

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PEACE SERVICE
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Date: 26 April 2013

Kufr Qaddum: Hospitalization and fire due to Israeli military tear gas

Date of incidents: 26 April 2013

Place: Kufr Qaddum, Palestine

Witnesses: Community of Kufr Qaddum, IWPS, ISM, Anarchists Against the Wall

Note: IWPS withholds contact information as a courtesy to those involved. However, we will do our best to furnish you with the information you may require, upon request.

Description of incidents:

On Friday 26 April 2013 a festival took place in Kufr Qaddum in the courtyard of the local schools, followed by a march. Hundreds of people were in attendance, including the Minister of Prisoner's Affairs, representatives of the municipality of the Qalqilya district and the President of Prisoners Club.

Following the festival, there was a march through the center of the village to the main road where the people were met by Israeli military jeeps and Border Police. The road, together with the surrounding hills and houses were doused with tear gas using a weapon dubbed "the tempest", which shoots dozens of tear gas canisters simultaneously, causing a fire in the surrounding fields and hospitalizing five people. Thirty soldiers entered the village, shooting rubber-coated bullets; the march completely dispersed.

Kufr Qaddum regularly suffers abuses from the nearby settlement of Qedumim and constant violence from the Israeli military. The weekly Friday protests targeting the main road closure are only one part of the ongoing resistance. The people of Kufr Qaddum will continue to build strength in their struggle until the end of Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Kufr Qaddum is located in the Qalqilya Governorate in northern West Bank. The town of approximately 4,000 people has been heavily affected by the nearby illegal settlement of Qedumim. Though the village lands are approximately 24,000 dunams, 11,000 dunams are located in Area C (under Israeli control) and are thus completely inaccessible to the residents of Kufr Qaddum; 4,000 dunams have been stolen for the establishment and expansion of Qedumim.

In 2003 during the Second Intifada, the main road of the village was closed by the Israeli army and has remained closed until the present. Residents are forced to travel longer routes to bypass the closure; travel to the neighbouring town of Jit has increased from 1.5 km to nearly

15 km and the distance to Nablus has doubled from 13 km to 26 km. Residents reported 3 deaths between 2004-2006 due to the inability to reach the nearest hospitals in Nablus.

Residents of Kufr Qaddum have held regular Friday demonstrations since 2011. Ever since the demonstrations started, the town has experienced increasing repression by the Israeli army, including frequent night raids, twice-daily checkpoints at the village entrance, and violent attacks using stun grenades, tear gas, attack dogs, and rubber-coated steel bullets. In April 2012, a 17-year-old resident of Kufr Qaddum was shot in the head with a tear gas canister, causing multiple skull fractures. At present, the teen has not regained his ability to speak.

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