

*INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PEACE SERVICE*  
*Deir Istiya, occupied Palestine*  
*palhouse [at] iwps-pal.org*  
*+972-(0)9-251-4644*  
*<http://iwps.info/>*

Date: 3 May 2013

Youth chase soldiers away from town center

**Date of incidents:** 2 May 2013

**Place:** Kufr Qaddum, Palestine

**Witnesses:** Residents 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 3 May 2013 the residents of Kufr Qaddum organized a demonstration in resistance to the closure of the village's main road which leads to Nablus, and to the Israeli occupation. Prior to the official start of the demonstration, the Israeli army entered the road closest to Qedumim settlement and chased young men who had assembled back toward the village.

At approximately 13:00 the demonstration began, as a crowd of around 75 people marched along the village's main road, chanting anti-occupation slogans. As the crowd walked toward the road closure, IWPS observed some 30 soldiers and 2 military jeeps on the hill overlooking the village, a greater army presence than usual. Upon reaching the usual protest area down the road, protesters met Israel occupation forces and Border Police who were parked along the road toward the illegal settlement. The soldiers would sporadically speed into the village, driving around defensive barricades built by protesters, only to retreat back toward the settlement.

A group of men from the village gathered near a field nearly halfway down the march route to observe the soldiers at the top of the mountain. At nearly 13:30 soldiers began descending down the hill toward the protesters standing in the field. The army repeatedly shot tear gas canisters and threw sound bombs at the youth gathered in the field. At 13:45, fires erupted in the fields due to the tear gas canisters and nearly 40 olive trees were burned. Soldiers continued to fire tear gas at the young men who attempted to put out the fires.

After nearly 30 minutes of tear gassing the field, some 20 soldiers charged down the hill toward the protesters to try to make arrests. The protesters escaped down the hill and regrouped with others standing along the main road. The residents of Kufr Qaddum moved toward the village center and were chased by a bulldozer that was used to clear away defensive stone barricades erected by the townspeople. Once the road was cleared, the "skunk truck", a truck that shoots foul-smelling chemical water, advanced upon the protesters,

spraying them and the surrounding houses. Two military jeeps drove into the town and soldiers shot more tear gas. The military also brought the "Tempest", a weapon that is attached to the top of a military jeep that deploys multiple tear gas canisters simultaneously.

By 15:00, the demonstration ended, though many residents returned to the fields to battle the wild fires in the olive groves as the soldiers looked on from the hill above. Two people were injured by tear gas - a local organizer and a journalist who was shot in the face - and one teenager suffered a fractured arm while running from the tear gas. No arrests were made that day in Kufr Qaddum.

Kufr Qaddum is located in the Qalqiliya 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.

-ENDS-