



מרכז המידע הישראלי לזכויות האדם בשטחים (ע.ר.)

B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

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## **B'TSELEM ACTIVITY REPORT**

**2009**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2009 marks B'Tselem's 20<sup>th</sup> year. In the past two decades, B'Tselem emerged as the gold standard of human rights research, serving as an extremely reliable source of information in a contentious and polarized climate. B'Tselem has developed creative public education and advocacy strategies. B'Tselem's video project pioneered a unique model of citizen journalism, and video has proved effective in reaching new audiences and promoting genuine accountability.

B'Tselem has effected real changes on the ground: ending the routine torture of Palestinians in interrogations; halting punitive house demolitions; driving the domestic and international efforts to reroute the Separation Barrier; and advocating successfully for a prohibition on the use of Palestinians as human shields in military operations.

However, as 2009 draws to a close, our work is far from finished. Among the many pressing issues:

- A year after the Cast Lead military operation in the Gaza Strip, Israel has so far refused to conduct an independent, effective investigation into the very grave allegations regarding its conduct in the operation (see report below).
- The siege on Gaza means that 1.4 million Palestinians are trapped, unable to leave Gaza to obtain medical care, education or reunite with relatives. Israel drastically restricts imports into Gaza. One year after Cast Lead, Gazans still lack access to the construction materials necessary to rebuild their homes;
- Settler violence is on the rise as extremists vent their anger at the government by abusing Palestinians. Security force abuse is also far too common. Whether they are victimized by soldiers or settlers, in most cases Palestinian victims of violence find little redress from Israeli law enforcement authorities.
- Hundreds of Palestinians are being held for months and even years without charge or trial in administrative detention.

In 2009, B'Tselem continued its unrelenting efforts to promote human rights protections. Advocacy efforts included: a month-long, high profile campaign using B'Tselem's 20-year anniversary to draw attention to the urgency of the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories; **four Internet campaigns** on Operation Cast Lead, security force violence, the siege on Gaza, and Road 443, which is barred to Palestinian use; **4 full-length publications**, including **Guidelines for Israel's Investigation of Operation Cast Lead**, and **Without Trial: Administrative Detention of Palestinians by Israel**; **22 visual articles and films** made available online; and **80 study tours and 176 briefings** for policymakers, journalists, diplomats, and international organizations.

B'Tselem won the prestigious **One World Media Award** for our **camera distribution project**. As the video archive surpassed 2,000 hours, the project expanded into Gaza with a new video blog in which Gazans

document their everyday lives under the siege. The blog was hosted on Israel's most visited internet news site, YNet, and covered in the New York Times and other international outlets.

Details of the above activities and landmarks are set forth in full below.

## **B'TSELEM'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN: 20 YEARS TOO LONG**

To mark its 20<sup>th</sup> year, and as described in brief above, B'Tselem launched a month-long campaign to use this anniversary to call attention within Israel to the ongoing human rights situation. The initial announcement included new statistics on human rights issues dating from B'Tselem's founding in 1989. In the past 20 years:

- Israeli security forces killed 7,398 Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories, among them at least 1,537 minors. During the past twenty years, Palestinians killed 1483 Israelis, of them 139 minors. Of this number, 488 were members of the security forces, and 995 were civilians, killed in Palestinian attacks in Israel and the Occupied Territories.
- The year with the highest number of Palestinian casualties was 2009: 1033 persons were killed, of them 315 minors. Most of those were killed in Gaza during operation Cast Lead.
- Israel demolished at least 4300 homes in the Occupied Territories in the years 1989-2009, either for being built without a permit, or as punishment. This figure does not include the destruction of property during military operations. This type of demolition includes 3540 houses demolished during operation Cast Lead alone, and an estimated 2700 homes demolished during previous military incursions into Gaza.
- Settlement population increase: In 1989, the settlement population was 69,800 in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), and 118,100 in East Jerusalem. Today, over 300,000 Israelis live in the West Bank, as well as about 190,000 in East Jerusalem.

With tensions still high after the hostilities in Gaza, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign attempted to open up a dialogue with the Israeli public. The campaign included:

- **A full-page newspaper ad** in the *Haaretz* daily newspaper conveying B'Tselem's hope that after two decades of human rights work, we anticipate the day that our work will no longer be necessary;
- **A series of short videos featuring noted television actor Menashe Noy.** In the clips, Noy theatrically recited highlights from the most vitriolic "talk-backs," or on-line comment postings, that B'Tselem has received over the years with voice-over narration stating B'Tselem's goal of protecting human rights. The videos have been featured prominently in the Israeli print and broadcast media;
- **The launch of a somewhat unconventional, more personal, B'Tselem blog** that aims to reach out to the Israeli audience and generate support for human rights, with posts written in Hebrew by B'Tselem staffers that allow more personal reflections on human rights and their role in documentation and advocacy. The launch of the blog generated responses on many of Israel's main internet news sites and in the blogosphere;
- **A public event with high-profile guests** in attendance, including noted authors, professors, and the founders of B'Tselem;
- Finally, **over a dozen tours and public events** were hosted for cultural figures, journalists, tour guides, youth movements, and the general public, including **noted broadcaster Ronen Bergman** and **actress Rivka Michaeli**. Both discussed their tours on primetime media broadcasts.

The campaign succeeded in generating a surge of media attention in Israel, including appearances on Israel's television Channel 1 and one of Israel's most prominent talk radio shows. Although the target audience was Israel, the campaign was covered by leading Arabic newspapers and international outlets such as Agence France-Presse, BBC World Service, and many others.

## ANNUAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

B'Tselem's activities during the past year included the following:

**827 testimonies** collected by B'Tselem's field research team throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

**Comprehensive statistics** compiled on a wide range of human rights issues, based on B'Tselem's fieldwork as cross-referenced with government statements, press reports, and other sources of information.

**32 press releases** issued in English, Hebrew, and Arabic to over **1,300 local and foreign journalists**:

- **Evacuate wounded trapped in buildings shelled by Israeli army** (*January 6, 2009*)
- **Army must allow evacuation of wounded and trapped civilians** (*January 8, 2009*)
- **Suspicion that woman carrying white flag was shot to death** (*January 13, 2009*)
- **Suspicion: Soldiers shot Palestinian farmer to death without warning** (*January 18, 2009*)
- **Israeli Human Rights organizations : Prisoners from Gaza were held in appalling conditions** (*January 28, 2009*)
- **B'Tselem releases 2008 annual report** (*February 5, 2009*)
- **Guidelines for Israel's Investigation into Operation Cast Lead** (*February 8, 2009*)
- **Israel: End Ban on Human Rights Monitors** (*February 22, 2009*)
- **Allow al-Haq director to leave West Bank** (*March 3, 2009*)
- **Do not use patients as political tools** (*March 9, 2009*)
- **Dutch human rights prize to be awarded to B'Tselem and al-Haq tomorrow** (*March 16, 2009*)
- **HR Groups: Forbidden to further restrict entry of goods into Gaza** (*March 19, 2009*)
- **Israeli Human Rights Organizations Call on the Attorney General: "Stop whitewashing suspected crimes in Gaza"** (*March 19, 2009*)
- **Sharp rise in reports of military and police violence in the West Bank** (*March 25, 2009*)
- **Israel and the Palestinians must assist the UN mission** (*April 6, 2009*)
- **Independent apparatus needed for investigation of Operation Cast Lead** (*April 23, 2009*)
- **The EU must link the upgrade to human rights compliance** (*June 15, 2009*)
- **Lift the closure on Gaza** (*June 17, 2009*)
- **B'Tselem's video camera distribution project wins British One World Media award** (*June 23, 2009*)
- **New report: Most West Bank wastewater is improperly treated, endangering the Mountain Aquifer** (*June 28, 2009*)
- **Israeli High Court of Justice rules against Judge Advocate General's "extremely unreasonable" decision** (*July 1, 2009*)
- **Judge Advocate General to B'Tselem: 0.22-caliber bullets are not crowd-control measures** (*July 9, 2009*)
- **Military avoids investigating soldiers' testimonies** (*July 15, 2009*)
- **Publication of list of fatalities in Operation Cast Lead** (*July 22, 2009*)
- **Don't silence "Breaking the Silence"** (*Aug. 2, 2009*)
- **B'Tselem publishes complete fatality figures from Operation Cast Lead** (*Sept. 9, 2009*)
- **Human Rights groups in Israel in response to Goldstone Report: Israel Must Investigate 'Operation Cast Lead'** (*Sept. 15, 2009*)
- **New report: Israel's policy of detention without trial is illegal** (*Oct. 14, 2009*)
- **Military's investigations into Operation Cast Lead focus on individual soldiers, not unlawful policies. Reveals list of 13 investigations into isolated incidents.** (*Nov 4, 2009*)
- **B'Tselem marks twentieth anniversary with a heavy heart** (*Nov. 22, 2009*)
- **New Report: Before Ma'ale Adummim was built Israel intended to annex it to Jerusalem** (*Dec. 23, 2009*)
- **Siege on Gaza gravely harms civilians and prevents reconstruction after Operation Cast Lead** (*Dec. 27, 2009*)

**20 email updates** distributed by email to over **15,000 subscribers**, with hundreds of additional print copies.

**2.4 million visitors to B'Tselem's website**, which contains information in four languages – Hebrew, Arabic, English and Russian - including comprehensive reports, short films and video footage, statistics, maps, and testimonies from Palestinians and soldiers. **This is more than double the number of visitors in 2008.**

Over **400 hours** of video material collected and provided to journalists and filmmakers in Israel and overseas. B'Tselem has now accumulated over **2,000 hours of footage in its video archive.**

**122 requests for investigations** filed with Israeli law enforcement authorities.

**80 study tours** for groups and individuals, as well as **176 briefings and presentations** to policymakers, journalists, diplomats, representatives of international organizations and others.

**Some 850 articles** in the local and international press.

**22 Visual articles and films made available on B'Tselem's website, YouTube and BlipTV channels, including the following:**

- a film on the [Israeli military's harsh restrictions on fishing in the Gaza Strip](#); since the time of filming, the permitted offshore distance has been reduced to only three nautical miles (5.5 km). The restrictions harm thousands of fishermen and their families, who depend on fishing for their livelihood, and deny residents of Gaza a vital food source.
- an on-site testimony of [Sharihan Majd Hanun](#), a student at Al-Quds University, describing the **evacuation of her family from their home in the Sheikh Jarrah** neighborhood of East Jerusalem (see below).
- **a film depicting restrictions on Palestinian land access near West Bank settlements**, twelve of which are surrounded by 'Special Security Areas' (SSA), which make these settlements 2.4 times larger. The film mapped the settlement boundaries while showing 'Abedallah 'Aqel, a farmer in Halhul, near Hebron, near land that he owns and often cannot access inside one of these areas.
- [a short film following the children of the Jadallah family on their three-hour walk to school](#) through the hills. The film illustrated how the closure of road 3265 to Palestinians in the South Hebron Hills disrupted their daily routines. Prior to the road closing it took them several minutes by car. On 22 October 2009, the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) ordered the opening of the road to Palestinian travel, ruling that it was unlawful to close the road to the 45,000 Palestinians in the area, on grounds that the closing was necessary to ensure the safety of 150 Israeli settlers living in illegal outposts in the region. The film made a significant contribution to the petition before the HCJ.
- **a testimony on the point-blank shooting of 'Attiyah a-Samuni** in front of his family by Israeli troops in Gaza City during Operation "Cast Lead";
- a visual article on the **use of tear-gas canisters as weapons by security forces**, which killed Bassem Ibrahim Abu Rahma and critically wounded many others. Following B'Tselem's repeated requests accompanied by filmed video evidence, **the State Attorney's Office ordered the Police to review its guidelines for dispersing demonstrators.**
- Finally, following a full-length report on wastewater in the West Bank, B'Tselem produced a visual article, **"Sewage flows from Ariel to Salfit,"** showing the flow of wastewater from the Israeli settlement of Ariel to the agricultural lands of the Palestinian city of Salfit (see below). Most of Salfit's 60,000 residents make their living from the agricultural sector, and wastewater has polluted the soil and had a visible effect on crop quality. While settlers in the West Bank are connected to Israel's water system, Palestinians rely on water from natural sources—which is being polluted by wastewater. B'Tselem calls upon Israel and the Palestinian Authority to act jointly to immediately put into place planned Palestinian wastewater treatment projects. The report, entitled *Foul Play*, appeared in

**leading Israeli media outlets and foreign press, such as the Washington Post. It also generated a Knesset agenda item proposed by Member of Knesset Dov Henin.**

### **Online Advertisement**

B'Tselem contributed to the project "**Gaza / Sderot: Life in Spite of Everything**," the award-winning internet documentary series on the lives of **civilians in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel**, launching an Internet campaign that framed the individual stories within the context of international humanitarian law and the importance of protecting civilian life. This campaign raised the **number of average daily visitors to the project's website, from within Israel, from 900 to 3,000.**

### **Internet Campaigns**

- **Human rights in Israel and Gaza during the hostilities: informational blog**

During the hostilities in Gaza, B'Tselem cooperated with other Israeli human rights organizations to inform the Israeli public of the impact on civilians. The blog featured dozens of photos and reports by B'Tselem field researchers in Gaza, and information on cases that have since been more fully investigated.

- **Security force violence: everyone is affected**

To kick off its 20-year campaign, B'Tselem conducted an Internet campaign on security force violence, conveying the extent to which everyone is affected by the violence: injured Palestinians, their families and communities, security force personnel and the Israeli public at large. The animated video portrayed the now-notorious picture of the Israeli soldier who fired at a bound and blindfolded Palestinian at close range in Ni'lin. The scene turns into an animated video depicting the soldier receiving the order from his commander and shooting the rubber coated steel bullet from close range, causing a spreading scar to appear in his victim's leg, then in the commander's medals, and, as the shot pans out, over a montage of Israeli and Palestinian faces. "Service in the territories erodes your conscience," says a voiceover, quoting from the soldier's testimony, "we all bear the scar."

Viewers were redirected to an informational mini-site with more testimonies from soldiers about the use of violence against Palestinian detainees. The campaign received over 18,000 views online, predominantly by Israelis.



Still photographs from the video. Animation: Alon Simon

- **For Jews Only: Route 443**

B'Tselem conducted a multi-pronged, extended Internet campaign for the opening of Route 443 to Palestinians, who have been barred from its use for the past seven years. Route 443 runs through the West Bank, serving Israeli commuters traveling between the two largest cities in Israel, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In the past, Route 443 was the main thoroughfare serving the southern Ramallah district. In 1988, Israel expropriated land from Palestinian villagers living along the road in order to widen it, claiming that the road would serve their villages as well. However in 2002, after several cases of Palestinian gunfire at Israeli vehicles on the road, in which six Israeli citizens and one resident of East Jerusalem were killed, the army prohibited all Palestinian traffic on the road, including for transport of goods or for medical emergencies. It is now a major obstacle to movement for Palestinians in the area, and B'Tselem, along with the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), called for the road to be opened to Palestinian use.

The campaign aimed to reach out to the Israeli population in a non-threatening but forceful way. B'Tselem distributed a comics-style booklet which told the story of 443 to over 50,000 people. B'Tselem's banner on Israel's most visited news site, YNet, led Israeli web-surfers to a digitally animated game version of the

comic-book, in which viewers click on various options for Road 443 and then receive information on the human rights consequences, measured by a “democracy meter” in the corner of the screen, whose animated glass shatters when the road is closed to all Palestinians.

Following the campaign, and two years after six of the villages along the route, represented by ACRI, filed a petition to the High Court of Justice (HCJ), the HCJ ordered the cancellation of the ban on Palestinian movement along the section of Route 443 that lies beyond the Green Line. The HCJ ruled that the military commander is not authorized to impose such a ban, and additionally, that it is not proportionate. B'Tselem footage of the effects of the travel ban was shown in the courtroom as part of the proceedings.

- **Gaza Siege: No Access**

As part of a wider campaign to mark the one-year anniversary of Operation “Cast Lead” in Gaza, B'Tselem has prepared an Internet banner and animated video, in which a hungry Gazan family finds their refrigerator empty, then waits by the Karni crossing between Israel and Gaza, watching all the incoming products denied passage. The campaign stresses the extent to which the siege is exacerbating the suffering of the local Gaza population, with an emphasis on the smuggling tunnels between Egypt and Gaza that enable Hamas to make huge profits from the illegal importation of basic provisions and arms. Israel prevents all products from entering Gaza except basic humanitarian provisions, and 1.1 million Gazans now depend on international aid agencies for food.

Viewers are redirected to a mini-site detailing the drastic economic and humanitarian effects of the siege. Electricity outages persist, 95% of factories in Gaza have closed, and a year after operation Cast Lead, over 20,000 people remain homeless, many living in tent cities (the page links to B'Tselem's video on life in the tent cities.) Based on the profitability of the tunnels for Hamas, and the impoverishment of the people of Gaza, the final message reads, "The siege isn't toppling the regime. It's causing human suffering."



Still photograph from the internet campaign calling to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip. Animation: Alon Simon

### **Public Debate and Requests for Information on Human Rights Issues**

B'Tselem continues to expose tens of thousands of people—the Israeli public, policymakers, journalists and other members of the international community—to testimonies, statistics, and legal analysis relating to human rights issues, through B'Tselem's reports, website, and email updates.

### **B'Tselem's website received 2.4 million visitors in 2009, more than double the visitors in 2008.**

The visitors included nearly 700,000 from the US, nearly 300,000 from Israel, some 100,000 each from the UK, Netherlands, and Canada, and many more, predominantly from European and Middle Eastern countries. The site, considered one of the most comprehensive resources for information on human rights in the Occupied Territories, contains information in four languages – Hebrew, Arabic, English and Russian. It includes comprehensive reports, short films and video footage, statistics, maps, and testimonies from Palestinians and soldiers.

In response to B'Tselem's activities, members of the public as well as policymakers have contacted B'Tselem by phone, mail and email to engage in discussion or critical dialogue, to request further information, donate money, or to express interest in volunteering, indicating that B'Tselem has provoked thought and debate on these topics.

This year, B'Tselem was invited to provide formal briefings to a broad range of target audiences on the human rights situation, including the following: participants in **an Israeli Army spokesperson training course, Officers' Course, and Border Police training course**; **US Congress members**; **consular officers and senior diplomats from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Greece, Norway, Switzerland, Egypt, Czech Republic, and Sweden**; **select EU Parliamentary Delegation**; **EU Special Rapporteur to the Middle East**, the **Chair of the German Foreign Affairs Committee**, and the **UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs**. B'Tselem was also invited to brief **former US President Jimmy Carter** and his senior staff during his Middle East visit. B'Tselem presented information to the Director of UNRWA Gaza Operations, the legal adviser of the ICRC in Tel Aviv, and **briefed the fact-finding team of the UN-appointed Goldstone Commission on Operation Cast Lead**. In addition, B'Tselem presented information to a range of international organizations including Human Rights Now-Tokyo; Meretz USA; trade and labor unions from the UK, Scotland and Sweden; Architects without Borders, and various US-based church groups.

The **US State Department extensively cited** B'Tselem's work in their *2008 Human Rights Report: Israel and the Occupied Territories*, regarding civilian deaths in military and police operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, among various other issues.

### **Media Coverage of Human Rights Issues**

B'Tselem's reports, work with the press, and study tours have continued to generate on average **70 articles per month** in the Israeli and international press regarding human rights issues in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, raising public awareness of these phenomena and fostering public debate.

Some of the central aspects of B'Tselem's work that received particular media attention this year were the Israeli incursion into Gaza, Operation "Cast Lead"; the failure of the military and police to investigate incidents in which Palestinians were injured and killed by security force personnel; increasing settler violence in the West Bank, including vandalism of olive trees (see below); and the camera project in Gaza, especially the Gaza video blog.

**B'Tselem footage reached millions in foreign television news broadcasts**, appearing on talk shows and primetime news programs on Sky News; Al-Jazeera; ZDF (Germany), the high-profile program 60 Minutes on Australian channel 9; and major networks in Italy, Japan, Canada, and the Netherlands.

An [Al-Jazeera English television report](#) covered B'Tselem's camera distribution project, interviewing B'Tselem's video department director at a camera training seminar with Palestinians, and showing how the project has helped Palestinians take action to document settler attacks on farmers and olive trees. Al-Jazeera's viewers alone number at least 40 million in the Arab world and beyond.

B'Tselem's video material continues to be **regularly featured in the Israeli media, at least twice a month on the main Israeli news channels**, Channel 1, 2, and 10. On Israeli TV, radio, and internet outlets, B'Tselem video received coverage in over 40 reports in June and July alone, averaging 17 appearances per month from June through August. B'Tselem material has been broadcast on several popular Israeli Internet news websites including YNet, Ha'aretz, and Walla.

In addition to the mainstream media, B'Tselem is doing intensive ongoing work with independent Israeli media outlets and websites such as Social TV and Hayarkon 70, which airs news at community movie theaters in Tel Aviv and elsewhere.

### **B'Tselem USA**

Since its launch over one year ago, B'Tselem USA has made inroads toward establishing itself as the central clearinghouse in Washington D.C. for human rights in the Occupied Territories.

Focusing on human rights issues relating, inter alia, to settlements—including movement restrictions, confiscation of private Palestinian land, and settler violence—B'Tselem's team in Washington has conducted meetings with United Nations delegates; former diplomats, such as Aaron David Miller; members of Congress, and State Department and other U.S. governmental officials. B'tselem USA also appeared in two panels hosted by members of Congress, Reps. Donna Edwards and Dennis Kucinich.

B'Tselem has helped facilitate visits to Washington by UNRWA's director of operations in the Gaza Strip, and, during Operation "Cast Lead," two Israeli human rights activists. The latter visit resulted in the circulation of two congressional letters, one calling for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, the second for humanitarian relief. The latter gathered 61 signatures, a considerable number on this issue in Congress.

B'Tselem USA conducted **two successful e-mail campaigns**: one directed at generating support for Israeli human rights groups' efforts to promote internal Israeli accountability for operation Cast Lead, and the other to rally American supporters to oppose an ill-advised House of Representatives resolution categorically condemning the Goldstone Report.

The Washington team has been buttressed by the arrival of **Uri Zaki**, who comes to B'Tselem following a career in Israeli politics: as a senior adviser to Dr. Yossi Beilin, a main spokesperson for the Geneva Initiative, Chair of Young Meretz, and a candidate in the Meretz list for the 2009 Knesset elections. Zaki has a law degree from the Hebrew University and last year was named among Israel's most prominent young professionals by Forbes Israel magazine. B'Tselem's USA staff will expand outreach to communities across the USA and ensure that human rights is a central part of discussion on Israel and the occupied territories.

B'Tselem USA has focused on creating human rights awareness in the American Jewish community. At the first national policy conference of J Street, Zaki and David Kretzmer (co-Director of B'Tselem's Board of Directors) were well-received speakers on a human rights panel. B'Tselem has also met with or presented to the following: the leadership of prominent Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Council on Public Affairs and the United Jewish Communities; advocacy groups like Americans for Peace Now, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, and Rabbis for Human Rights – North America, which collaborated with B'Tselem on two letters to the Secretary of State; and six synagogues and Jewish community centers in New York and Washington.

## **CAMERA DISTRIBUTION PROJECT – CIVILIANS AS VIDEO ADVOCATES**

The camera project has continued to be not only a source of effective advocacy material but also a tool for both individual and community empowerment. B'Tselem now has 160 cameras in the field in the following areas: the South Hebron Hills; Hebron city center; Jerusalem; Bethlehem; Nablus; Jordan Valley; Tulkarm; and the Gaza Strip. In the past six months, B'Tselem has focused its efforts on expanding camera distribution to the Northern West Bank, where violent attacks by Israeli settlers are more common.

The resulting footage has proved increasingly valuable for B'Tselem's human rights advocacy: filmed materials have helped initiate numerous police and army investigations; have served as evidence in hearings before the court; and have been frequently aired on Israeli, Palestinian and international television, and online news sites, as detailed above.

Due to the camera project's influence on the local level, and as an integral goal of B'Tselem's promotion of community ownership of the learned skills and strategies, independent community media centers have been established, or are being established, in Hebron, the South Hebron Hills, Ni'ilin, and the Northern West Bank. In these centers, local residents gather to review, edit, and discuss filmed material, independent of B'Tselem.

With video material being shot weekly, the video archive has now exceeded 2,000 hours.

*In the spotlight: the camera distribution project reaches Gaza – and YNet and the New York Times*

B'Tselem began moving cameras into Gaza just in time to document some of the severe human rights abuses that occurred during operation Cast Lead. By exposing daily life in Gaza's hardest-hit areas, documenting and distributing unseen images of life in Gaza through the eyes of Gazans themselves, the project has endeavored to break the silence in Israeli society about conditions in Gaza.

One aspect of the project is the **Gaza citizens' video blog**. With skills and equipment from B'Tselem, **some 15 citizen journalists in Gaza are filming the reality around them**, from their balconies, their doorsteps, and in the streets. In recognition of the **unparalleled potential for these images to humanize Gazans in the eyes of Israelis**, YNet, Israel's leading news site, hosted [a special site for the Gaza video blog](#). Days later, the **New York Times covered the project in a [leading story](#)**, as well as **Dutch television and radio, German television**, and other print outlets worldwide.

So far, B'Tselem has provided professional guidance in the production of **6 short films**, 3-5 minutes in length, based on footage from the project participants. In one film, project participants depicted the **substandard living conditions in which much of Gaza's displaced population lives**. According to the UN, Israel destroyed 3,500 homes in the Gaza Strip during the fighting. Some of the displaced persons now live in tents, in harsh conditions. The video short was picked up by YNet as [a front-page story](#). This clip generated **100,000 viewers** on YNet, and **600 talkback comments**, making it one of the most noticed clips on the popular site. In another clip, filmed by 'Awatif al-Jadalli, 21, of Al-Bureij Refugee Camp, a group of schoolgirls on a fun day out [talk about their experiences during "Cast Lead"](#). This material has unparalleled potential to show Israelis the hardships of daily life in Gaza, in a way that no other Israeli media outlet has been able to. With the infrastructure now in place, B'Tselem will continue to develop the project in the coming year.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- **Guidelines for Israel's Investigation into Operation "Cast Lead"**

Following the end of Operation "Cast Lead," B'Tselem published a position paper on the Gaza fighting, which received press coverage in Israel and the international media, including The Guardian, AP, and the Jerusalem Post. The document details the issues that Israel must investigate regarding its conduct during the operation in Gaza. Israeli military and government officials declared with confidence that the military acted according to International Humanitarian Law and that responsibility for the harm to the civilian population rests exclusively with Hamas. B'Tselem's initial survey of the military operation calls these statements into question. While the extensive harm to the civilian population is not, in and of itself, proof of violations of the laws of war, Israel is required by law to conduct an independent and credible investigation, rather than relying solely on operational debriefings. It is also in Israel's best interest, as the Israeli public has a right to know what was done in its name in the Gaza Strip.

- **Israel's Neglect of Waste Water Treatment in West Bank**

In its report *Foul Play: Neglect of Wastewater Treatment in the West Bank*, B'Tselem warned about the danger inherent in neglecting wastewater treatment in the West Bank. The report criticizes both Israel and the Palestinian Authority for their failures, which have harmed the health and future water supply of all residents of Israel and the West Bank. Some 2.8 million people currently live in the West Bank and Jerusalem. The wastewater of two million of these 2.8 million people – from settlements, the city of Jerusalem, and Palestinian towns and villages – is not treated. This prolonged neglect has created various hazards and environmental nuisances throughout the West Bank and is liable to pollute the Mountain Aquifer, the main water source for Israelis and Palestinians.

B'Tselem's recommendations are threefold. First: Israel must immediately treat all wastewater (originating in the settlements and Jerusalem), for as long as settlements exist, the Israeli government must act immediately to treat all settlement waste in accordance with existing Israeli standards. Second: Israel must remove all obstructions it creates hampering Palestinian authorities in building their own treatment facilities.

Finally, Israeli and Palestinian authorities should cooperate as quickly as possible to treat wastewater in order to deal with the current dire situation.

The report received extensive media coverage nationally and internationally, including in the Jerusalem Post, YNet, Israel Today, and the top news website in China, Xinhua Net.

- **Without Trial: Administrative Detention of Palestinians by Israel**

B'Tselem jointly published a report with HaMoked in October, in which the organizations severely criticized Israel's detention of Palestinians without trial. The report states that the policy of extensive detentions breaches international law, which permits the use of administrative detention only in very extreme cases.

There has been a steady decrease in the number of detainees since the height of the second Intifada, but on **30 September 2009, the number of detainees stood at 335, among them three women and one minor**. Of these, some 70 percent have been held for a period of six months to two years. 28 Palestinians have been in administrative detention for two to four years, and one has been detained for more than four and a half years.

The judicial review of the administrative-detention proceedings presents a semblance of a fair judicial process, based on two laws, the Administrative Detention Order for the West Bank and the 2002 Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law. But according to the report, **the proceedings in fact deny the detainees any possibility to reasonably defend themselves against the allegations made against them**. In the vast majority of cases, the judges declare evidence privileged and rely on written reports by the Israeli Security Agency (formerly known as the General Security Services). The reports are submitted to the judges in the absence of the detainee or his or her attorney. Consequently, the detainees cannot refute the allegations or offer alternative evidence, and the administrative detention orders are nearly always approved. Between August 2008 and July 2009, military-court judges cancelled just 5 percent of the orders brought before them for review, and approved 95 percent.

HaMoked and B'Tselem call on the government of Israel to release the administrative detainees or prosecute them according to the standards of international law regarding due process. The release of *Without Trial* was covered by major international media outlets such as CNN, and the Associated Press.

- **The Establishment and expansion plans of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement**

B'Tselem also prepared a report on Ma'ale Adummim, the largest Israeli settlement in its jurisdictional area (some 4,800 hectares) and the third largest in population size. Recently the Israeli government has approved an outline plan for residential neighborhoods in E1, an area that lies within Ma'ale Adummim's city limits and borders Jerusalem's jurisdictional boundary. In the face of American opposition to construction in E1, Israel has moved the Samaria and Judea Police District headquarters there, paved roads and built infrastructure to serve hundreds of housing units planned to be erected nearby. The B'Tselem report reveals that as far back as the 1970s, Israel planned to annex Ma'ale Adummim. To do this, over the years, it expropriated tens of thousands of dunams of Palestinian land and expelled hundreds of Bedouin who were living there. (In two videos released along with the report, [Bedouin shepherds living next to Ma'ale Adummim discuss their expulsion](#).)

The route approved by the government for the Separation Barrier in the area will leave more than 6,000 hectares on its "Israeli" side, including not only Ma'ale Adummim's built-up area (400 hectares), but also extensive swaths of land for future expansion of the settlement. Although construction of the Barrier has stopped – officially due to budgetary constraints – the plans to complete it along the designated route, thus annexing extensive areas of land to Israel, remain in place. Implementation of plans to expand the settlement will destroy north-south territorial contiguity in the West Bank and impede realization of the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

## **MILITARY AND POLICE VIOLENCE**

In the first half of 2009, B'Tselem noted a sharp rise in reports of military and police violence in the West Bank, according to figures published in late March by B'Tselem. In response, B'Tselem wrote to the commander of the IDF forces in the West Bank, calling attention to this grave situation and demanding that the defense establishment take immediate action to stop the phenomenon of violence by security forces.

In addition, it has come to light that there exists a general and pervasive attitude among **Israeli security forces that violence and harassment of Palestinian civilians is an acceptable practice.** In May 2009, an article was published on the Israeli news website NRG, "A Blow is Sometimes an Integral Part of the Mission," detailing segments of the testimonies of two IDF officers before a military court. Their testimonies painted a harsh picture of deliberate use of violence against Palestinians, including comments which indicate that orders the two commanders issued included permission for extensive use of violence and injurious, even lethal means, against Palestinians, and harassment. In response, B'Tselem and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel have called on the Chief of Staff and the Judge Advocate General to order a Military Police investigation.

In addition to cases of the destruction of property or death by gunfire, B'Tselem has documented dozens of cases in which Palestinians reported being severely beaten by police officers and soldiers.

In late September, soldiers assaulted Palestinian laborers in the southern Hebron hills in three separate incidents, according to testimonies collected by B'Tselem. All the incidents occurred in the area of a-Ramadin, where laborers enter Israel through a gap in the Separation Barrier. On 23 September, soldiers detained Salman Zagharnah near a planned section of the Separation Barrier, about two kilometers from a-Ramadin, where he lives. According to Zagharnah, the soldiers attacked him, beating and kicking him, and demanded he hand over his identity card and cell phone. They then left and ordered him to remain there until they returned. According to the testimony, about half an hour later, they returned, only to hit him in the cheek with a rifle-butt. Zagharnah says that the soldiers did not give him first-aid or call an ambulance. Following B'Tselem's demand, a Military Police investigation was opened into the cases of Zagharnah and two others.

B'Tselem refers all documented cases to the law-enforcement authorities. Although Israeli officials condemn the beating and abuse of Palestinians, the law-enforcement authorities regularly refrain from carrying out serious investigations of reported incidents and from prosecuting the perpetrators, and rarely take any measures against them. Thus, for example, of 370 complaints regarding offenses of violence by security forces that B'Tselem forwarded to the authorities since September 2000, disciplinary or criminal proceedings were initiated against security forces in only 14 cases, to B'Tselem's knowledge. (Note that this figure refers only to complaints forwarded by B'Tselem to the authorities.) This policy conveys to security forces in the field a clear message of leniency toward violence against Palestinians, thus facilitating harm to Palestinians.

In addition to beatings, property destruction and the illegal use of weaponry constituted major issues in the reporting period:

- **South Hebron Hills:** On 12 October, B'Tselem video coordinator Yoav Gross [filmed a commercial van going up in flames](#) by the side of the road near Jenbah in the southern Hebron hills. The vehicles were used to transport Palestinian laborers wanting to enter Israel without permits. According to the testimonies of the passengers, they abandoned their vehicle when an army Hummer began chasing them. From a distance, said the testimony, they then watched the soldiers smash the windows of the abandoned vehicle, remove the spare tires and burn them under the vehicle. The gas tank caught fire and the vehicle went up in flames. The next day, another vehicle was torched and four more rolled off the road, in the same area. B'Tselem documented the damage and collected eyewitness testimonies.
- **Security forces' illegal use of tear-gas canisters and as weapons**

As referred to above, B'Tselem requested the Judge Advocate General, Brig. Gen. Avichai Mandelblit, to immediately clarify to security forces that it is absolutely forbidden to directly aim

tear-gas canisters, including extended-range type canisters, at demonstrators in the West Bank. Firing of this kind has already resulted in injuries, some grave, to dozens of Palestinians and Israelis, and foreign citizens. B'Tselem also called on the Judge Advocate General to conduct a thorough and effective investigation into cases in which there is a suspicion that this prohibition has been breached, and bring the persons responsible to justice for their misdeeds, including the officers who gave the orders or turned a blind eye to the illegal firing. Two incidents received extensive media attention due to B'Tselem's advocacy: in March 2009, Tristan Anderson, an American citizen, was struck during a demonstration in Ni'lin; and in April 2009, during a demonstration in Bil'in, Bassem Ibrahim Abu Rahma was killed.

**In response to B'Tselem's aforementioned letter to the State Attorney regarding security forces' illegal use of tear-gas canisters, the State Attorney's Office has ordered the police to review its guidelines for dispersing demonstrators.** The order comes in the wake of the death of Bassem Abu Rahma, and of injuries suffered recently by a number of other demonstrators. B'Tselem welcomes the State Attorney's Office's directive, which follows requests by B'Tselem to stop firing tear-gas canisters directly at persons. The real test, however, is whether the directive is implemented in the field. B'Tselem calls on the State Attorney's Office to investigate incidents of tear-gas canisters fired at people and to prosecute the police officers and soldiers who were responsible for the prolonged and flagrant breach of regulations.

## **RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT**

In 2009, for the first time in at least five years, restrictions on movement have **eased slightly in the West Bank**, while **movement in and out of the Gaza Strip has remained at an utter standstill**. B'Tselem has monitored a decrease in the number of manned checkpoints in the West Bank, though as of August 2009, there were **still 40 checkpoints in use in the West Bank**. Some checkpoints have not been removed, but are less restrictive in impact whereby they are manned for fewer hours, or searches are conducted in a more random manner. Due to the ongoing presence of physical roadblocks, surprise, or flying, checkpoints and the separation barrier, Palestinians still face many movement restrictions.

Israel's policy of separation between the West Bank and Gaza continues to disrupt every aspect of Palestinians' lives, from university study to marriage (see the case of [Berlanty 'Azzam](#), expelled to Gaza just two months shy of finishing her degree at Bethlehem University, and [Israel's prevention of a Bethlehem-Gaza couple from marrying](#)).

In early 2009, the ongoing siege on the Gaza Strip entailed severe restrictions on movement, with crossings almost completely closed. Palestinians seeking medical care, many urgently, were often not allowed across the necessary checkpoints, or even out of their homes. For example, Sonia Rasaras, a resident of the West Bank, took her children to visit her ailing father in the Gaza Strip. Since then, Israel has prevented her from returning home. As a result, her disabled 18-month-old daughter cannot receive medical treatment. On January 8, with Operation Cast Lead underway, B'Tselem learned of four Gaza towns in which [disabled and wounded civilians were trapped and unable to receive treatment](#). B'Tselem immediately published their names and locations, calling on the Israeli Army to allow medical teams access. Again, in March, B'Tselem and other organizations protested the Palestinian Authority's refusal to authorize medical treatment in Israel, as well as Israel's insistence that the PA promise to pay for Palestinians' treatment as a condition for their access to critical medical care.

Movement was also severely restricted for B'Tselem and other human rights groups investigating allegations of abuses. In January and again in March, B'Tselem petitioned the High Court of Justice to enter Gaza, but was denied both times. This constraint of movement and denial of access particularly threatens the ability of B'Tselem and other human rights groups to do our work. Freedom of movement is a vital issue, not only for Palestinians, but for human rights defenders working on their behalf as well.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

## Operation Cast Lead: Comprehensive Casualty Figures and Continued Calls for Investigation

On the morning of 27 December 2008, Israel launched Operation "Cast Lead" in Gaza. One year later, with thousands dead and thousands of buildings destroyed, 1.5 million residents continue to live with chronic electricity outages and shortages of food, clothing and basic goods. B'Tselem has devoted extensive resources this year to documenting the consequences of the recent military operation, publishing *Guidelines for Israeli's Investigation into Operation Cast Lead*; an internet banner on life in the Gaza Strip a year after the operation; and broadcasting a Gaza video-blogging project to Israeli audiences. B'Tselem reiterates that an Israeli investigation must take place and focus not only on isolated incidents but on policy-making regarding the operation; and it must be carried out by people who were not involved in any way in conducting the operation.

B'Tselem published a meticulously researched list of Palestinians and Israelis killed in Operation Cast Lead:

1,385 Palestinians were killed, 762 of whom did not take part in the hostilities. Of these, 318 were minors under age 18. More than 5,300 Palestinians were wounded, of them over 350 seriously so. Israel also caused enormous damage to residential dwellings, industrial buildings, agriculture and infrastructure for electricity, sanitation, water, and health, which was on the verge of collapse prior to the operation. According to UN figures, Israel destroyed more than 3,500 residential dwellings and 20,000 people were left homeless.

During the operation, Palestinians fired rockets and mortar shells at Israel, with the declared purpose of striking Israeli civilians. These attacks killed three Israeli civilians and one member of the Israeli security forces, and wounded dozens. Nine soldiers were killed within the Gaza Strip, four by friendly fire. More than 100 soldiers were wounded, one critically and 20 moderately to seriously.

B'Tselem's figures, the result of months of meticulous investigation and cross-checks with numerous sources, sharply contradict those published by the Israeli military. Israel stated that 1,166 Palestinians were killed in the operation and that 60% of them were members of Hamas and other armed groups. According to the military, a total of 295 Palestinians who were "not involved" in the fighting were killed. Behind the numbers lie shocking individual stories.

B'Tselem also released the details of the isolated cases that the Israel Defense Forces' Southern Command is investigating— as of the end December 2009, 19 known cases—and is **continuing to call for a fuller investigation**. This press release received **coverage in Israel's leading news outlets**, including the front page of the *Jerusalem Post*.

In addition to playing a key role in the debate over an independent investigation into Cast Lead by Israel, B'Tselem has succeeded in drawing media and public attention to a number of incidents of security force abuse and settler violence requiring investigation. Extensive Israeli and international press coverage on the following issues included reports in Ha'aretz, YNet, AP, and Al-Jazeera:

- **Soldiers arrested on suspicion of abuse at 'Ein Gedi checkpoint:**

In late May, several Palestinian youths traveled to the Dead Sea for a night out, which ended in soldiers beating two of them, 'Ata 'Ariqat and Ramzi Salah. One was tied to an electricity pole and the other to a signpost. Later, according to the testimonies, a jeep arrived at the scene with more soldiers, who also attacked the two handcuffed youths. B'Tselem wrote to the Judge Advocate General **demanding that he immediately order an investigation into the incident**. In mid-June, it was reported that two soldiers from an armored battalion were **arrested on suspicion of beating 'Ata 'Ariqat and Ramzi Salah at an 'Ein Gedi checkpoint, and that their detention had been extended by the military court**.

- **Additional border-police sentenced for killing of Abu Hamdiya in 2002:**

In the 2002 incident, four Israeli policemen threw 'Imran Abu Hamdiya, 18, from a jeep moving at high speed after they had abducted, beaten, and abused him. His head struck the pavement

with great force, killing him. The entire affair was exposed by B'Tselem and the Palestinian human rights organization al-Haq. In April 2009, the Jerusalem District Court sentenced two additional border policemen Shachar Butbika to 8½ years' imprisonment and Dennis Alhazov to 5½ year's imprisonment for their involvement in the abduction and killing. Two other border policemen were previously convicted and sentenced to imprisonment. Of these two, Yanai Lazla originally was sentenced to 6½ years, but in April 2009, the Supreme Court increased the sentence to 8½ years. It is questionable whether the sentences are compatible with the gravity of the offense. However, bringing the policemen to justice, even if only partially, is a rare instance in which the justice system in Israel has met its obligation to hold security forces accountable for illegally harming Palestinians.

## ***SETTLER VIOLENCE***

In 2009, incidents of settler violence continued to threaten Palestinians in the West Bank, and B'Tselem has continued to improve the speed with which it responds to these incidents. In December, the announcement of a partial settlement freeze in the West Bank resulted in heightened threats of retaliation against Palestinians. Particularly disturbing was an arson attack on the mosque in Yasuf, in the northern West Bank. Prayer rugs and holy books were burned, and graffiti indicated it was the work of settlers, in response to the settlement freeze. B'Tselem's field researcher in the area arrived promptly at the scene to gather evidence, and was interviewed hours later on the lunchtime news shows of Israel's two leading news radio stations.

In addition to a relatively poor yield for this year's olive harvest, the Israeli army was better prepared than last year to prevent incidents of settler violence, increasing security measures and coordinating access with the Palestinian liaison office. While abuses were fewer than in previous harvests, however, they did persist. Palestinians with B'Tselem cameras documented two incidents in the town of Al-Mughair, northeast of Ramallah, in which over 300 olive trees, including over 200 seedlings, were uprooted and destroyed. Citizen journalists trained by B'Tselem also filmed two Israeli settlers in real time, harvesting a whole tree of olives in al-Mughair which belonged to Palestinians. Footage was promptly passed on to the authorities and uploaded onto B'Tselem's website, and investigations are pending.

In June 2009, the Hebron police closed the investigation into the attack on Palestinian shepherds near Susiya in June 2008, on grounds of "offender unknown." **In the incident, members of the Nawaj'ah family were beaten with clubs by masked Israeli settlers from the settlement of Susiya**, while grazing their flock in the nearby Samu' Village. Muna Nawaja'ah, 25, [documented the beating with a camera received as part of B'Tselem's camera distribution project](#). With this strong video evidence, which has already generated massive international attention, B'Tselem has filed an appeal, demanding that the investigation be re-opened and completed.

It is this lack of accountability that B'Tselem is working to counter, and 2009 saw some high profile successes in this area. For example, **Israel's High Court of Justice** ordered Israel's chief military prosecutor, the Judge Advocate General, to **change the indictments filed against the soldier and commander who were involved in the shooting of a handcuffed detainee in Ni'lin** – an incident documented on video (see above) - **so as to reflect the gravity of the offense**. In the framework of this ruling, the Court articulated in unequivocal terms, the unparalleled force of visual images in bringing the truth to light.

Reports on the incident appeared on the **BBC, and in the AP, The Guardian, New York Times, CNN, International Herald Tribune**, and many other publications. B'Tselem used the incident and accompanying footage as a springboard to draw attention to the wider phenomenon of settler violence and impunity.

## **LEGAL ADVOCACY**

During the past period B'Tselem engaged in legal advocacy before the High Court of Justice together with other human rights organizations, providing documentation and research material that served as the basis for these petitions:

- **Punitive House Demolition: 2009 marks first use in four years**

In January 2009, the Israeli army sealed off two floors of the home of 'Alaa Abu Dahim, who committed the attack at the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva in March 2008. The house is located in the Jabal Mukabber neighborhood of East Jerusalem. **After declaring a cessation of the policy in 2004, this is the first time in four years that Israel has sealed the house of relatives of Palestinians who carried out attacks against Israelis.**

In a separate incident, in March 2009, **the Israeli High Court of Justice allowed the state to demolish the home of the family of Husam Dwayat**, who used a bulldozer to carry out an attack in the center of Jerusalem in July 2008. Dwayat's widow and two small children live in the apartment, which is on the first floor of a building.



*Demolition of the Dwayat family's house, East Jerusalem. Photo: Kareem Jubran, B'Tselem, 7 April 2009.*

- **Evictions of Palestinians** in cases where houses are not demolished also constituted an urgent issue. Two Palestinian families, totaling 46 persons, were evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrakh, East Jerusalem, on 2 August 2009, and settlers immediately moved into the houses. **B'Tselem field researcher Kareem Jubran [filmed](#) Sharihan Majd Hanun, a psychology student at Al-Quds University, describing the eviction of her family from their home**, in which many family members were detained, and the family was not allowed to retrieve all its belongings. The eviction came after the Israeli High Court of Justice accepted the claim to Jewish ownership of this property from the 1930's. A settler association is planning to erect a Jewish neighborhood in the area. The two families evicted are the descendants of refugee families from 1948, the Hanun family from Haifa, and the Alghawi family from Sarfarand (Tzrifin). They were part of a group of 28 families who were settled in the neighborhood in 1956 by the Jordanian government and UNRWA. Israeli settlers have gained Israeli legal support in moving into several of the other houses and evicting the residents. Police have evacuated the al-Ghawi from their tents on the sidewalk adjacent to the home, and confiscated their belongings several times since their eviction. In November, settlers moved in to an unoccupied room of the al-Kurd family, also in Sheikh Jarrah. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 475 people will be displaced by the planned settlement in the neighborhood.

## **BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

In June 2009, B'Tselem won **the prestigious One World Media award for its groundbreaking work in the field of citizen journalism**. B'Tselem was awarded the prize in the "special award" category, given to an outstanding media project or organization working on the ground in the developing world, which has made a real impact on the lives of those living and working around them. Oren Yakobovich, B'Tselem's video department director, and 'Issa 'Amro, the project's coordinator in Hebron, accepted the award at a ceremony held in London. Attended by leading figures in the British media, the ceremony was broadcast on

BBC World Television. This is the twenty-first year of the One World Media Awards, considered the premier media awards related to the developing world. Sponsored by the BBC, UNICEF, and others, it rewards the most outstanding media coverage of the developing world, and recognizes the unique role of journalists and filmmakers in bridging the divide between different societies and raising awareness of vital development issues.

B'Tselem staff members participated in a variety of training and enrichment sessions in 2009. B'Tselem's field researchers participated in five training sessions, the first focusing on all aspects of the organizational strategic assessment, in Arabic. B'Tselem staff participated in a workshop led by the local media consulting group Agenda, which was designed to analyze effective uses of media in reaching different sectors of the Israeli public. B'Tselem has also organized weekly **Arabic classes** for most of the Jerusalem staff. B'Tselem field researcher Suha Zeid attended the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network **Conference on Gender Equality**; B'Tselem's press officer Sarit Michaeli attended a multi-day **conference on EU advocacy and lobbying in Cairo**; and B'Tselem researcher Eyal Hareuveni attended a **UNICEF workshop** in Amman **on water rights**, featuring civil society and government leaders from the Occupied Territories and around the Middle East.

B'Tselem completed its **strategic planning process** for the next three years, developing a comprehensive plan to maximize the organization's effectiveness in the complex and changing reality of the occupied territories.

#### **Staff Changes**

In 2009, B'Tselem welcomed Miriam Leedor as Director of Public Outreach. Miriam comes from an extensive background in advocacy, public relations, and communications following her many years of work at the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. In addition, B'Tselem was joined by Uri Zaki as the new USA Director (see above); Lizi Sagi as the new Director of Information; and Jeremy Siegman as International Relations Associate.

#### **IN CONCLUSION**

B'Tselem will continue to play a crucial role in putting human rights on the public agenda, and in advocating for changes in military and government policies to bring about human rights protections in the Occupied Territories. B'Tselem will seek to expand all aspects of our work - documentation and monitoring, media and video advocacy, and research and publication - to advance our vision of the full enjoyment of universal human rights by Israelis and Palestinians.