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

## B'Tselem 2005 Activity Report

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רחוב התעשייה 8 (קומה 4), תלפיות, ירושלים 93420, טלפון 6735599 (02), פקס 6749111

(02) 6749111, (02) 6735599, 93420, ( ) 8

8 HaTa'asiya St. (4<sup>th</sup> Floor), Talpilot, Jerusalem 93420, Tel. (02) 6735599, Fax (02) 6749111

[mail@btselem.org](mailto:mail@btselem.org) <http://www.btselem.org>

## **INTRODUCTION**

A number of political developments took place during 2005 that generated a sense of optimism regarding the possibility of renewed diplomatic progress. The year began with the election of Abu Mazen as president of the Palestinian Authority, followed almost immediately by the Sharm el-Sheikh summit. Israel committed to a cessation of incursions and assassinations (except in "ticking bomb" cases) and other "confidence-building measures." The PA worked closely with Palestinian militant groups in order to achieve a cease-fire. These developments led to a very dramatic reduction in incidents of violence, both by Israeli forces and by Palestinian militants, though violence on both sides escalated during the last months of the year.

Israel's disengagement plan dominated the public agenda throughout the year, culminating in August in the removal of all settlements and security forces from the Gaza Strip, as well as four settlements in the northern West Bank. The pending disengagement brought about an increase in settler violence, including two terror attacks by settlers against Palestinians (the first directed at Palestinian citizens of Israel, the second Palestinians in the West Bank). Settlement expansion continued in the West Bank, despite the harsh criticism voiced by the Justice Ministry's report on illegal construction in settlements (the Sasson report).

The second issue on the public agenda throughout the year was the Separation Barrier. The Israeli government approved a new route for the Barrier in February. While this route is an improvement over the previous one, the bulk of the route remains inside the West Bank, with harsh consequences for Palestinians. Construction proceeded throughout the northern West Bank and around Jerusalem, with one-third of the total route completed by year's end. In September, Israel's High Court of Justice accepted a petition by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel concerning the Barrier surrounding the Alfei Menashe settlement. The Court ordered the State, in the first ruling to address a portion of the Barrier already constructed, to consider moving the existing Barrier such that Palestinians will not be imprisoned inside an enclave.

The primary goals of B'Tselem remain to protect human rights in the Occupied Territories and to generate commitment among the Israeli public to human rights principles. The strategies to achieve these goals are the following:

- To provide information to the Israeli public and the international community about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories;
- To recommend and encourage policy changes to ensure greater protection of human rights;
- To foster debate and discussion among the Israeli public regarding human rights norms and specific policies in the Occupied Territories.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

B'Tselem issued four publications in 2005, addressing movement in Gaza, the use of lethal force during arrest operations, the threatened expulsion of Palestinians from the Southern Hebron Hills, and the connection between the route of the Separation Barrier and settlement expansion. These publications were produced in both Hebrew and English and distributed to more than ten thousand policymakers, journalists, organizations and individuals in Israel and around the world. In Israel, B'Tselem's reports are distributed to all Members of Knesset, all

judges, all government ministries, and a wide range of officials within the military, and the judicial community. B'Tselem also prepared an Arabic summary of all reports.

B'Tselem continues to serve as a primary source of information on human rights in the Occupied Territories. B'Tselem regularly briefed local policymakers and the diplomatic community on developments, and gave presentations to visiting foreign policymakers and delegations from around the world.

B'Tselem launched its new website, which includes special features such as a photo archive and access to B'Tselem's statistical databases. The site now receives close to 3,000 visitors per day. The organization continued to issue monthly email updates to over 9,000 subscribers, and issued 5 one-page briefings to over 2,000 local and foreign policymakers.

B'Tselem worked extensively with the media, issuing press releases, accompanying dozens of journalists into the West Bank and Gaza, and giving interviews. B'Tselem played a leading role in generating public attention to various issues, including settler violence and the plan to transport garbage from Israel into the West Bank. B'Tselem's work on these issues contributed to a wave of media attention, a high court petition and an inter-departmental commission of inquiry.

B'Tselem continued to expand its public education efforts. The organization initiated a dramatic expansion of its use of video and photographic documentation by hiring a professional video coordinator, setting up a video editing room, and gathering new footage. B'Tselem now regularly produces video testimonies and short movies to accompany the publication of reports.

B'Tselem conducted over 85 bus and jeep tours for groups of journalists, policymakers, visiting delegations from abroad and the Israeli public. The tours focused primarily on restrictions on movement, the separation Barrier and East Jerusalem, but also touched upon other human rights issues such as settlements, violence by security forces, settler violence, and house demolitions. The tours provided participants with a first-hand experience of the daily realities of the situation on the ground, and enabled them to speak out on these issues and share their insights with others.

B'Tselem continued its work on the Separation Barrier and its human rights implications. The organization produced a new map and updated statistics following the government's approval of the new route in February; conducted advocacy; and took journalists, policymakers and the public on tours along the Barrier route.

In February, the Israeli Defense Ministry announced the cessation of punitive house demolitions. This decision followed the publication of a B'Tselem report and major public advocacy campaign on this topic that we initiated in 2004. While the Defense Minister justified the decision based on considerations of effectiveness, it is clear that criticism from the human rights community served as the impetus for reconsideration of the policy. The cessation of punitive house demolitions is one of the most significant successes of the local human rights movement.

B'Tselem invested considerable resources to ensure that the disengagement plan was conducted in a manner that accorded with human rights. The organization's comprehensive report on freedom of movement for Gazans was accompanied by the production of a CD-Rom and a public event in Tel Aviv, where representatives of four Israeli organizations addressed the human rights of Palestinians as well as Israeli settlers during the disengagement. B'Tselem also worked together with other human rights organizations to prepare for the disengagement. Throughout the

year, B'Tselem conducted advocacy on issues relating to settler violence, generating significant media attention to the issue of the protection of Palestinians and their property.

## TOPICS ADDRESSED

### Gaza Before and After Disengagement

B'Tselem's primary message during the months leading up to disengagement was twofold: to welcome

the dismantling of settlements as an important step to rectify the severe violations of Palestinian rights that these settlements cause; at the same time, to warn that Israel retains responsibility for the welfare of Palestinians in Gaza so long as it controls all movement in and out of the Gaza Strip.



(Internet Banner: March 2005)

In March, B'Tselem published a report entitled *One Big Prison*, together with HaMoked, addressing the extreme restrictions imposed by Israel on movement to and from the Gaza Strip. The report highlighted the results of this policy, including a poverty rate of over 75%, and the separation of many families. The report also challenged the notion that the policy is based on security considerations, describing the sweeping restrictions imposed on entire categories of people. The report highlighted the fact that the suffering it describes is likely to continue, and even worsen, after disengagement, and that Israel will continue to bear legal responsibility despite its withdrawal, so long as it controls all movement in and out of the Gaza Strip.

To accompany the report, B'Tselem produced an animated presentation of the report's content, along with video testimonies of Palestinians from Gaza describing how they are affected by Israel's restrictions on movement (see enclosed CD-Rom). In addition to being distributed on a CD-Rom together with the printed report, these materials are available on B'Tselem's website, and were distributed electronically.

To advertise the release of the report, B'Tselem placed internet banners on the Y-Net and Walla Israeli portals, and the English language *Ha'aretz* website, and print advertisements in the *Ha'aretz*, *al-Quds* and *al-Ayyam* newspapers. The report drew media attention in *Ha'aretz*, *Globes*, *Voice of Israel* radio, *IDF* radio, the *Financial Times*, *Al Jazeera* and the *BBC* (see attached article), among others.

This report was just one way in which B'Tselem worked to ensure that the disengagement plan was conducted in a manner consistent with basic human rights. In May, B'Tselem organized a public event in Tel Aviv, where representatives of four Israeli organizations addressed the human rights of both Palestinians and Israeli settlers during the disengagement. At the event, two well-known Israeli actresses read testimonies of victims of human rights violations. Over 200 people attended the event. On Israeli Independence Day, B'Tselem published an advertisement regarding human rights in Gaza in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, under the heading, "For the Glory of Israel?"



#### *For the Glory of Israel?*

*Dismantling settlements in Gaza is an essential step in improving the human rights situation. But this is not enough. Israel must end the siege on Gaza, or it will remain-The world's biggest prison.*  
(Haaretz, Israeli Independence Day, March 2005)

In preparation for the disengagement, B'Tselem organized a coalition of Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations to highlight human rights issues and provide real-time responses to any problems that arose. This initiative included a coordinated fieldwork strategy with PCHR and al-Mezan adapted to the possible scenarios, as well as a joint action plan of four Israeli human rights organizations in the event of an emergency situation. Weeks before disengagement these four organizations identified the issue of settler violence as a priority area, and sent an urgent petition to the Attorney General and the Ministry of Defense recommending a series of measures to protect Palestinians from such violence, and issued a press release to publicize these urgent concerns. Unfortunately these fears were realized with settlers murdering Palestinians in two separate incidents, one in the West Bank and the other inside Israel.



*Advertisement in the English Ha'aretz and Jerusalem Post.*

During and following disengagement, B'Tselem used a variety of tools to highlight the severe human rights violations that remain. During the UN General Assembly session at which Prime Minister Ariel Sharon spoke B'Tselem released a one-page briefing entitled "Disengagement – Necessary but not Sufficient" which was distributed to hundreds of policymakers around the world. In addition, B'Tselem published advertisements in the Jerusalem Post and the English version of Ha'aretz, specifically targeting the massive presence of journalists from around the world who came to cover the disengagement.

## Settler Violence

Throughout the year, B'Tselem advocated for law-enforcement agencies to seriously address violence by settlers against Palestinians. B'Tselem called on the authorities to take preventive measures in high-friction areas, and to provide the full protection of the law to all civilians. B'Tselem fieldworkers took dozens of testimonies from Palestinians who were victims of settler violence, particularly in the southern Hebron Hills, in the city of Hebron and in the area around Nablus. Individual cases were sent to the Israel Police for investigation.

During the olive harvest, B'Tselem worked to draw attention to the phenomenon of the widespread destruction and vandalizing of Palestinian olive groves. B'Tselem's video footage was used in a Channel 1 television news story on this vandalism. In response to settlers' claims that the vandalism was really Palestinians pruning their own trees, B'Tselem recruited an expert opinion from a professor at the Hebrew University. This opinion was cited in the Ha'aretz newspaper.

B'Tselem succeeded in generating substantial media attention to a rage of incidents of settler violence. In July, B'Tselem's Fieldwork Director was featured in a piece on the Channel One evening news on fire that consumed land in the village of Qaffin. Prime time newscaster Zvi Yehezkeli of Channel Ten reported on a family in Hebron that can barely leave their house due to settler violence and the presence of soldiers who have set up an outpost on their roof. B'Tselem's press officer also published an article on the Y-Net internet site devoted to the lack of law enforcement against violent settlers. Following the attack in which a settler killed Palestinians just prior to the disengagement, B'Tselem took Israeli journalist Tom Segev to meet the families of the Palestinians killed. Segev devoted his Friday column in Ha'aretz to the children orphaned by the settler attack.

In December, B'Tselem contacted Rivka Michaeli, a well-known Israeli television personality, who agreed to accompany the organization to visit Palestinians whose olive trees were damaged

by settlers. She subsequently mentioned the issue in an interview in the "7 Days" weekly supplement of the Yediot Ahronot newspaper, Israel's largest newspaper, published in January 2006: "I did something I have wanted to do, to go to the West Bank and see the injustices with my own eyes. B'Tselem took me on a tour and I saw this terrible tragedy of the occupation... we cannot live with apartheid roads, and basing our lives on walls and fences."

B'Tselem's work regarding settler violence contributed to the decision to establish an inter-departmental commission to investigate and prosecute claims of vandalism and destruction by settlers.

## **Separation Barrier and Settlement Expansion**

Throughout the year, B'Tselem continued its monitoring and documentation on the Separation Barrier, conducting research, providing regularly updated information and statistics as well as carrying out advocacy work. B'Tselem's fieldworkers took more than fifty testimonies from Palestinians affected by the Barrier, addressing issues including the ability to obtain permits; violence by security forces stationed along the Barrier; expropriation of land; and the functioning of agricultural crossings. In addition, fieldworkers carried out observations at Barrier crossing points in the northern West Bank, and took video and still footage to complement the written testimonies and reports. Following the government's approval of the new route of the Barrier in February, B'Tselem produced an updated map and analysis of the implications of the route, and distributed to international policymakers a one-page briefing addressing this subject. One-thousand poster-sized copies of the map were printed and distributed to diplomats, visiting groups, NGOs, and interested individuals. In May, B'Tselem reprinted the map in both English and Hebrew, and included updated information regarding sections currently under construction. In June, B'Tselem drafted a brochure focusing specifically on the Barrier around Jerusalem.

The revised route includes a number of important improvements. Some sections of the route will now run close to or along the Green Line, most notably along the south of the West Bank. In addition, the secondary barriers will be eliminated, and the Eastern Barrier that was proposed though not approved by the government, has been cancelled. Yet the route remains far from perfect. Most pressingly, there is no change to the devastating route of the Barrier in East Jerusalem where construction continues, and several major settlement blocs including Ariel, Ma'ale Adumim, and Gush Etzion are slated to remain to the west of the barrier.

B'Tselem also monitored changes in policy relating to permits and passage at gates in the Barrier. For example, many people who were previously denied permits have been able to obtain them in recent months. While in 2004 permits were often issued for short periods of time, permits are now regularly issued for periods of two years eliminating the need for frequent renewals which require extensive time and provide regular opportunities for denials.

In February, the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee held a special extended session on the Barrier route in the Jerusalem area, which was attended by the Director of the Defense Ministry and the Deputy Chief of Staff. B'Tselem prepared a special map of the area that was distributed at the session.

In September, B'Tselem released the interim findings of its report on settlement expansion along the Separation Barrier published in cooperation with Bimkom. The report, released in December and entitled ***Under the Guise of Security: Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable the Expansion of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank***, demonstrates that contrary to Israel's claim that the barrier's route is based solely on security considerations, in many areas, the route was dictated by a desire to "annex" areas intended for settlement expansion or for

construction of new settlements. In fact, where security concerns conflict with settlement expansion, Israel chose settlement expansion, even at the expense of compromised security.

B'Tselem conducted a major public campaign to coincide with the release of the report. The planning of the campaign began when B'Tselem conducted a public opinion survey regarding the Barrier and consulted with other human rights organizations and PR experts. With the explicit goal of reaching beyond B'Tselem's natural constituency and traditional domestic audience, the campaign was geared to recruit support from as wide an audience as possible. The campaign was designed to acknowledge the legitimate security needs that prompted the construction of the barrier, while emphasizing that the chosen route both fails to satisfy security needs, and also has an unnecessarily brutal effect on the daily life of Palestinian families torn asunder by the route, leaving many without access to extended family members, medical treatment, schools, their agricultural lands and places of employment. The advertising campaign humanizes the message, depicting a grandmother cut-off from her grandchildren, a toddler who is squeezed through gaps in the Barrier to reach his day care, and an elderly woman trudging a great distance to reach the health clinic – every day hardships that most Israelis do not see. The slogan sums up the message: "There are People on the Other Side Too".

The campaign, which will continue through the beginning of 2006, includes a total of 6 one-page advertisements in Yediot Ahronot, Israel's largest mass circulation daily, and 4 advertisements in Ha'aretz. In addition, the messages contained in these advertisements will appear as Internet banners on several popular Israeli websites. B'Tselem is also using the audiovisual capacities developed by the organization in the campaign. A special mini-Website has been prepared, containing an animated presentation, and additional visual and statistical information on the route of the Separation Barrier and its impact. The video coordinator has produced several video clips of Palestinians who suffer directly from the Barrier route. These testimonies will also be available on the website. All of these materials will be disseminated to B'Tselem's mailing list as a CD-Rom. To make the information contained in the campaign even more accessible, we are in the process of preparing a brochure for wide distribution.

In December, B'Tselem dramatically expanded its tours of the Separation Barrier for policymakers and members of the Israeli public. B'Tselem conducted a series of briefings on the report for the diplomatic community, which were attended by over 40 diplomats. In addition, 30 journalists attended a press conference and subsequent tour. These tours will continue throughout the month. A new target audience for the Barrier tours consists of members of Israel's artistic community: actors, directors, musicians, and authors.

As part of a coordinated effort to amplify the impact of the report, in December B'Tselem's Executive Director, Ms. Jessica Montell, traveled to New York and Washington DC to conduct advocacy on human rights implications of Israel's Separation Barrier. B'Tselem prepared a powerpoint presentation that summarizes the main findings of the report, and presents four cases studies to illustrate the human rights violations caused by routing the Barrier to enable settlement expansion. The primary target audience of the advocacy was policymakers, both from the legislative and executive branches. In addition, Ms. Montell met with Jewish organizations, think tanks, journalists and human rights organizations, both to present the new research and to speak more broadly about B'Tselem's work on behalf of human rights. B'Tselem succeeded in presenting the research to a fairly broad and important audience. B'Tselem has received dozens of inquiries and requests for additional information following these briefings. In response, Ms. Montell established new contacts who are interested in aiding B'Tselem's advocacy work.



B'Tselem also used International Human Rights Day as a springboard to convey the information contained in the report: B'Tselem presented the report before the Knesset Parliamentary Lobby for Human Rights and Awareness of the Price of the Occupation headed by MKs Issam Mahul and Yuli Tamir on Human Rights Day, and conducted two tours of the Barrier – in the Jerusalem and Alfei Menashe areas - with individuals and groups recruited specifically for tours in the context of Human Rights Day.

Following a tour with B'Tselem, Uzi Benziman of *Ha'aretz* wrote a major article on the Barrier. Tours with Ohad Hemo from TV Channel One resulted in two stories: one on the divided village of Wallaje and another on children in the northern West Bank who are unable to reach school because of the Separation Barrier.

In July, B'Tselem's Research Director published an opinion piece in *Ha'aretz* on the Separation Barrier around a-Ram in northern Jerusalem. In the context of the compensation paid to settlers being removed from the Gaza Strip, the article raised the question of why the Palestinian residents of a-Ram are not entitled to compensation for the devastation and loss the Barrier will cause them.

In November, the Ministry of Interior appointed a committee to examine upgrading the status of the settlement of Modi'in Illit from a local council to a municipality. B'Tselem prepared a position paper opposing this status that addresses the illegality of the settlement and the human rights violations it causes. This paper was the basis of a letter to Interior Minister Ofir Pines. B'Tselem's letter was cited on two of Israel's most popular news Internet sites, Walla and NRG (Maariv).

B'Tselem's map of the Barrier remains in high demand, and was distributed to the local diplomatic community as well as visiting politicians and delegations, has been circulated by NGOs at public events and demonstrations. It was frequently reproduced in the press as well as in publications by academics and NGOs, including the RAND Corporation, the youth magazine *Windows* and a research paper by Givat Haviva. B'Tselem continued to regularly escort journalists, policymakers, leading public figures, and representatives from local and foreign NGOs to see the Separation Barrier, and the wall in Jerusalem was a regular stop on B'Tselem's public study tours. B'Tselem also continued its cooperation with HaMoked and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel in order to facilitate their legal advocacy on the Barrier.

## **Military Accountability**

### **Lethal Force during Arrests**

In May, B'Tselem published a report entitled *Take No Prisoners*, which discussed the fatal shootings of Palestinians during what Israeli security forces defined as arrest operations. The report argued that Israel has essentially been carrying out assassinations under the guise of arrests in an attempt to avoid the widespread criticism that accompanied assassinations. The report examines the relaxation of Israel's open-fire regulations since 2000, allowing lethal force even in cases when the security forces are not in life-threatening danger. This is compounded by a lack of investigations into cases where Palestinians have been killed by soldiers. *Ha'aretz* and all of the major Israeli internet news sites covered the publication of *Take No Prisoners*.

The report provides a thorough overview of the two central principles of IHL governing these operations: the principle of distinction and the treatment of combatants who are *hors de combat*. Based on these principles, the report concludes that the cases presented in the report “constitute a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law.” The report also frames the obligation to ensure accountability for security force violations within the context of IHL.



Throughout the year, B'Tselem continued its work with the press to draw attention to additional cases of fatal shootings during what the IDF claims are arrest operations. On Aug 24<sup>th</sup>, Israeli soldiers shot dead five Palestinians in a raid into Tulkarm. B'Tselem's investigation revealed that they were unarmed. Following a major article in Ha'aretz generated by B'Tselem's work, the IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz ordered the opening of a special inquiry. B'Tselem also highlighted the contradictions between IDF statements issued shortly after the operation and those issued later, indicating the unreliability of official military accounts. In mid-September, Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Dan Halutz decided not to take disciplinary measures against soldiers.

### **Lethal Force and Lack of Military Investigations**

In order to expand the public debate around the army's rules of engagement in the Occupied Territories, B'Tselem's video coordinator interviewed soldiers regarding the rules of engagement. Entitled *Lethal Ambiguity*, the video clip features the soldiers speaking of the lack of clarity regarding the orders they receive and the tragic results. The video was screened at a conference organized by ACRI, in the presence of the IDF Judge Advocate General. It is now available on B'Tselem's website.

B'Tselem has continued to call attention to the need for accountability in cases of injury or death of civilians at the hands of Israeli forces, both as a result of gunfire and of physical violence. B'Tselem's takes testimonies from victims and eye-witnesses to these incidents and sends an inquiry to the Chief Military Prosecutor or to the Department for the Investigation of Police (DIP - in cases involving Police or Border Police) requesting that an investigation be opened. The staff followed the progress of all of these complaints, including the dozens of complaints that remained open from previous years. In several cases, B'Tselem facilitated investigations, locating witnesses and persuading them to testify, and providing other assistance to the authorities.

This is Sisyphean work, as the vast majority of cases are not investigated, and most of those investigations that are opened do not lead to accountability for those who harmed Palestinians. However, during 2005, there were several successes in B'Tselem's efforts to pursue accountability. B'Tselem was instrumental in three convictions of Border Police for abusing Palestinians. In 2005, the first of the four Border Police officers on trial for killing Imran abu Hamdia was sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment. Imran was a teenager killed when thrown from a moving jeep in Hebron in 2002. B'Tselem began its initial investigation that same evening, and immediately demanded that DIP open an investigation. B'Tselem assisted DIP in locating the witnesses and facilitated their meeting with DIP investigators. B'Tselem and al-Haq worked together to obtain the consent of Abu Hamdia's family for an autopsy, and arranged that Danish pathologist Dr. Jurgen Tomassen participate in the autopsy. Without these measures, it is doubtful whether the Border Police officers would have ever been put on trial.

Also in 2005, B'Tselem was instrumental to the filing of indictments against Border Police officers for two cases of violence against Palestinians, and the decision to take disciplinary measures against Border Police in a third incident of violence against a minor in Hebron.

B'Tselem continues with its petition to the High Court of Justice demanding Military Police Investigations into deaths and injuries to civilians. The petition relies on and cites extensively relevant IHL provisions. The HCJ has made it clear that it expects an improvement, and the State has said in response that it will seek a more efficient mechanism to ensure that cases make their way much more quickly through the initial investigation and will increase the

number of investigations that are opened. B'Tselem and ACRI proposed a number of changes that accord with IHL standards. The recommendations that the State has already accepted include the following: 1) informing the IDF Judge Advocate General within 48 hours of the killing of a citizen not involved in the fighting; and 2) documentation of the scene by the IDF forces on location at the time of the incident.

B'Tselem called additional attention to IHL violations by using the trial of the soldier who shot Tom Hurndall, a British ISM activist, as a platform to draw press coverage to the lack of investigations into the killing of civilians. Under the headline "Whitewash," B'Tselem issued a press release with statistics on the number of Palestinians killed and the very few investigations opened, generating articles and reports in Walla, Israel Television Channel 1, Y-Net, the International Herald Tribune, The Guardian, Associated Press, the Chicago Tribune, and the Boston Globe among others. B'Tselem also worked closely with the press covering the trial, particularly the British press. In addition, B'Tselem organized an interview with Jocelyn Hurndall, the boy's mother, in Israel's largest daily newspaper, *Yediot Ahronot*.

In September 2005, B'Tselem also mobilized media attention to other fatal shootings and the wider implications for open-fire regulations. B'Tselem's testimonies together with testimonies from soldiers through "Shovrim Shtika" (Breaking the Silence) and information from Palestinians on the killing of three civilians in Nablus formed the basis for a prominent article on open-fire regulations in the mass circulation weekend supplement of Israel's widest circulating daily, *Yediot Ahronot*. In addition to providing the testimonies that formed the basis for the feature, B'Tselem arranged for photographs to be taken of the family for publication.

B'Tselem took Yigal Sarna, a leading journalist from *Yediot Ahronot*, the largest circulation daily newspaper in Israel, to Rafah following the death of Iman al-Hams. Sarna wrote an op-ed following his visit, in which he wrote "For a minute standing there, it seemed like it was only B'Tselem, that small, brave organization standing against the evil."

B'Tselem continued its advocacy against the use of Palestinians as human shields. B'Tselem took additional testimonies of Palestinians used as human shields, and also generated media attention to the issue. B'Tselem's report *Take No Prisoners* includes a brief analysis of the issue, given that in the course of one of the "arrest operations," soldiers forced two Palestinians to perform various tasks. The report cites both the customary IHL requirement that civilians are to be removed from combat zones and protected from the dangers resulting from military operations, and the explicit prohibition in the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention on forcing civilians to perform military operations of any kind.

In October 2005, the High Court of Justice ruled that it was illegal for the IDF to use Palestinian civilians during military actions. B'Tselem welcomed the unequivocal ruling of the HCJ. However, given that the army violated the HCJ's interim injunction, there is real concern about whether the ruling will be fully implemented. B'Tselem will monitor military actions to ensure that no Palestinians are compelled to assist the Israeli military.

In May, a picture in the Israeli press showed a young Palestinian in Dura (south of Hebron) who was being detained by soldiers in what appeared to be an attempt to use him as a human shield. B'Tselem initiated follow-up and took the boy's testimony, persuading Channel 10 to do a major story on the incident the following day.

## **Jerusalem**

In November, B'Tselem launched a public campaign designed to draw the attention of the media, the public and policymakers to the human rights implications of Israeli policies in

Jerusalem and to pressure for positive change. The campaign, which will continue through early 2006, focuses on the Separation Barrier, but also includes attention to discrimination in urban planning, house demolitions, denial of residency rights and discriminatory allocation of municipal budgets.

Jerusalem has been identified as a priority issue for B'Tselem's advocacy with the international community, because of the scope and severity of the issues involved, their long-term impact on any future negotiations to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the resonance Jerusalem has with Jewish, Christian and Muslim audiences around the world.

B'Tselem issued a one-page briefing to policymakers addressing the unilateral measures being taken by Israel to further its control over East Jerusalem (see attached). In June, B'Tselem drafted a brochure focusing specifically on the Barrier around Jerusalem, including case studies of a-Ram and Sheikh Sa'ad where the impact of the Barrier will be devastating. The brochure includes a new map of Jerusalem, including Israeli settlements, the route of the Separation Barrier and the checkpoints surrounding the city. The brochure was produced in both English and Hebrew, and over 20,000 copies were distributed in July via B'Tselem's mailing list, through local and international NGOs, and to media correspondents and diplomats.

In addition, B'Tselem also brought media attention to the discriminatory and widespread policy of administrative house demolitions in East Jerusalem neighborhoods. In response to a media report in *Ha'aretz* that the municipality intended to demolish 89 homes in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan, to accommodate a planned archaeological park, B'Tselem briefed both Israeli and foreign journalists. After participating in a tour initiated by B'Tselem, both the BBC and French radio aired a report on Silwan and the planned house demolitions.

## **Southern Hebron Hills**

In July, B'Tselem published a report entitled "Means of Expulsion" addressing the difficult realities faced by the Palestinians residents of the Southern Hebron hills. The residents of the area have repeatedly been subjected to attempts to expel them from the region, as well as violence and harassment by settlers and the security forces. The report was presented at the first session of the Parliamentary Lobby for Human Rights and Awareness of the Price of the Occupation headed by MKs Issam Mahul and Yuli Tamir. A video was produced to accompany the report, which was made available on B'Tselem's website. The video focused specifically on the human rights of Palestinian women and girls. B'Tselem's researcher presented the highlights of the report to the diplomatic community in Jerusalem, and an article on the report appeared in *Ha'aretz*. To supplement the extensive material contained in these media, and to maximize the accessibility of the information, B'Tselem created a Flash presentation that includes highlights of the report and video testimonies. This presentation appears on B'Tselem's website, and was distributed among a broad network of individuals and organizations.

## **House Demolitions**

B'Tselem played a central role in one of the most significant achievements of the human rights community: the abolition of punitive house demolitions. B'Tselem's report on Israel's policy of punitive house demolitions published at the end of 2004 and the subsequent public campaign generated a wave of public attention. The Knesset Law Committee convened a special session on the basis of the report. Then-Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon established a special committee to evaluate the policy of punitive house demolitions. In February, this committee released its conclusions. The committee found there was no clear evidence that house demolitions were an effective deterrent, and that such demolitions increase the hostility

of the population and harm Israel's international reputation. On this basis, the Committee recommended halting the policy of punitive demolitions. B'Tselem issued a press release calling for the immediate adoption of this recommendation. The following day, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz announced that the use of punitive demolitions would be halted. This is one of the most tangible achievements for the human rights community in recent years, and B'Tselem can be proud of its role.

In December, military officials were quoted in the press saying that the army would ask the Attorney General to allow a renewal of punitive house demolitions, following several suicide bombings within Israel. B'Tselem wrote an urgent letter to Attorney General Mazuz asking him not to approve this policy. B'Tselem's letter was reported in the popular Walla internet site. Mazuz's office subsequently informed B'Tselem that there had been no such request from the military.

While B'Tselem celebrated this achievement, the organization continued its advocacy against other forms of house demolitions.

At the beginning of 2005, B'Tselem attracted substantial press attention to renewed IDF plans to carry out massive house demolitions in Rafah, where a water-filled channel was to be built along the Philadelphi Route in order to prevent arms smuggling. The plan was frozen following the Sharm a-Sheikh summit. The disengagement from the Gaza Strip has halted the massive house demolitions throughout Gaza, but particularly in Rafah, which had been justified on the basis of military necessity.

B'Tselem also continues its advocacy against administrative house demolitions, i.e. demolition of Palestinian homes built without a permit. In 2005, B'Tselem documented 91 house demolitions in East Jerusalem, and another 45 throughout the West Bank. The issue is highlighted in B'Tselem's tours in Jerusalem. In addition, B'Tselem's Jerusalem fieldworker serves as the leading expert on demolitions in Jerusalem, providing information to journalists, diplomats and other organizations. B'Tselem, together with representatives of other human rights organizations, met with Labor Party MK Raleb Majadalla, chairman of the Knesset Interior Committee, to enlist his support to halt house demolition policies in East Jerusalem. In response to the information B'Tselem and the other organizations presented, he undertook to become more involved in the issue and help raise the awareness of other Knesset members of human rights violations entailed in the house demolition policies.

### **Death Penalty in the Palestinian Authority**

In February, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas approved the execution of a number of individuals convicted of criminal activity or collaborating with Israel. B'Tselem sent an urgent letter to Abbas, urging him to commute the death penalties to jail sentences and abolish the use of the death penalty by the PA. In addition, the organization issued an urgent appeal to the diplomatic community and a one-page briefing to international policymakers, calling on them to take action on this issue. Four death sentences were carried out, while the rest are on hold. B'Tselem's stance on this topic was covered by media outlets including *Ha'aretz*, Reuters, BBC, ABC news, and the Associated Press.

## **Additional Research Topics**

In addition to the publications released in 2005, B'Tselem initiated research on the following topics that will be completed in 2006:

- Interrogation methods of the General Security Service;
- Family reunification
- The right of Palestinians to visit family members in prison;
- Human rights violations against Palestinians who enter Israel without permits

## **RESOURCE AND INFORMATION CENTER**

B'Tselem continues to serve as the leading source of information about human rights in the Occupied Territories for researchers, diplomats, journalists, and the Israeli and international public. B'Tselem fieldworkers gathered over 700 testimonies during 2006. Four data coordinators compiled comprehensive statistics on a wide range of human rights issues, basing their work on B'Tselem's fieldwork as well as on government statements, press reports, and other sources of information.

At the beginning of February, B'Tselem launched its new website. The site was designed to facilitate easier access to information, and includes special features such as a photo archive and access to B'Tselem's statistical databases. In addition, the site is trilingual with an extensive Arabic site alongside the English and Hebrew. B'Tselem has received very positive responses to its new site, which now receives close to 3,000 visitors every day.

B'Tselem continues to issue email updates on a monthly basis. Over 7,000 individuals are now subscribed to the updates in English and 2,000 receive the Hebrew version. In addition to providing extensive information through its website and email updates, B'Tselem responded to dozens of information requests each month via phone, post, and email.

During 2006, B'Tselem issued five one-page policy briefings that were distributed to more than 1,500 policymakers in Israel and around the world: the briefings addressed the separation barrier, the human rights implications of disengagement from the Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian Authority's use of the death penalty;

B'Tselem's research and documentation serve as a primary source of information for the media. In 2005, B'Tselem issued nine press releases in Hebrew, English, and Arabic to over 200 local and 1,000 foreign journalists to announce the release of new reports and issue statements on current events. B'Tselem provided regular and frequent briefings and items to AP, Reuters, the BBC, New York Times, Knight Ridder, the Guardian and the Independent, as well as the Israeli print and broadcast media, sometimes on a daily basis. B'Tselem staff members regularly accompanied journalists to collect information for feature stories and meet with Palestinians affected by Israel human rights violations, and were frequently interviewed for up-to-date information and analysis on human rights issues. B'Tselem's efforts resulted in hundreds of articles in the Israeli and international press over the course of the year.

B'Tselem's work on Israel's plans to transport garbage from Israel to the West Bank is one example of the organization's success in obtaining media coverage that results in tangible change. After learning that preparations had begun to use the Qedumim quarry as a dump for ten thousand tons of garbage a month from within Israel, B'Tselem passed the information on

to David Ratner, who broke the story in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper (see attached article). The article highlighted the violation of international law entailed in Israel's actions as well as the environmental damage that would result. Other media sources, such as Israeli TV Channel One, then became interested in the topic, and B'Tselem provided background information, video footage of construction at the dump, and interviews. B'Tselem also assisted the [Israel Union for Environmental Defense](#) in preparing a High Court petition on this topic. The High Court subsequently issued an interim injunction preventing any transportation of garbage to the site until the case has been heard. B'Tselem has periodically monitored the site to ensure that this injunction is enforced.

B'Tselem regularly updated the diplomatic community in Israel on human rights developments in the Occupied Territories, and gave presentations to visiting foreign policymakers and delegations from around the world, including Christian Leffler, Chair of the EU-Israel Association Committee; the European Commission's Israel desk officers; Thomas Hammarberg from the Olof Palme International Center, former secretary general of Amnesty International and now special advisor on children to the Prime Minister of Sweden; the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British parliament; a delegation from the Irish Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee; parliamentarians from France, Iceland, England, Sweden, and the European Parliament; and the Steering Group of the British Foreign Ministry's Global Conflict Prevention Pool.

B'Tselem staff members were invited to participate in international conferences and share their knowledge of human rights issues in the Occupied Territories. B'Tselem representatives participated in a speaking tour in Sweden organized by Diakonia; a conference in Rome on the Separation Barrier organized by Caritas; a speaking tour in Germany; a conference in Austria on Human Rights and the Middle East Conflict organized through the Euro-Med Human Rights Network; and a week of briefings in Washington DC on the Separation Barrier.

## **ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **Advocacy with Policymakers**

As in recent years, B'Tselem was regularly invited to sessions of the Knesset Constitution and Law Committee to examine Israel's human rights record in the context of the war on terror. B'Tselem requested that the Chair of the Committee, Michael Eitan, convene a session on Border Police violence, and such a session was held in February, attended by the head of the Border Police and B'Tselem's Executive Director. B'Tselem also attended the session at which the Military Judge Advocate General provided his semi-annual report to the committee; a practice begun in 2003 as a result of Committee discussions on security force violence following a wave of public attention to this topic, largely stemming from several cases publicized by B'Tselem. In addition to providing updated information on investigations, the JAG addressed several issues B'Tselem raised in the past. He said that his office has dealt with the problem of confiscations of IDs and car keys from Palestinians at checkpoints, and that this phenomenon no longer occurs. The JAG also expressed interest in resuming a policy of investigating all cases of civilian deaths, though he said that this was not possible as long as there was an armed conflict.

At the end of February, the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee held a special extended session on the Barrier route in the Jerusalem area, which was attended by the

director of the Defense Ministry and the Deputy Chief of Staff. B'Tselem prepared a special map of the area to be distributed at the session.

In February, B'Tselem met with the new JAG, Avichai Mendelblit to raise a number of the organization's concerns. Virtually all high-ranking members of the military's legal staff attended the meeting. The most tangible benefit of the meeting was the agreement on the part of the military to give B'Tselem access to military police investigations as long as the family agrees. This information is vital to B'Tselem's research on this topic.

Throughout this period, B'Tselem also escorted a number of Israeli policymakers on tours of the Barrier, including MKs Amram Mitzna and Colette Avital from the Labor Party, Roman Bronfman from Yahad, and Jamal Zahalka from Balad; Yaron Shor, Secretary General of Meretz; and Brig. Gen. (res.) Nehemia Dagan, the former IDF Chief of Education.

We also attended a Knesset Constitution and Law Committee session on freedom of movement. The human rights organizations in attendance raised the problem of individuals who are prevented by the General Security Services from any travel outside of the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Committee chairman Michael Eitan said he would hold a further discussion on this issue in the future.

In September, B'Tselem conducted a tour in Hebron for Knesset Members together with representatives from "Breaking the Silence." The tour was attended by over forty people, including MKs Yuli Tamir, Ran Cohen, and Issam Makhul as well as a number of parliamentary aides. The tour attracted substantial press attention including Reuters and Israeli TV Channel 1. Following the tour, MK Ran Cohen, Chair of the Knesset Committee on Children and member of the Foreign Policy and Defense Committee, expressed interest in getting additional information relating to children's issues.

Throughout 2005, B'Tselem conducted advocacy in Knesset regarding several pieces of legislation relating to human rights issues.

### **Compensation for Victims of Security Force Violence**

B'Tselem was active in a coalition of human rights organizations that worked to counter Knesset attempts to amend Israel's tort law so as to deny compensation to Palestinians injured by the Israeli security forces. B'Tselem participated in three Knesset Law Committee discussions on this topic, and distributed information on the proposed legislation to diplomats, local and foreign policymakers, and international human rights organizations. Among the materials distributed was a CD with testimonies taken by B'Tselem from individuals who would be affected by this law (see enclosed CD). As several such individuals were denied permits into Israel to testify before the committee, the video testimonies were the only way that potential victims of this policy could make their voices heard. B'Tselem sent a letter to Knesset members, accompanied by the CD-Rom presentation containing testimonies, emphasizing the hardship that would be brought about by the blanket denial of the right to compensation for injuries suffered. B'Tselem conducted extensive press work on this topic, and issued an urgent action alert to its email update list. Despite the coalition's efforts, the proposed amendment was passed by the Knesset in July. In September, B'Tselem joined eight other Israeli human rights organizations in a petition to the High Court to cancel the amendment.

### **Family Unification**

In July, the Knesset voted on extending the law which prevents granting of citizenship or residency status to Palestinians from the Occupied Territories who marry Israeli citizens or



residents. Prior to the vote, B'Tselem joined other organizations in publishing an advertisement opposing the amendment, lobbied Knesset members, and published an item on the website citing the High Court demand that the State Attorney's Office substantiate its claim of connection between family unification and terrorism. Although the law passed, as a result of the organizations' lobbying it included amendments that loosened the restrictions, enabling reunification in cases when the members of the couple are over a certain age. B'Tselem is currently working on report which will address the issue of family unification and is planned for release in 2006.

## Detention of non-resident aliens

In November, the Ministry of Justice proposed a law that would allow non-residents of Israel suspected of having committed security offenses to be held almost completely incommunicado for fifty days. B'Tselem worked closely with other Israeli human rights organizations in opposing this legislation, placing an ad in Ha'aretz prior to the first reading in the Knesset plenum, issuing an action alert to B'Tselem's e-mail mailing list, and getting international organizations to speak out. The bill passed its first reading and is now under discussion in the Constitution and Law Committee.

## Advertisements and internet banners

B'Tselem continues using paid advertisements to attract attention to new reports and respond to current events. Throughout the year, B'Tselem maintained a permanent button on the Ha'aretz Hebrew website, focusing on the issue of the day. B'Tselem placed internet banners to draw attention to the publication of the Gaza report. In addition, B'Tselem published print advertisements about the Gaza report; announced public tours; and responded to the Sasson report on outposts. The advertisement following publication of the Sasson report on the illegal outposts highlighted the fact that all settlements are illegal and not just the outposts.

B'Tselem also joined together with other organizations to publish an advertisement in Ha'aretz opposing the renewal of the law on family unification at the end of January, and advertisements in Ha'aretz and al-Quds newspapers in February opposing the continued widespread use of administrative detention.

## Visual Materials

Over the past two years, B'Tselem has expanded its use of visual images as a tool to promote human rights. The organization has provided video footage to journalists and produced several short videos, including a music video on Israel's siege policy and an advertisement on house demolitions. These materials have proven to be a particularly powerful means to present B'Tselem's information, and have reached an even wider audience than B'Tselem's written reports generally attract. As such, B'Tselem will now make visual materials a regular part of its on-going work. Oren Yakobovich, who has a rich background in documentary filmmaking, joined B'Tselem's staff at the beginning of this year and coordinates all of B'Tselem's video work. Oren established a video editing room, began gathering footage, and produced videotaped testimonies to accompany all the reports released this year. These videos were available on B'Tselem's website and distributed on CD together with the printed reports. As described above, B'Tselem also produced a CD with video



### *Which of these settlements are legal?*

*The settlements, like outposts, were established on lands taken from their Palestinian owners. As a result of the settlements, Israel carries out a policy of discrimination and separation that routinely results in human rights violations.*

*The settlements, like the outposts, are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and must be dismantled.*

*There is no such thing as a legal settlement.  
(March 2005)*

testimonies from individuals who will be denied the possibility of compensation as a result of the proposed legislation in the Knesset, which was distributed to members of Knesset (see page 14). Following the *Ha'aretz* exposé on the garbage dump in Qedumim (see page 12), B'Tselem provided video and still photographs of the site to the media. This documentation was instrumental in proving that organic (household) waste is being dumped at the site, contrary to the Civil Administration's assertions.

The number of viewings by both a domestic and international audience in the past year of the video material on B'Tselem's website totaled close to 34,000.

## **Public Presentations and Tours**

B'Tselem staff continued to provide lectures and tours to target audiences, educating the public about human rights in the Occupied Territories and fostering engagement with human rights issues.

- B'Tselem staff gave a presentation in January to forty-five soldiers serving in the office of the IDF spokesperson.
- In April, B'Tselem's Research Director, Yehezkel Lein, participated in a panel at the Jerusalem Cinemateque organized by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel entitled "Human Rights under Fire." The event was attended by fifty people.
- Jessica Montell, B'Tselem's Executive Director, spoke at a conference on house demolitions held at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies in May.
- Jessica Montell participated in a panel organized in May by the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University on the role of the IDF Spokesperson.
- In June, Jessica Montell gave a lecture on human rights to 150 legal advisors from the various government ministries, at a conference organized by the Justice Ministry.
- B'Tselem staff members gave presentations for Jewish groups from around the world including Reform and Conservative rabbinic students in Israel for the year; several groups of pro-Israel activists from North American university campuses in Israel for advocacy training programs; participants in a leadership course from Switzerland; members of American Friends of Meretz and Givat Haviva; and a delegation from Rabbis for Human Rights – North America. These presentations were attended by over four hundred people.
- Jessica Montell participated in a panel in September on Restrictions on Movement Sponsored by Truman Institute and the al-Quds University.
- Shlomi Suissa, a B'Tselem Data Coordinator, together with B'Tselem's Study Tour Coordinator Eliezer Moav, presented B'Tselem's public advocacy work to a group of over 30 staff members from local human rights organizations, organized by the ICRC.
- Shlomi Suissa, a B'Tselem Data Coordinator, gave a presentation on human rights in the wake of disengagement in September for a group from the political party Hadash.
- B'Tselem conducted human rights study tours focusing primarily on the situation in East Jerusalem, the Separation Barrier, and checkpoints. Tours were held for groups including:

- Separate bus tours for each of the following Israeli organizations: Adva Center, Keshet-Democratic Mizrahi Rainbow, Adam Institute, Kav Laoved, Sikkuy, Reut Sedaka, Windows, and Bina;
- Fifty Israeli high school students in a military preparatory academy;
- Fifty youth counselors from Tel Aviv;
- Fifteen teachers from a Tel Aviv high school;
- Forty members of the Ga'ash Kibbutz;
- Fifteen German high school graduates in Israel for a year of service;
- Staff and board of the New Israel Fund's Canadian office;
- Five tours open to the general Israeli public, attended by over two hundred people;
- Ten public figures from the Israeli religious community;
- Tours of Hebron for Swedish Parliamentarians and representatives of the British think tank DEMOS;
- Academics from universities in Israel, as well as Sweden, New York, Norway, and Italy.

In addition, B'Tselem set up information booths to distribute materials at Israel's annual nationwide Activism Festival and the Day without Occupation events, both held in June with thousands of people in attendance.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

At the beginning of 2005, B'Tselem's staff and Board held a series of meetings to determine research and advocacy priorities for the year.

At B'Tselem's request, Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki included two questions on B'Tselem in his March survey of Palestinian public opinion. According to this poll, 38% of the Palestinian population has heard of B'Tselem. Of these, 58% thinks positively about our work.

## **Building Organizational Capacity**

B'Tselem staff members participated in a variety of training and enrichment sessions during the first half of 2005. Four training sessions were organized for fieldworkers. One session was held in the B'Tselem office, facilitating interaction with the office staff. A video link was set up for two of the sessions, to enable the participation of the two Gazan fieldworkers.

After several years of being denied permits, B'Tselem was able to obtain permission from the IDF for B'Tselem's Fieldwork Director, Najib Abu Rokaya, to enter Gaza to meet with the organization's two fieldworkers there. Abu Rokaya spent two days touring the Gaza Strip, and met with PCHR and al-Mezan to discuss further cooperation.

B'Tselem's data coordination staff and fieldwork research team participated in a series of three sessions conducted by Alex Peleg, former head of the Tel Aviv Police forensic lab, focusing on crime scene investigation and methods for collecting and analyzing physical evidence. Peleg has also assisted B'Tselem in investigating suspected violations of human rights, most recently the killing of a fifteen-year old boy shot and killed after he allegedly stabbed a soldier in Hebron. The findings of this case were inconclusive.

B'Tselem conducted several activities to strengthen its organizational capacity in the area of IHL. B'Tselem's Research Director conducted two lectures for the office staff on IHL. In

addition, B'Tselem asked Attorney Sonia Boulos from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel to provide a day-long training to B'Tselem's fieldworkers in IHL. The response to these lectures was very positive and the staff has asked for additional trainings.

B'Tselem also provided background and training for individuals who have come through international civil society organizations to serve as observers in the Occupied Territories, with an emphasis on the provisions and guidelines of IHL as well as other human rights treaties and laws.

B'Tselem's Research Director Yehezkel Lein is completing an MA program in International Human Rights Law at Oxford University. One research project he completed for this program was an IHL analysis of Israel's assassination policy. B'Tselem's fieldworker in Ramallah, Iyad Khadad, attended the two-week training course on human rights advocacy and awareness run by the Meridian International Center in the United States.

Members of B'Tselem's research team contributed its expertise and knowledge at sessions organized by AIDA and Diaknoia on the status of Gaza Strip following Disengagement, and at a meeting on the Separation Barrier organized by the EU Humanitarian Secretariat.

In November, B'Tselem organized an enrichment session for staff members and staff from other human rights organizations with Isa Foighel, Professor of International Law at Copenhagen University, and a Former Judge at the European Court of Human Rights. Professor Foighel addressed the issue of human rights in the context of the global fight against terrorism.

In response to the increased calls for sanctions against Israel, B'Tselem organized a workshop for Israeli human rights organizations to examine the issue from a human rights perspective. B'Tselem invited Morton Winston, a Board member of Amnesty USA, to design and lead the workshop, which looked at various foreign policy tools such as sanctions to promote human rights. Staff from B'Tselem and some ten other Israeli human rights organizations attended the workshop. B'Tselem's position remained the same following the session: the organization calls on all states to ensure respect for human rights, without advocating specific foreign policy measures by any state.

B'Tselem staff members also participated in two workshops on UN mechanisms to advance human rights conducted by Chris Sidoti from International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) that was organized by Shatil. In June, B'Tselem invited Nava Kedar from Mosaica to present the organization's work on the issue of restorative justice, a mediation process between victim and perpetrator under the auspices of the Justice Ministry. This presentation provoked lively discussion about whether such a model is feasible in cases of Israeli human rights violations.

## **Staff Changes**

- Oren Yakobovich joined B'Tselem's staff as Video Coordinator. Oren is an independent filmmaker with experience in all aspects of video production.
- Sarit Michaeli, B'Tselem's Press Officer, assumed responsibility for all of the organization's public education activities. Lin Chalozin-Dovrat joined the public education team as Campaign Coordinator. Previously Lin conducted tours of the Separation Barrier on behalf of the Women's Coalition for Peace, and initiated the Campaign for Tali Fahima.
- After five years with the organization, researcher Ronen Shnayderman left B'Tselem to pursue a doctorate in the UK. B'Tselem decided to increase its research capacity and hired two new researchers: Anat Barsella, a researcher who

joined B'Tselem's staff six months ago, holds a masters degree in international human rights from Essex University and spent six months in the Balkans working for human rights organizations there; and Eitan Diamond, who also joined B'Tselem's staff as a researcher during this period, holds an Israeli law degree and a masters degree in International Law from the London School of Economics.

- At the end of the year, Rachel Greenspahn, left B'Tselem after four years with the organization. She will be replaced by Risa Zoll, a lawyer, who formerly worked as the International Relations Director at the Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

## What Palestinians Will Face After the West Bank Withdrawals

Israel's withdrawal from four settlements in the northern West Bank will not significantly change the outlook for Palestinians in the area, according to David Shearer, head of the United Nations office in Jerusalem responsible for tracking the impact of the Israeli occupation on Palestinians. The withdrawal is overshadowed by the separation barrier, which has restricted the flow of people and goods to and from Israel. "The wall is the dominant factor in the revival of the economy of the West Bank," said Mr. Shearer.

ARCHIE TSE

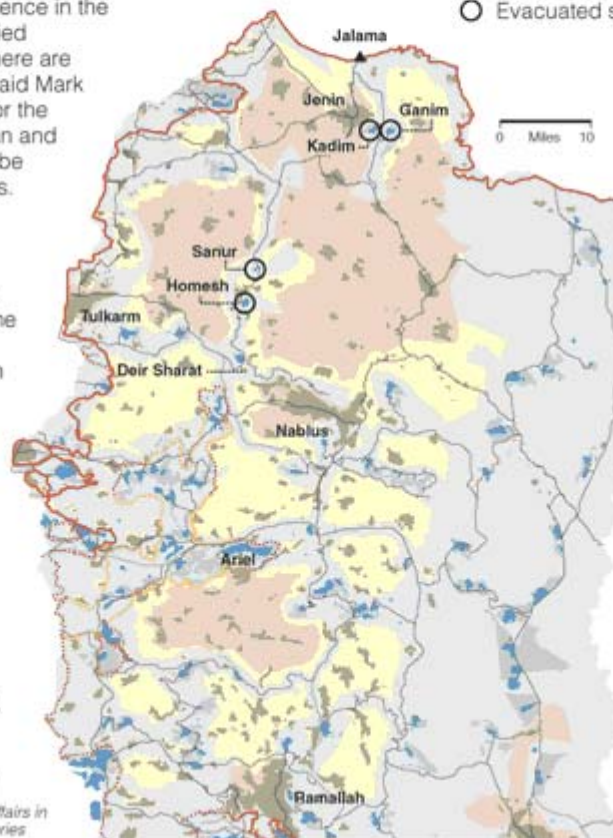
### A more contiguous area

There will be a decreased need for a significant military presence in the areas around the emptied settlements because there are no settlers to defend, said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry. Civilian and criminal matters are to be handled by Palestinians.

### Improved movement

The main routes to the four settlements became barriers between the surrounding Palestinian areas. Getting from one side of the road to the other often required passing through checkpoints that could have unpredictably long delays. Travel has been improving since this spring because Israeli forces have been decreasing the number of checkpoints in the area.

Sources: Map boundaries from B'Tselem; U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories



### Limited crossings to Israel

The barrier has limited the number of crossing points. Currently most goods are funneled through the Jalama crossing.

### A struggling economy

Before the separation barrier was built, much of the area's economy depended on commerce with Israel, with a quarter of West Bank workers employed there. Since the barrier's construction, the economy has become more localized and unemployment has jumped as workers tried to find jobs close to home.

The New York Times