friday protests by the residents of Nabi Saleh.

The people running were settlers who happened to be at the stolen spring and obviously felt they were in mortal danger when they saw Palestinians far away on the top of the hill.

There were cheers as the settlers ran towards the army jeep. The sight of a car which stopped and then moved at 'walking' pace, shielding the fleeing settlers from the 'danger' coming from us, was quite comical. The distance was such that the demonstrators could not have looked to the settlers much larger than dots on the landscape, and all that the protesters were doing at this point was waving flags and chanting anti-occupation slogans.

This reaction from the settlers really illustrated the extent that Palestinians have been demonised amongst the people who continue to steal their land and have been oppressing them for decades.

Our attention was then diverted from the settlers by a group of soldiers who appeared to the right, some pointing their guns at the marchers.

It was an amazing sight to see the demonstrators continuing to walk peacefully towards the soldiers who backed away from them.

As this was happening, two jeeps appeared on the top of the hill, one belonging to the IOF and another to the infamous Border police. The policemen and the soldiers came out of the jeeps and started firing teargas in all directions. Some of them approached a group of journalists and asked for their press passes. Soon after, they arrested two TV journalists. We were later told that they were Majd Mohammed from the AP and Mohammed Razi from Palestinian Television.

Other journalist tried to film the arrests and were intimidated by the soldiers who minutes later declared the area a 'closed military zone'. Everybody was given five minutes to leave or be arrested.

While this was going on the villagers placed stones across the road that the jeeps had to take and while soldiers were removing them, the youth started throwing stones and for a moment the soldiers looked so panicked that I worried about what they would do next. Thankfully they fought their way out of the village by firing loads of teargas, some straight at demonstrators and I saw several people collapsing on the ground temporarily blinded and with breathing problems.

The jeeps left and the demonstration continued down the exit road from the village. The marchers blocked the road with large rocks and set car tyres alight to prevent the soldiers and the police from entering the village again.

Teargas rained as demonstrators moved towards the soldiers and back. I saw the soldiers allowing the Palestinian passenger car to proceed towards the village where the demonstration was taking place and when the car stopped in front of the barrier of rocks, they fired a teargas right at it.

Soon after, no cars were allowed in and cars leaving were stopped and searched. Also the deafening sound called 'scream' was used for a prolonged time. A villager woman was very worried about the 'scream' because she said that the noise was very harmful for the hearing of the small children and caused them much pain.

House Report Nabi Salih 12/23/11

The IWPS team attended the Friday protest at Nabi Saleh on the 23/12/2011. We immediately noticed there that were significantly fewer people than the previous week, which had been the first Friday demonstration since the death of Mustafa Tamimi. This was partially due to many internationals returning home for the holidays, but also due the fact that many of the international and Israeli activists arrested the previous week had been barred from entering the area.

The protest started of as usual, at the mosque just after Friday prayer. However, unusually we did not head along the road toward the end of the village – the protest instead headed directly towards the hillside that leads down to the spring appropriated by the settlers of Halamish over two years ago.

Almost as soon as we got on to the hillside we were shot at with tear gas from soldiers stationed on the road below us. They were shortly joined by soldiers who had made their way through the village to the top of the hill. As tear gas was now being shot from the bottom and the top of the

hill, it was not long before the entire hillside was saturated with the fumes and many protesters were suffering from excess tear gas inhalation. The soldiers stationed on top of the hill walked back towards the village followed by a few internationals. One shouted “I am American, my tax dollars pay for your uniforms and weapons, I am against what you are doing here”. This was met by a volley of tear gas shot back directly into the group of people. It was clear that the death of Mustafa had no effect on the tactics of the IOF, as they continued to shoot canisters directly at the crowd, disregarding their own rules of engagement which state they must be shot into the air. Many people had to duck and dive in order to avoid being hit. One international was injured in the thigh from a direct hit by one of the canisters.

The IOF then advanced into the village and were using people’s homes to shoot tear gas from. We made our way to the top of the main street and watched as the entire road, which heads out of the village, was hit by repeated volleys of tear gas. For a while we had no choice but to stay where we were cut off from entering the village or from moving further down the road.

As we eventually were able to move down the road towards the entrance of the village one of our team members was hit by a tear gas canister that had ricocheted off the floor. She sustained bruising and a cut to her knee. A few moments later we heard the calls for an ambulance and saw some of the young men from the village carrying a man who had been shot in the leg. The IOF later confirmed that one of their snipers had shot an individual with a 0.22 caliber rifle. They also added that according to their own rules this is not considered as live fire.

Unlike the previous week, there was very little regarding this incident in the international press. It is a travesty that someone needs to die in order to get the attention of the world. Regardless of whether the world is watching, the people of Nabi Saleh and their supporters are as resilient as ever and will go on to protest each and every Friday as they have been doing for the past two years.

Arrest Incident Report: Nabi Saleh

Friday December 16, 2011

On Friday the 16th of this month we arrived early to Nabi Saleh. We feared that the Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) would close the village, as they have done several times before, to prevent people from coming to the first Friday demonstration since the murder of village resident Mustafa Tamimi on the 9th.

Other internationals and Palestinians did the same and a group, including some from the Jenin Freedom Theatre, chatted for a while in front of the house of Bilal Tamimi - known for his footage of Nabi Saleh demonstrations. To our great surprise the UK Vice Consul joined us and we questioned him about the UK stance on Palestine. ‘How come you are here when you do not support the Palestinian UN bid?’, asked a Spanish journalist. ‘Let me just say that two years ago UK would have voted ‘No’ and this time we abstained and that illustrates a change in UK position’, said the Vice Consul.

An unusually large number of jeeps were driving past us, up the hill towards the main mosque where the Friday demonstration always starts, after the midday prayer. Many displayed ‘foreign press’ signs on their windscreens and some were complete with security in sharp suits - we were told that Spanish and French Consular staff and the UN were also present. ‘It is sad that

somebody needs to be killed for the world media and diplomats to become interested', said a fellow activist.

We all knew that this demonstration was going to be both large and particularly emotional, following the brutal murder of young Mustafa Tamimi and the violent response of the IOF at his funeral on Sunday the 10th, when mourners were 'treated' to more than the usual quantity of teargas, skunk water and rubber bullets.

We all went first to Mustafa's grave, which is on the top of the hill in a quiet shaded plot of land near the mosque. While we were waiting for the prayer to finish, a fellow activist asked me if I wanted to take a part in an action in front of the Halamish illegal settlement on the nearby hill, which has caused so much suffering to the Nabi Saleh villagers over the years.

The settlement was started more than 30 years ago and it expanded by taking by force more and more land belonging to the Nabi Saleh villagers. First the illegal colonisers decided to build a factory and two years ago the village spring was 'annexed' for the exclusive use of the illegal settlers, which sparked the regular and ongoing Friday protests.

I liked the idea of bringing the demonstration to its source, in front of the Halamish illegal settlement. Five female internationals were to sit near the settlement gate holding Palestinian flags. We were hoping that it would be a surprise action, catching the IOF unawares, giving us time to make our point to the perpetrators.

Just after midday we drove west of Nabi Saleh, through the village of Abud and onto the road, going past the green area surrounding the stolen spring. It was a strange feeling to see the spring from so close, rather than from the glimpse we usually get from top of the hills during demonstrations.

One of the women in the car said that she had previously been to the spring with one of the Nabi Saleh women. 'You go there and after five minutes the army arrives to throw you out', she said. An army van, which looked like a troop carrier, was parked in front of the spring and we sped past, stopping at the side of the road leading to the settlement entrance. We had to run about 20-30 metres to reach the settlement gate.

There were no army jeeps at all in the vicinity, indicating that we had indeed surprised the IOF with our action. However, before all of us had even sat down on the ground, several Border Police and Army jeeps came to a screeching halt, inches away from us. Dozens of soldiers and police ran out and started to pull at us, disentangling individuals from the group and picking us off one at a time. We tried to cling to one another as hard as we could.

I saw a couple soldiers grabbing one of the women, pulling her into a standing position and then smashing her head against a jeep parked nearby. As I was waiting for my turn, hoping that more protesters would join us as they arrived, I saw behind me two soldiers removing one woman. At Mustafa's funeral she had confronted them at the road near the spring, holding Mustafa's picture and asking each of the soldiers 'Did you kill him?' From the way they grabbed her, it was clear that they knew exactly who she was and were therefore particularly targeting her.

There was a lot of screaming and shouting. An Israeli activist I was holding onto shouted that she did not recognise their racist occupation. They took her and one more, until finally it was me who got all their unwanted attention. I was left until last, so there was nobody I could cling on to. I felt fingers digging into my upper arm and screamed and screamed and screamed.

More fingers dug in and my arm was twisted behind my back, pulled up so high that I felt it would break. My hand was then skilfully and excruciatingly twisted outwards. The pain was unbearable and so was the rage.

I tried to wriggle away and succeeded for a moment but the next thing I knew, I was on the ground, face down with three soldiers completely covering me from above and digging their knees into my back. I was suffocating, and as panic swept through me I thought “That’s it! This is going to be deemed 'a regrettable, rare and tragic accident'”.

I thought about my son, my husband, my brother and my sister - who would go hysterical at the news. Fortunately, it did not last long and the soldiers pulled me up and repeated the same excruciating arm twist, which is probably is a routine restraint practice they picked up at some army training.

I screamed and screamed again and I focused on screaming in order to forget about the pain and the fear. It seemed that for a long time, although in reality it was probably only seconds, me and the group of soldiers attached to me, pulled on each other, staggering in different directions through a crowd of people - demonstrators, soldiers, police and lots of media, directing camera lenses at us.

I was surprised that actually they did not seem to be able to effectively restrain me and stop me from moving away from them. However, they then began pushing me ahead of them, faster than I could walk, holding both of my arms high up behind my back. Thinking back I should have sat down and made them carry me.

As we reached the army jeep with its door open and waiting for people like me to be pushed in, I managed to release myself somehow. I thought about how to escape but was soon spotted by two soldiers who grabbed me again. I caught the jeep antennae and held on to it for a few seconds before I was peeled off and pushed into the car. Nobody tried to protect my head from hitting the car entrance, as seen in American films. In fact, whoever was pushing me from behind tried very hard to actually make it impossible for me to avoid my head colliding with the top of the entrance. I still have a painful spot on my head as testimony to their success. The army of heroes of the only democracy in the region indeed!

Three people were already inside the jeep, handcuffed. That is when I first noticed that they had only managed to put a ‘cable tie’ on one of my arms but not on the other. An Israeli woman with her hands tied behind her back asked me to pull up the woolly hat covering her eyes, which I could therefore do. They then pushed Mohammed Khatib from the Bil’in Popular Committee to the floor of the jeep, where he lay prone for some seconds, before recovering enough to move inwards. More people were bundled in and shortly afterwards, we were driven to an old building inside the settlement, which I realised was a British Army garrison for the Mandate times. I had previously been told that this was where the first illegal settlers moved in 1977 and started their Halamish project.

We were ordered out of the jeep and told to sit outside the building on the side of the street. This was done in the way that dog trainers ask their dogs to sit, and some of us refused. The soldiers shouted and made threatening moves and noises. 'Don't tell me what to do,' I said, 'I could be your mother or even grandmother'. 'My mother would never do what you are doing', replied the soldier. Fair enough.

'Maybe we would sit down if you said please', said the Palestinian standing next to me. The army had no intention of being so polite, but in the end gave up trying to force us to sit. Mohammed Khatib told me that had been attacked by a settler during the protest and there was blood on his nose indicating the truth of this allegation. His hands were tied in front of him and when a soldier wanted to change this to tie them behind his back, he pushed Mohammed to the ground, where two more soldiers joined in, pinning him down. The injury on his nose started to bleed more and we all stood up and shouted at the soldiers to leave him alone. I told the soldier nearest to me to take a red keffiyeh, which was lying on the ground nearby, to put under Mohammed's face. He bent to do so, but then changed his mind, instead pushing it towards Mohammed's face with his booted foot. Mohammed said he would stand up on his own accord if they stopped forcing him. The soldiers agreed to that, so he stood up and his hands were tied behind his back.

Minutes afterwards, a civilian car appeared with two men inside and Mohammed recognised one of them as his earlier attacker. The settler came out and stared taking pictures of us. We protested and demanded that the soldiers stop him, but they did nothing of the sort. One Israeli activist stood up and went close to him and the settler slapped her across the face. It was infuriating to see the settler be able to attack an individual in police custody, whose hands were bound behind her back, with complete impunity, whilst the soldiers looked on.

All five or six of us stood up, staring and shouting in disgust, asking for the settler to be arrested. A Palestinian prisoner shouted that it was typical of soldiers to protect woman-beating fanatics. The soldiers reached the settler and reprimanded him, whilst we loudly repeated his car number-plate, trying to remember it. It was either 44233 or 33244. We all chanted it for a while and later in the day, a policeman actually asked us for the registration plate number! They clearly let him go without taking any of his details.

The soldiers kept bringing more and more people and when there were about 15 of us, we were taken into the building. The room looked like an abandoned dormitory with metal beds and dirty, torn sponge mattresses. We sat on them and started talking to each other about what had happened.

Phones were taken away as people tried to make phone calls or as their phones rung. Both of my arms were hurting and one was swelling up and starting to feel numb. More people were brought in, including a large group of Israeli activists and Mohammed Tamimi from the Nabi Saleh Popular Committee. They reported to us that the demonstration was still going on in the village, and that the response of the IOF was more aggressive than usual.

Mohammed Tamimi joked and laughed all the time trying to cheer everybody up. A woman activist had heard that Mohammed had told a soldier 'You have killed my brother and now you are arresting me', and that the soldier started to cry! Whilst I did not witness this, there was certainly one soldier who looked in my direction often, checking if I was comfortable. However there were other soldiers there who did not act so humanely.

At one point the policeman in charge came in with a soldier carrying a booklet of photographs - the product of the hard work of army photographers seen regularly at demonstrations, pointing their lenses at the protestors. They inspected the faces in the room and called Mohammed Tamimi out.

People wanted to go to the toilet but were made to wait. I asked to see doctor because my arm was hurting badly and starting to feel numb and a soldier came and said: 'You will have to do

with me, I am a medic. It is probably nothing' he diagnosed in the next sentence, without any examination. 'How do you know?' I asked, to which he replied, 'How do I know that you are not making it all up?'

I therefore insisted on seeing a real doctor, who arrived shortly afterwards. We went to his surgery on the ground floor with a soldier in tow, where he asked me if he could touch my arm and whether I could make a variety of different movements. He concluded that my arm was not broken and offered me painkillers for what he called something like 'pressure bruises'. His use of language was interesting and he said something like 'your arm was exposed to handling which is now causing pain', which almost made me laugh.

Back in the dormitory, we sat around, guessing what was going to happen to us. Two internationals had a flight home at 11am the next day which they were concerned about missing. Two Palestinian women worried about the reaction of their families to their arrest and one was particularly concerned about having been asked the names of her siblings during questioning. The place was cold and I had left my jacket in Nabi Saleh, thinking that I would be too hot running up and down the road and the hill. The soldiers would from time to time bring a bottle of water and plastic cups and put them on the floor in the middle of the room, as well as replacing any handcuffs that had fallen off. The view out of the windows was of a children's playground and we found a handful of rifle bullets, which looked unused, on a windowsill.

Two Border Policemen kept coming in, calling our names and asking us to step one by one out of the room. The process was chaotic. We were first asked for our names, then we were all called again because they forgot to ask for our dates of birth, after which the same was repeated to take IDs, then all of our possessions except our purses were taken away, and finally we were all thoroughly searched. One woman soldier searched me, over my clothes, top to toe and looked inside my, by now, smelly trainers with a torch, whilst another watched. After this, at around 9pm - eight hours after we had been detained - we boarded a bus which was to take us to Binyamin Police Station in another illegal settlement near Jerusalem.

Before we left, we were called out individually to a modern four wheel drive police vehicle. When my turn came, one of the two policemen who had dealt with us all afternoon told me that I had been arrested and accused of being illegally in a closed military zone. He asked me to sign a form confirming this.

According to Israeli laws, foreigners cannot be detained for more than three hours without being arrested and, as far as I or any of the other foreigners detained were concerned, we had not been informed of our arrest, or at least not in a language we understood. Another set of much harsher rules apply to Palestinians, of course.

Most of us refused to sign and we went on our way to Binyamin, where we found ourselves in a modern heated building, which smelled of coffee and had an accessible toilet. In Halamish we were required to be accompanied by a soldier to the toilet, which was outside in a port-a-cabin. One female soldier tried to get into a cubicle with a Palestinian woman, but stepped out when the detainee told her that she would not use the facilities in front of her.

Our handcuffs were cut off and a box with bread, chocolate spread, fruit and large bags of yogurt (without cups), was dropped on the floor. Most of us were exhausted and people were falling asleep where we sat, on the floor and on chairs. We were told that we would be called in for

interrogation individually and that we could consult a lawyer who had been provided by the Israeli activists.

I was called soon and the interrogator started by asking me who I was, before clarifying that he would ask me for the details of my participation in an illegal demonstration, held inside Halamish in Israel. He stated that I had remained inside a closed military zone despite being shown an order by the army which stated that I would be arrested if I did not leave.

He produced a copy of what he said was the military zone order, in Hebrew, and I told him that this was the first time I had seen one, and that I had been told in Halamish that I was accused only of being in the closed military zone, and that he was now expanding the accusations to include my presence in an allegedly illegal demonstration in Israel.

'Why did you think you were here? Did you think that you were brought here for a picnic?' he said, and asked me to sign the paper summarising the accusations against me. He explained that this did not amount to an admission of guilt, but was just a confirmation of the accuracy of his notes in Hebrew. I refused and asked to see the lawyer, who I had initially I would not need. The lawyer came in and after the interrogator asked him for his ID, he translated the notes, which were accurate.

The lawyer and I went out I told him that the policeman was widening the accusations and that I had been hurt during the arrest and was in pain. He wrote my name down and I returned on my own into the interrogation room. The interrogator asked many questions and I replied to each of them that I wished to remain silent. When he asked me finally if I had anything to add, I started telling him about the brutality of my arrest. He replied ' You cannot claim that you do not remember anything of your participation in an illegal demonstration and now come up with all these details'. I responded that I remembered very well what had happened, but I was maintaining my right to remain silent. We went in circles, repeating the argument for a while. 'If you participate in an illegal demonstration you should expect a rough treatment', he said. He resisted including my description of the settler taking pictures of us, insisting that I tell him whether I had personally asked the settler to stop taking pictures, which I could not remember and maintained had not been my responsibility to do anyway, as we had been in police custody. When I said that I had been distraught to witness the settler slap a handcuffed woman, he said that I should stick to what had happened to me. In the end, after a long and arduous exchange, I finished by saying that we had been held for eight hours without being told that we were arrested, which is against Israeli law.

Another man in light blue uniform had joined us and stood by, listening to the whole exchange. I have no idea what my interrogator wrote in Hebrew during this time, if any of my 'additional information' was ever recorded and even if it was, whether it will ever reach anybody outside that interrogation room.

Back in the room, the other arrested protesters said that they had been told that it was likely that we would all be released conditionally, except Mohammed Tamimi who was accused of stone throwing based on photo evidence and Mohammed Khatib for the alleged assault of a soldier during his arrest.

The atmosphere was grim and one of the women started to cry. Mohammed Tamimi continued to joke and comfort everybody saying how happy he was for us to be released and saying that his only worry was being without a computer and access to Facebook. When he came out of the

interrogation room he said that not only it was not him in the picture but that the picture was not even taken in Nabi Saleh.

I was dozing off and every time I woke up there would be fewer people in the room. The last four people to be released, at around 4.30am, were all from the original sit-in group, including myself. Israeli activists were waiting for us outside, to take us to Qalandia checkpoint where taxis were available.

We left behind Mohammad Tamimi in one of the Israeli activist's jacket - his own was torn in a number of places - and Mohammed Khatib. They were expecting to go to Ofer prison. Two Israeli women activists also remained. I later read that, unlike the rest of us, they had refused to sign the release conditions not to go to Nabi Saleh for some weeks, instead choosing to be arrested in solidarity with the two remaining Palestinians. Thank god for people like them! Leaving Mohamed Tamimi and Mohamed Khatib behind felt like abandoning them to their fate. It still feels that way now.

IWPS HOUSE TEAM REPORT

The IWPS house team today attended the first Nabi Saleh Friday demonstration since Mustafa Tamimi's death. Five international volunteers, including one from IWPS, were asked to travel by car into the illegal Halamish settlement, wearing Mustafa Tamimi t-shirts, in order to impress upon the residents the effect that they have had on the village of Nabi Saleh. This group left at around 1200, and we were later notified that they were detained and arrested shortly after this. They are currently still in detention (at 2330 in Palestine), apparently for interrogation. We are awaiting further information at this time, so the remainder of this report is from the other members of the house team who attended the demonstration.

The team noted that the international presence was greater than usual – there were also representatives from the British and Spanish consulates, as well as reportedly a journalist from Fox News. The initial speeches emphasised that the village wished to have an entirely non-violent protest, and that stones were not to be thrown. However, we were anticipating a heightened Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) presence, and a continuation of the high levels of violence and arrests experienced by demonstrators on Friday 9/12/11 and at Mustafa's funeral on 11/12/11.

This proved to be the case, as within around a minute or two, the large group of Palestinians, Israelis and internationals walking down the road were shot with several volleys of tear-gas, both from jeep-mounted firing devices and hand held launchers. The group was heading towards the point where Mustafa was shot last week, holding large banners of his image, chanting and singing. As the tear-gassing and sound bomb attacks continued, the group scattered and re-joined several times, but continued a steady walk towards the soldiers, most with hands in the air. Eventually, many of the group sat down and continued chanting, but were continually pelted with more tear-gas. Following this, the IWPS team witnessed a large group of activists suffering from the extreme effects that tear-gas inhalation can have, unable to move from the side of the road, but being continually hit with more gas. Medical attention from the Red Crescent was required by several individuals. Shortly afterwards, a "skunk-water" cannon approached and shot foul-smelling liquid at the demonstrators, prompting most people to retreat up the road, leaving a few brave individuals who appeared not to mind the smell. The cannon continued along the road, approaching the village proper, but was halted by a roadblock made of rocks and stones.

After the skunk-water cannon had retreated, the demonstration group were alerted that arrests were occurring on the hill overlooking the spring appropriated by the Halamish settlers, which sparked the weekly Nabi Saleh protests just over two years ago. The IWPS team therefore moved from the road, as the majority of the IOF soldiers were also relocating to the bottom of the hill. On arrival at the base of the hill, the group were confronted with a line of around 20 soldiers and border police. Five detained demonstrators were visible, hands bound and sitting on the floor next to army jeeps on the other side of the road. A line of demonstrators formed, facing the soldiers, chanting and waving flags. This continued for around 10 minutes, until a group of Palestinian women and girls approached the soldiers, asking them who killed Mustafa, holding images of him. Vast quantities of tear gas were immediately fired and one Palestinian woman was sprayed in the face with pepper spray, requiring medical attention. The border police made several arrests, witnessed by the IWPS team, appearing to generally target male internationals. The whole line of border police would make a dash into the group of demonstrators and grab the individual they were targeting. Unfortunately, none of these arrests could be prevented. The team and others were then told by the army that the officer had established a “closed-military-zone” and we were ordered to take two steps back or we would be arrested. Our requests for further information about why we could not remain where we were, and what we were allegedly doing wrong were met with the threat of pepper spray. The group retreated, and then withdrew further up the hill as the Border Police made more arrest attempts.

At the time of writing, the IWPS team member, and all other arrested individuals are still in detention. Updates will be issued when we have further information.

Mustafa Tamimi's Funeral

It was a sad journey in a procession of about 30 vehicles, which took the body of a young Palestinian, Mustafa Tamimi, to his beloved village of Nabi Saleh. Mustafa was fatally injured on Friday by a teargas canister fired directly into his face at close range by an Israeli soldier.

A couple of kilometres before our final destination, there were occupying soldiers standing just above the road, lined up and smiling at the funeral procession. On the hill above the village there was a large army vehicle and at the entrance an army jeep. The large crowd of people, many red-eyed from crying and looking desperately sad, surrounded the ambulance Mustafa's body was in and carried him up the street he had marched on so many times previously, and where he paid with his life for his devotion to freedom of his village and his country.

Mustafa's body was first taken to his home and as it reached it, heartbreaking screams could be heard from inside. The villagers then carried the martyr to the mosque chanting slogans and one after another, Mustafa's nearest collapsed and were taken into the ambulances which had borne his body to the village. Mustafa's grave is in a beautiful spot at the top of the hill, not far from the main mosque where Friday demonstrations start, and overseeing the illegal and ugly scar on the landscape, the Halamish settlement - built on Nabi Saleh land, which has been causing so much grief and suffering to the people of the village.

After the speeches, a group of people started walking towards the entrance to the village where there is an army tower and a gate installed by the occupiers which they open and close, cutting Nabi Saleh off as they please. Dozens of soldiers and the infamous Border Police were there and they showered the peaceful protesters both with teargas and the disgusting "stink water". Youth

threw stones in response and teargas canisters sped around, aimed at our heads as per usual, despite lessons that certainly should have been learnt since Mustafa's death.

After a while a group of villagers decided to go down the hill towards the Nabi Saleh spring usurped by the Halamish colonisers two years ago, triggering the regular Friday demonstrations which cost Mustafa his life. A group of people carrying pictures of Mustafa and Palestinian flags, many of them women, approached a line of about 15 soldiers. A young woman held Mustafa's picture in front of a soldier, asking 'Which one of you is responsible for this?'. The soldier snatched the poster, tore it and threw it to the ground.

In a matter of minutes a number of Border police and army jeeps joined in and the whole valley was covered in a thick cloud of teargas. The IWPS team could see from 20-30 metres away a scuffle between the mourners and the occupying force who were trying to pick out people and arrest them. The screams coming from brutalised and angry mourners were something I will never forget. We heard calls for ambulances and were later told that a soldier tried to strangle an Israeli activist who was taken away for treatment. Several activists were arrested, mainly internationals and many people were seriously affected by the gas inhalation due to its repeated and heavy use.

Nabi Saleh protests will continue for the same reasons as before and now also in honour of Mustafa, a well loved young man and the first martyr of Nabi Saleh.

[Breaking News from Wafa](#)

RAMALLAH, December 10, 2011 (Wafa) –A Palestinian protester who was seriously injured in Nabi Saleh protest on Friday, died Saturday morning, according to local sources. They told Wafa that Mustafa Tamimi, 27, who was participating in the peaceful weekly demonstration in Nabi Saleh, north of Ramallah, was shot in the face at close range by a tear gas canister fired by an Israeli soldier. Tamimi was transferred to Belinson hospital in Israel after he was critically injured, but doctors were not able to save his life.

A family member confirmed to Wafa death of Tamimi, but did not say when the family would get the body back from the Israeli hospital for burial.

A source said Tamimi's funeral will be held on Sunday.

A statement by Stop the Wall Campaign said residents of Nabi Saleh were marking the second anniversary of the start the popular resistance when Tamimi was shot in the face. This occurred while the UN Special Rapporteur for the Freedom of Assembly was visiting the village.

It said Tamimi's face was split from the impact of the gas bomb, losing a large amount of blood before being transferred by car to hospital in Ramallah, 30 kilometers away. The ambulance was stopped at the Nabi Saleh checkpoint by the occupation forces for 30 minutes. Subsequently he was flown for treatment at an Israeli hospital near Tel Aviv.

Tamimi was not the only one hit in the demonstration, said the statement. The Israeli army crackdown led to the injury of six other people. A cameraman from Palestine TV, Najib Fraona, and Ahmed Abdullah Khreish were both hit by rubber bullets. Wa'de Tamimi was hit by a tear gas canister that fractured his foot and a girl, Nissan Tamimi, was shot with a tear gas bomb that broke her hand. Fadel Tamimi was wounded by a rubber bullet in his ear and another one in his foot. Muhammad Abu Samra was wounded by a rubber bullet in his ear. Additionally, dozens of people suffered from tear gas suffocation.

In response, the people of the village of Nabi Saleh attacked the Israeli military tower at the entrance to the village of Nabi Saleh and broke the main gate that closes the entrance to the village, venting their anger at the injury of Tamimi and others, said the statement.

Nabi Saleh, which has a population of approximately 500 people, is located 30 kilometers northeast of Ramallah. The Israeli settlement of Halamish (also known as Neveh Tzuf) was established on lands belonging to the villages of Nabi Saleh and Deir Nidham in 1976.

In the summer of 2008, Halamish settlers seized control of a number of springs, all of which were located on private Palestinian land belonging to residents of Nabi Saleh. In December 2009, the village began weekly demonstrations in opposition to the annexing of the fresh water springs and village land.

Since Nabi Saleh began its demonstrations, the Israeli military has brutally sought to repress the protests, arresting more than 13% of the village residents, including children. In total, some 90 village residents have been arrested. All but three were tried for participating in the demonstrations. Of those imprisoned, 29 were minors under the age of 18 years and four were women.

Nabi Saleh Anniversary

The IWPS House team participated on Friday (9th Dec) in the 2nd anniversary Nabi Saleh protest. The demo started, as on every Friday, after the midday prayer in front of the main mosque, with a speech about the villagers' struggle against the occupation, land theft and their determination to continue their peaceful resistance.

As we proceeded down the main road, we were immediately met with a barrage of teargas which was, almost without exception, fired at the demonstrators rather than into the air, as they should be for (comparatively) safe usage.

The rubber coated metal bullets soon followed and it was not surprising that in the first half an hour of the demonstration, we saw two individuals bleeding from their heads, one man with what looked like a broken leg and a boy with an injured foot, which he later told us was broken. A large number of people also suffered from teargas inhalation.

At around 1.30pm we were surprised to see a procession of 3 UN vehicles driving through the village gate, which the Israeli occupiers had previously closed. A villager friend told us that the UN had requested to come and observe the demonstration, and that they would do so from the hill above the village. As the UN vehicles passed, the teargassing eased off somewhat and the villagers joked that the UN should come more often, as it seemed that the Israelis wanted to impress them with their non-violent tactics. The quiet did not last long. The demonstrators decided to go downhill in the direction of the stolen village spring, where a group of soldiers were visible standing in the field and amongst the olive trees. Teargas started to rain on us from all sides and many people needed aid from the extremely busy and helpful Palestinian Red Crescent volunteers. We then noticed a bulldozer, followed by several army and Border Police jeeps, travelling down the road that the protest had been following. Everybody rushed back fearing the possible intentions of the bulldozer and army entering the village. The village youth started throwing stones and one tried and failed to stick a Palestinian flag in the blade of the bulldozer. Large rocks, placed by the protesters on the road to prevent the army vehicles from

entering the village, were removed by the bulldozer, after which all the vehicles and soldiers retreated to the village entrance.

Many of them stood behind the metal gate, installed by Israeli occupiers in Nabi Saleh, as in almost all of the villages in the West Bank. A group of mainly women followed the soldiers and the Border Police, who moved to line up in front of the gate in response, with around a further dozen of them standing in the field to the left of the gate. An army photographer was busy clicking away.

Earlier on Bushra Tamimi, wife of the imprisoned village leader Naji Tamimi, told us that in the last few days the army had arrested two Nabi Saleh youth, alleging that they have pictures of them throwing stones. The women were not intimidated. I could hear some of them saying 'come on take a picture of me'. We saw the ambulance speeding by and were told that a villager called Mustafa Tamimi had been shot in the face with a teargas canister and that his situation did not look good. We then noticed a young woman waving a bloodied flag, which she said was soaked in Mustafa's blood. Moments later, a Palestinian man ran from the Israeli side shouting for someone to retrieve Mustafa's ID from his home! Amazing, but perhaps not surprising, that Israelis should insist that a man they just shot must have his ID in order to get what is likely to be life-saving treatment.

With only around a metre between them, and ignoring occupiers orders to leave, the women, joined by a group of men and internationals, sat on the street and questioned the soldiers and police. They asked what they were doing on their land and why they were besieging and tormenting their village. 'This is our land, and not yours. We will never give up our land' a woman told the soldiers, who seemed like they did not know what to do with themselves or where to look. Several women were telling soldiers that they kill innocent and defenseless Palestinians, asking them 'Who are terrorists, us or you?'

The young woman with the flag soaked with Mustafa Tamimi's blood then stood up and waved it in the face of each soldier, one by one. It was windy and the flag got wrapped around the faces of several soldiers, who stepped back and did nothing. The woman was shouting 'Look, this is what you did. This is what you are responsible for and I hope that you will answer for this in court. All of you'.

It was difficult to describe the scene that we were so privileged to witness: women and men of Nabi Saleh fearlessly telling their tormentors what is in their hearts and on their minds. Both their strength and their moral superiority was so obvious that occupiers did not know how to respond. The soldiers then decided to leave. They just turned back and the crowd cheered. The women got up and followed them to the closed gate and stood there. Again the soldiers looked completely lost and just stood there. A few moments after this, an army jeep sped up and stopped right at the yellow gate and started the unbearable noise called the 'scream'. The women picked up rocks and responded by banging on the metal gate. Rocks, once more, against the Israeli latest high-tech weaponry. The racket that the women were making with their rocks was no less loud than the 'scream'. I saw a soldier closing his ears with his hands and smiling. After a noise standoff which lasted about 10 minutes, the 'scream' was switched off and the soldiers retreated to near the tower, where they joined about 10 different army and police vehicles and tens of soldiers and police. The demonstrators opened the gate and waved a line of Palestinian cars through which only minutes ago Israelis ordered to turn away.

4 December 2011 Army violence at Nabi Saleh protests is on the rise

We arrived early in the village of Nabi Saleh this Friday (3 December), because the last couple of Fridays the Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) declared the village a 'closed military zone' and prevented international activists from entering.

We visited couple of friends and talked about the recent night raids when three villagers were taken, two of them witnesses at the ongoing trial of Nabi Saleh activist Naji Tamimi. It was good to hear that all of them have now been released.

Just after midday we started marching with a group of villagers as they came out of the Mosque. Internationals - and Israeli activists in particular - were present in large numbers.

As we reached the main village junction, the demo turned to the right up the hill, not going the usual way down the street, where army jeeps were ready and waiting just around the curve.

We walked near the top of the hill and could see in the far distance a group of people frantically running from the Nabi Saleh spring towards the main street leading to the Halamish illegal settlement. Two years ago this spring was taken over by the Halamish colonisers, triggering the Friday protests by the residents of Nabi Saleh.

The people running were settlers who happened to be at the stolen spring and obviously felt they were in mortal danger when they saw Palestinians far away on the top of the hill.

There were cheers as the settlers ran towards the army jeep. The sight of a car which stopped and then moved at 'walking' pace, shielding the fleeing settlers from the 'danger' coming from us, was quite comical. The distance was such that the demonstrators could not have looked to the settlers much larger than dots on the landscape, and all that the protesters were doing at this point was waving flags and chanting anti-occupation slogans.

This reaction from the settlers really illustrated the extent that Palestinians have been demonised amongst the people who continue to steal their land and have been oppressing them for decades.

Our attention was then diverted from the settlers by a group of soldiers who appeared to the right, some pointing their guns at the marchers.

It was an amazing sight to see the demonstrators continuing to walk peacefully towards the soldiers who backed away from them.

As this was happening, two jeeps appeared on the top of the hill, one belonging to the IOF and another to the infamous Border police. The policemen and the soldiers came out of the jeeps and started firing teargas in all directions. Some of them approached a group of journalists and asked for their press passes. Soon after, they arrested two TV journalists. We were later told that they were Majd Mohammed from the AP and Mohammed Razi from Palestinian Television.

Other journalist tried to film the arrests and were intimidated by the soldiers who minutes later declared the area a 'closed military zone'. Everybody was given five minutes to leave or be arrested.

While this was going on the villagers placed stones across the road that the jeeps had to take and while soldiers were removing them, the youth started throwing stones and for a moment the soldiers looked so panicked that I worried about what they would do next. Thankfully they fought their way out of the village by firing loads of teargas, some straight at demonstrators and I saw several people collapsing on the ground temporarily blinded and with breathing problems.

The jeeps left and the demonstration continued down the exit road from the village. The marchers blocked the road with large rocks and set car tyres alight to prevent the soldiers and the police from entering the village again.

Teargas rained as demonstrators moved towards the soldiers and back. I saw the soldiers allowing the Palestinian passenger car to proceed towards the village where the demonstration was taking place and when the car stopped in front of the barrier of rocks, they fired a teargas right at it.

Soon after, no cars were allowed in and cars leaving were stopped and searched. Also the deafening sound called 'scream' was used for a prolonged time. A villager woman was very worried about the 'scream' because she said that the noise was very harmful for the hearing of the small children and caused them much pain.

Fri 4 Nov '11

Nabi Saleh Friday protest

We travelled from Deir Istiya to Nabi Saleh this Friday via the Palestinian village of Brukin. The route was through the back roads which are the only roads majority of Palestinians use nowadays, because they are either banned from the 'settlers only' roads or 'ethically cleansed' from them by traffic fines which occupying force liberally dolls out to Palestinians.

A neighbour from Deir Istiya who travels every day to Ramallah where he works, said when I asked what were the fines usually for: 'They will find something wrong with the car even if it is brand new and many are not, because Palestinians can not afford cars'.

So what years of checkpoint harassment could not achieve was successfully done by a more mundane method of pricing impoverished Palestinians from the significant parts of their occupied country ravaged by the settler roads, they can not afford to use.

Before the demo we visited Bushra, a lovely wife of the imprisoned Naji Tamimi, one of the organisers of the now famous Nabi Saleh Friday protests against the theft of the village spring by the nearby illegal Israeli settlement of Hallamish.

For me the settlements are a crime under the international laws banning annexation of occupied lands, but also a crime on the aesthetic grounds. Just like their inhabitants, they do not belong in the landscape of wavy hills of Palestine. Somebody likened them to having a Milton Keynes on the top of every hill which is a depressing but accurate description. And Hallamish is one of the ugliest.

Villagers of Nabi Saleh have to look at Hallamish day-in and day-out because it is perched on the top of the opposite hill on their ancestral lands.

Naji phoned his wife from Negev prison, while we were there and asked about us, guests in his far away house, and they talked for a while with Bushra's face lit by a smile. They have five children and Bushra is a Fatah activist, one of the two women on the village Fatah committee of seven. When we asked her about her political work she said that she represented all women in the village. I later kept meeting her during the demonstration. All her and Naji's children were there too, I was told.

Naji is due to be released in couple of months but Bushra hopes that he will come home earlier, in a prisoner release deal.

Their relative and activists Basem Tamimi is also in prison but he has not been charged yet. The court hearing is currently ongoing and it is expected to take a long time. One of the very young Nabi Saleh boys Israelis arrested and interrogated in an illegal manner, accused Basem of inciting stone throwing and that is now being contested.

Bushra said that the village, which has about 500 inhabitants and most of them belong to the Tamimi family, was saddened because Said Tamimi, who was imprisoned 20 years ago when he was 18 years old and who is serving a life sentence, was not amongst those freed in the recent Shalit release. His family and in particular his mother are devastated.

It is this solidarity which is so amazing and which has probably kept Palestinians together and helped them survive and preserve strength and pride through decades of horrendous Israeli occupation. Nobody ever talks only about their own situation, the problems of neighbours, relatives and friends are always brought up too.

I was in Nabi Saleh for the first time though I read weekly about the protests and watched fascinating video clips by Bilal Tamimi which made the Nabi Saleh one of the most important resistance demos in the West Bank.

The demo was unusual. We were on the tops of the hills, which Palestinians call mountains (-:, and Israeli's far bellow on the road curbing around the ugly Hallamish colony and the British military post from the times of Mandate, which is still a visible landmark people refer to.

As the Friday prayer ended, a group of demonstrators descended down the main village road carrying a beautiful boat, like the ones thousands of Palestinian prisoners make in their long days in captivity, symbolising the Waves of Freedom ships which were on their way to break the siege of Gaza. People wore white ribbons with 'Waves of Freedom' written on them.

Down the main curbing road there were Israeli army vehicles, ready and waiting. What I feared the most was the white cistern truck called the 'stink' or the 'shit', which sprays stinking water which can not be washed from the hair and it has to be cut or clothes which have to be burned. As for the body, those who experienced it say that it takes many showers to get rid of it. 'Give us teargas any time', said Bushra smiling at the irony of her words, earlier, when I mentioned the 'stinker-shit'.

In the previous demos the Israeli's would douse the villagers houses in the stinky water and after smelling it on the sprayed road a bit later, I wondered how people managed to stay in them after, except that they had no choice but to put up with it.

As we approached the bend we could see the pale green army jeeps and a dark green jeep of the infamously cruel 'border police'. The demo then split and one group went to the right down the steep hill of layered rocks lined with the red soil. My IWPS friends and I joined them and soon we were climbing the steep hills followed by the speeding army jeeps down bellow, who we surprised by our detour.

The view was out of this world, wavy rocky hills covered with the small silvery olive tree groves and the shadows of the masses of white clouds. It felt like we were on the top of the world. To the left in the distance there was a pretty Palestinian village with the slim minaret shooting towards the sky. And right ahead of us was Hallamish scarring the landscape. We could see in the distance towards Ramallah another ugly illegal settlement of 'all-the-same' mass produced 'housing units', and thought that is exactly what they are, not 'homes' but the 'housing units', without any links to this land.

To the right of Hallamish, a dozen of long mobile houses were in full sight. This is the so called 'outpost', which is the first step colonisers take in their relentless theft of Palestinian land. The occupied village spring was also visible, even though far away, at the bottom of the hill, surrounded by the lush greenery of trees in the otherwise pretty bare surrounding landscape. The demo routine of teargas started and both the main road we departed from and the hills where we were, looked like a scene from some weird rock concert, with teargas grenades coming from below reaching high up in the sky and then spiraling down and erupting into clouds of sharp white smoke which tore through the lungs and burned the eyes even in smallest of quantities. I was thinking that American taxpayers funding the Israeli army machine would probably be scandalised to witness the sight of their hard earned and nowadays scarce dollars turning into stinky water, which I heard is so expensive that, thankfully, Israelis use it sparingly and hundreds of teargas grenades and all that with the aim to subjugate the occupied people. Even the worst of Hollywood could not glorify that.

The wind was on our side and we followed the Palestinians and would safely stand metres away from the nasty gas watching it being blown towards the soldiers.

People sat on the rocks, women, children, internationals, while young village man went dangerously close to the soldiers making a point that they were not scared and that they would not obey.

After some time the 'shit' cistern appeared in the main road followed by the teargas cannonade and I saw from another hilltop one young man collapsing and than two more followed. I toughed that they were shot either by the teargas canisters or by bullets as their limp bodies were carried by the running groups of people.

I thought that this is how it happens! This is how Basem Abu Rahme was killed in April 2009 in Bil'in with the tear gas canister fired into his hearth.

When we reached one of the guys he looked unconscious but the Palestinian woman who was helping him reassured us that his life was not in danger and that he would recover.

She was surely right, less than 10 minutes later the young man stood up and to my surprise rushed down towards the line of soldiers who looked like some strange Robo Cop larmy form another planet, with helmets and all kinds of equipment and antennae sticking out of them. And confronting them was soft, unprotected, vulnerable body of a young man in a cloud of teargas with his hands up shouting slogans about freedom.

David and Goliath in reverse. I found it hard to think that soldiers were probably teenagers themselves, maybe scared and unsure what to do.

The action has moved to the end of the curving main road which ends with a yellow metal barrier gate Israeli occupiers use to try to corral Palestinians in, when they deem it necessary. Three jeeps and a dozen of soldiers stood there with a larger number of jeeps, other military cars and soldiers stationed a few hundred metres above, just under the settlement factory which a friend told me was built on Bushra and Naji's land.

Next to the gate was a short round grey watchtower. Demonstrators scattered around moving towards the soldiers, some throwing stones, others just standing there watching.

The teargas rained, but it posed no problem because a friendly wind continued to blow it back to the soldiers.

The soldiers milled around some knelling and taking ominous firing positions and spraying metal balls all over us. These were the so called rubber bullets which is a 'cuddly' name for the heavy metal marbles encased in thin layer of hard plastic, which can certainly kill if they hit 'the right spot'.

The soldiers were supposed to fire them in the legs but they whizzed around our heads like flies. A villager told me that they were fired in clusters, 15 at the time.

Teargas canisters are also supposed to be fired up in the air but I saw the soldiers shooting them straight into protestors and using them like a weapon.

As all this was going on taxi vans, passenger cars and trucks would drive to the gate as if it was just an ordinary day and stop some distance away from the solders, turning back when soldiers failed to wave them through.

And all of a sudden out of a blue the solders got into the jeeps and drove up towards the settlement factory.

Kids and villagers surged forth taking over the vacated ground and hurling stones into the watchtower for a while.

And then a group of soldiers appeared from behind the tower and started chasing the youth. They stood no chance under their heavy killing gear and on the foreign terrain. It was no context - the villagers rejoiced in leaving them behind and when a soldier toppled and fell like catapulted through the air. There was a cheer like the one we hear after the score at the important football matches.

I jumped around like a monkey at this small victory, at this small accidental justice which had to be savoured.

But that was not the only victory for that day. Following the soldier fall the jeeps started rolling down from their factory and entered the village. We all rushed up the hill to see what they were intending to do. They drove through the village at speed and their only way out was via the downhill road where the demo started earlier that day.

They made what military strategists would probably call a strategic mistake. In fact, from a point of view of a lay person like me, it was tactical disaster: army jeeps driving under the hill full of angry villagers and stones. The stones sure as hell rained on the jeeps, sounding just like 'rubber bullets' army showered us with not so long ago. More damage to the Israeli war machine to be fixed by the US taxpayers. Tough!

As the jeeps were retreating in haste a teen staggered towards me and my friend with his hand bleeding. He was shot by the rubber bullet and looked like he was going to faint. We took out our First Aid kit and made a spectacularly bad attempt of helping him. Some Israeli activists came over and assisted knowledgeably. Somebody came by and suggested the guy should be taken to the ambulance and we saw him later with his arm in the sling.

A lesson for us that we have to brush up on our First Aid in hope that we will never have to use it.

Al Nakba Demonstration in Nabi Salih: at least 25 protesters were injured, including a Palestinian woman in her 50s who was beaten up so badly that her wounds required her removal from the Salfet Hospital to the bigger and more advanced Rafidiya Hospital in Nablus. A 25-year-old American demonstrator suffered a serious head injury and an Israeli activist was diagnosed with two open fractures in his hand. The last information the American is in critical condition. Both were injured by tear-gas projectiles shot directly at them from short range, in violation of the Israeli Army's open fire regulations. Four protesters were arrested in Nabi Salih, including two Palestinian women and an Israeli activist who was beaten and kicked repeatedly while being dragged to her arrest.

On Friday, April 15, the Israeli Occupation forces fire high velocity tear gas canisters at peaceful demonstrators, many of them young children at the beginning a march toward farmlands and a spring taken over by the illegal settlement of Hallamish. Later in the day they spray toxic "skunk water" in the center of the village, and later still, they fire at least 50 rounds of live ammunition. Luckily, in all this violence perpetuated in innocent people by the IOF, nobody is injured.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHnBKVj_194

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FnaYdG2MJU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9c6a2aW4Rlw>

Israeli Army Represses Dissent with 3am Child Arrests

“They come for our woman and our children,” Bassem Tamimi, the leader of the Popular Committee of Nabi Saleh recently told me, “they [the Israeli army] know that women are half our population and half our strength and so they target them along with the children.” Tamimi, a gentle man with a warm smile spoke to me about the repression of his village as we sat in his home overlooking the settlement of Halamish. “They know where to apply pressure on our resistance. It has become really difficult since the last wave of arrests.”

Israel is devoting maximum effort to the repression of Nabi Saleh's determination to demonstrate against the Occupation. The specific method of repression has been in development for the past eight years and is not only designed to break the demonstrations but to leave permanent psychological scars on the next generation of Nabi Saleh villagers. In short, children are used to implicate the leaders of the Popular Committee for incitement in demonstrations, providing evidence for their long term incarceration. In the last month, six children have been arrested or detained in Nabi Saleh by the army.

[Inside the Israeli Military Repression of Nabi Saleh: Night Raids](#) from [Joseph Dana](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The videos embedded in this post were taken in a night raid three weeks ago. The army invaded the village at 03h00, woke everyone up and went from house to house photographing children and recording their ID information. The photographs are compiled and used by soldiers in demonstrations to systematically target and arrest the children. Once arrested, children are given a brief interrogation at an undisclosed military base and then returned to the village.

Based on the initial investigation, the General Security Service (Shabak in Hebrew) determines which child is the most susceptible to psychological torture and will most likely implicate the leadership of the popular committee. This unlucky boy is then rearrested, charged with stone throwing (evidence other than confession is usually not provided to back up this charge) and subjected to a much longer interrogation without lawyer or parents present. After two or three children go through this punishment, the army raids the home of the popular committee leaders and they are then imprisoned for between one and three years on charges of incitement. This is what happened to Bil'in's Abdallah Abu Rahmha, whom the European Union has labeled a human rights defender. He was given a sentence of 16 months for charges of incitement based on the coerced testimony of four children from Bil'in.

[Inside the Israeli Military Repression of Nabi Saleh](#) from [Joseph Dana](#) on [Vimeo](#).

14 year old Islam Tamimi, one of the children seen being photographed in a night raid, has been in jail for the past three weeks. Days after the video was shot he was arrested and detained for a number of hours at the Halamish military base. Two days after he was detained, the army raided his home at 02h00 and arrested him. He was left in the cold, blindfolded and bound for the rest of the night and then taken imminently to interrogation without lawyer or parents present. The interrogation lasted eight hours. Incidentally, the day that Tamimi was arrested the IDF Spokespersons office tweeted that 'a wanted suspect was arrested overnight and taken for security questioning.' Tamimi is awaiting a trial set to begin on the 14th of February. Israel decided that he was too dangerous to be released on bail and remains in jail until the hearing.

The language in these videos is short and simple. The scene is eerie in its simplicity. Soldiers enter in the middle of the night, wake everyone up and coldly go about their business. Names are written down along with the ID information. The children are asked to stand for a photograph and the soldiers leave. What you are watching in these videos is a small but crucial component of, in the words of Jonathan Cook, Israel's ongoing project of human despair.