



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

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

B'TSELEM ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT **2007**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two significant dates were commemorated in the past year: the 40th year of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and twenty years since the outbreak of the first Intifada. The context of these two events provides a broad perspective on the human rights situation that has followed in their wake.

Two clear themes characterize Israel's policies in many spheres that B'Tselem addresses. The first is the tendency to claim that policies and practices implemented in the Occupied Territories are justified in the name of security, without substantiating this justification or ensuring that legal standards are met. Almost completely absent is the mandatory balancing of security needs with other important values, including protecting the rights of Palestinians living under Israel's control. The second theme is the lack of accountability of Israel's security forces in matters relating to human rights in the Occupied Territories. This is expressed in the reluctance of the state to thoroughly investigate violations and to prosecute those responsible for them, as well as in the denial of most Palestinians' right to compensation when they are injured through no fault of their own by Israeli forces.

One welcome improvement in the human rights situation in the past year is that the number of Palestinians and Israelis killed in clashes in the West Bank and Gaza has dropped. However, alongside this development has been deterioration in many other measures of the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories. Highlights from B'Tselem's year-end report illustrates some of these:

- In 2007, there was an increase of 13 percent in the number of Palestinians held in administrative detention without trial, which averaged 830 people.
- 66 staffed checkpoints and 459 physical roadblocks on average controlled movement inside the West Bank. There was little improvement in Palestinians' freedom of movement, despite the promised easing of restrictions.
- Israeli settlement population grew by 4.5% (compared with 1.5% population growth inside Israel), a more moderate increase than the previous year.
- Israel continues the freeze policy on family unification, denying tens of thousands of Palestinians the right to a family life. However, in what was termed a one-time gesture, Israel approved family unification for some 3,500 Palestinian families.
- The number of houses demolished in East Jerusalem rose by 38 percent, to 69 homes.
- Palestinians continue to face severe discrimination in the allocation of water in the West Bank, causing serious hardship in the summer.

- The number of Palestinians killed in intra-Palestinian clashes was the highest throughout the Intifada.
- The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has declined drastically as a result of Israel's siege policy that prevents access of essential foodstuffs, medication, and limits the supply of fuel and electricity.

B'Tselem has continued to do battle with these policies and their impact, and despite Israel's persistent attempts to evade responsibility, has succeeded in placing these issues on the public agenda, and in some cases bringing about incremental change.

Highlights of B'Tselem's major program accomplishments during the past year include:

- For the first time in over a decade, B'Tselem published a report presenting a **broad survey of the spectrum of human rights issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip**, with an emphasis on those issues under direct Israeli control.
- Through strategically launched video footage of a settler woman in Hebron attacking a Palestinian family that was covered by most major domestic and international news channels including CNN, BBC, ABC, NBC and MBC, B'Tselem initiated a campaign highlighting **the failure of Israeli law enforcement in Hebron that leaves Palestinians residents of the city without protection from settler violence and illustrating the restraints on freedom of movement imposed on Palestinians that render life in the city untenable.**
- B'Tselem published a unique study on the **infringement of the human rights of the tens of thousands of Palestinian workers staying in Israel without a permit** in a report entitled **Crossing the Line.**
- B'Tselem, together with the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, published the report **Ghost Town: Israel's Separation Policy and Forced Eviction of Palestinians from the Center of Hebron**, which documents for the time the extent to which **Israel's policies designed to segregate Palestinians from the Jewish settlers in the city has led to the "quiet transfer" of the Palestinian population of Hebron's city center.**
- B'Tselem launched an initiative to **target the Russian-speaking community in Israel**, introducing a new Russian website and translating press releases, briefings and selected materials into Russian.
- In **Absolute Prohibition: The Torture and Ill-treatment of Palestinian Detainees**, B'Tselem published the first report since the landmark ruling prohibiting the use of torture in security interrogations detailing the **maltreatment, and in some cases torture, of Palestinian detainees interrogated by the Israel Security Agency.**
- B'Tselem, together with other Israeli human rights organizations, held a public event in the heart of Tel Aviv to mark **40 years of Israel's occupation**, exploring the human rights violations in the Occupied Territories and also examining the negative impact of the occupation on Israeli society.

- B'Tselem documented the debilitating impact of the network of movement restrictions imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank in its report **Ground to a Halt: Denial of Palestinians' Movement in the West Bank**.
- B'Tselem fieldworkers gathered **1180 testimonies** during 2007.
- B'Tselem's website, which now appears in four languages: Hebrew Arabic, English and Russian, has received over **2,500 visitors** on average every day in 2007.
- B'Tselem has expanded its use of visual images as a tool to promote human rights, reaching over **800 hours** of total archive footage. Over **80,000** people have viewed B'Tselem videos on our website in 2007, **70% of whom are from within Israel**. Over **300,000** individuals have viewed B'Tselem's videos on additional Internet sites that include YouTube/Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Democracy Now and Flix, among others.
- B'Tselem provided **48 study tours** for groups and individuals, as well as over **140 briefings and presentations**.

A detailed description of these achievements and many others are set forth below.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

B'Tselem's activities during the past year reflect the planned program output, and included the following:

1180 testimonies collected by B'Tselem's fieldwork 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 well as on government statements, press reports, and other sources of information.

20 press releases issued in English, Hebrew, Arabic and Russian, to over **1,200 local and foreign journalists**:

- **B'Tselem: Don't Make one Hebron Settler into the Scapegoat** (*January 11, 2007*)
- **B'Tselem: Stop Using Undercover Forces in Combat Actions** (*January 25, 2007*)
- **Israel Prevents all Boats and Fishing off the Gaza Coast** (*February 25, 2007*)
- **New Report: Crossing the Line** (*March 6, 2007*)
- **Israeli Soldiers use Palestinian minors and an adult as human shields in the operation in Nablus** (*March 11, 2007*)
- **New Report Uncovers Routine Ill-Treatment of Palestinians in Israel Security Agency Interrogations** (*May 6, 2007*)
- **The 'quiet transfer' in Hebron** (*May 14, 2007*)
- **B'Tselem to Israeli Defense Minister: Do not Target Civilian Infrastructure in the Gaza Strip** (*May 17, 2007*)

- **B'Tselem demands an investigation into beating of the organization's field worker by a police officer** (*June 14, 2007*)
- **Urgent Appeal from Israeli Human Rights Groups to Israeli Defense Minister: Open Gaza's Borders to Prevent a Humanitarian Crisis** (*June 17, 2007*)
- **B'Tselem demands that perpetrators of war crimes in Gaza be tried and warns against revenge attacks in the West Bank** (*June 18, 2007*)
- **B'Tselem: Holding Gilad Shalit as a hostage is a war crime** (*June 25, 2007*)
- **B'Tselem's recommendations for easing travel in the West Bank** (*June 27, 2007*)
- **Joint Call by Human Rights Groups to Open the Rafah Crossing** (*July 30, 2007*)
- **For seven years, Israel has denied Palestinians freedom of movement to ease travel for Israelis in the West Bank** (*August 7, 2008*)
- **Cabinet decision will impose collective punishment on a civilian population, lead to grave breach of International Law** (*September 20, 2008*)
- **Sharp rise in violence by Israeli settlers and security forces around the new settlement in Hebron** (*October 19, 2008*)
- **Human rights organizations petition Supreme Court against Suspension of Power Supply to Gaza** (*October 28, 2008*)
- **The Israeli Army does not do enough to combat abuse of Palestinians** (*December 16, 2008*)
- **131 Palestinians who did not participate in the hostilities killed by Israel's security forces in 2007** (*December 31, 2008*)

8 email updates distributed by email to over **6,000 subscribers**, with hundreds of additional print copies.

3 print advertisements in the Hebrew press; one marking 40 years of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the second addressing the freeze on family unification in the form of a letter to Defense Minister Ehud Barak and his wife congratulating them on their own wedding anniversary, and the third on B'Tselem's annual International Human Rights Day tour.

2 internet banners: 1) on human rights issues in Hebron which appeared on the Ha'aretz and Ynet websites. The Ynet banner was seen by 13,617,744 viewers and received 19,288 hits, and the Ha'aretz banner was seen by 1,247,837 viewers and received 10,040 hits, figures that indicate much higher than average exposure; 2) on the checkpoint preventing Palestinians from enjoying the northern Dead Sea beaches, an area that is an integral part of the West Bank, apparently to enable Israelis to enjoy the area without Palestinians present. The YNet banner was seen 4,669,472 viewers and received 18,277 hits.

1 newspaper insert highlighting the responsibility Israel bears for the welfare of the 1.4 million Gazans in light of the widespread control Israel still exercises over many aspects of life in Gaza.

2,500 website visitors per day to B'Tselem's website that contains information in four languages – Hebrew, Arabic, English and Russian - including comprehensive reports, summaries of reports, short films and video footage, statistics, maps, and testimonies from Palestinians and soldiers

Over **200 hours** of video material collected and provided to journalists and filmmakers in Israel and overseas

10 new videos were made available on B'Tselem's website during this period

80,000 people have viewed B'Tselem videos on our website, **70%** of whom are from within Israel, as well as over **300,000** viewers of B'Tselem videos on Internet websites that include YouTube/Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Democracy Now and Flix, among others.

48 study tours for groups and individuals, as well as over **140 briefings and presentations** to policymakers, journalists, diplomats, representatives of international organizations and others.

590 articles in the local and international press.

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. In response to B'Tselem's activities, hundreds of 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.

During this period, B'Tselem was invited to provide formal briefings to a broad range of target audiences on the human rights situation, including the following: **IDF lieutenant colonels**, officers from the **United Kingdom Royal College of Defense Studies**, **parliamentarians from the Czech Republic, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the EU, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden**, **US Consular political officers**, and the **UN Special Rapporteur on Terrorism and Human Rights**. B'Tselem provided information on family unification at the request of **US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice** and material to the **IDF Judge Advocate General**. These high level requests came in addition to the regular requests for video footage from Israel television channels, and information requests from the general public.

Expanded Media Coverage of Human Rights Issues

B'Tselem's reports, work with the press, and study tours have generated on average **50 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 during this period were human rights abuses in Hebron, ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees in interrogations by the Israel Security Agency (formerly the "General Security Service"), Israel's restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank, and B'Tselem's annual report reviewing the human rights situation in 2007.

B'Tselem's research and accompanying campaign on Hebron, together with the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Breaking the Silence, highlighted Israel's policies of closures, curfews and constraints on Palestinian movement in the center of Hebron under Israel's control, and the failure of Israeli military and police personnel to intervene to protect Palestinian residents of Hebron from repeated and violent attacks by Jewish settlers living in their midst. In response to video documentation released regarding these issues, articles appeared on major Israeli news channels, Internet news sites, newspapers and on daily radio broadcast. The **deluge of media coverage** included repeated and in-depth articles and broadcasts internationally and locally as follows: **Television and radio:** Israel television channels 1, 2 and 10, and internationally on *ABC*, *CNN*, *BBC*, *NBC*, *MBC*, *RAI* (Italy), Brazilian, Danish and French television, and NRP (Japan). Israel radio stations including Voice of Israel (Hebrew and English), and Galei Tzahal. The radio and television guests invited to speak on these programs included Knesset members, settlers, activists and Palestinians. **Internet news sites:** *YNet*, *Walla*, *NRG*, and *Yahoo*. **Print Media:** *Ha'aretz* (Hebrew and English), *Yediot Aharonot*, the *Jerusalem Post*.

B'Tselem's research, together with the organization HaMoked-Center for the Defence of the Individual, and advocacy work on the issue of routine maltreatment, and in some instances torture, of Palestinian detainees by the Israel Security Agency during interrogations also garnered widespread media coverage. In addition to appearing as the **front-page headline of France's Le Monde**, the report and its findings were featured in *NRG* (Maariv Internet site), *Nana* (Internet), *YNet*, *MSN*, *Haaretz*, the *Jerusalem Post*, *UPI*, *BBC*, *Middle East Times*, *Nyngan Observer* and the *Financial Times*. **Television and radio coverage** included Israel television Channel 2, Israel's Knesset channel, Reuters, Channel 1 Arabic news and Al Jazeera, as well as Israel's full range of radio stations: Voice of Israel, Galatz, Radio 103, Channel 7, and Radio "Kol Chai".

B'Tselem's report on Israel's restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank, *Ground to a Halt*, generated extensive international and domestic media coverage, including the following: the Israel radio and television outlets **Channel 1**, **Army Radio** and the **Voice of Israel**; Israeli Internet news sites *YNET*, *NFC*, *Nana*, *Walla*, *Omedia*, *NRG*, *INN Site* and *MSN*; the *Jerusalem Post*, *Yeted Ne'eman* (Ultra-orthodox daily), *Metro Israel*, *Al-Quds*; and internationally, the *Washington Post*, the *Middle East News*, *UPI*, and *CBS News*.

The annual report produced by B'Tselem providing an overview of the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories attracted wide attention as well, including the following print and broadcast media outlets: internationally, the **BBC**, the **Guardian**, **ABC News**, **Yahoo**, **Reuters**, and radio and news stations in **Australia**, **Canada**, **Italy**, **Germany**, **Holland** and **Indonesia**; domestic Internet site coverage included **YNet**, **NRG**, and **Nana**; and locally, the **Jerusalem Post**, **Ha'aretz** and **Army Radio**.

B'Tselem has also escorted a large number of film and television professionals on field tours to witness our video work firsthand, including most recently the Program Director for the Sundance Film Festival, the documentary coordinator for BBC's Channel 4 and a senior representative of France's Arte. B'Tselem will cultivate these connections as channels for engaging even wider audiences in the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories.

Changes in Israeli Government and Military Policies

As a result of the work of B'Tselem and other human rights organizations, some incremental changes have been made, including the following: in response to B'Tselem's publicizing an instance of a car theft and shooting of a Palestinian civilian by IDF soldiers in Dahariya, the IDF unit commander was suspended from his position following a preliminary investigation and the investigation is continuing; an order of the High Court of Justice to the Judge Advocate General to review IDF open fire regulations in response to the petition on the IDF killing of Iman al-Hams, a twelve year-old girl, who was shot and killed while walking to school in the Rafah refugee camp; a response from the Judge Advocate General stating his intention to further address the issue in soldier training of the need to intervene in cases of settler violence; and the establishment of a ministerial committee to examine constraints of movement on Palestinians living in Hebron city center in response to B'Tselem's highly visible campaign.

The IDF also notified B'Tselem of its **inclusion in an IDF pocket guide for soldiers a page devoted to human rights organizations**, articulating the right of human rights activists to be present in the field, and noting their right to film and photograph.

In addition, in response to a demand made by B'Tselem, HaMoked, Physicians for Human Rights and the Public Committee Against Torture, **the Attorney General, in cooperation with the Israel Security Agency, agreed to prohibit the use of family members as a way of exerting pressure during interrogations of detainees.**

Following the public advocacy, research and legal advocacy by B'Tselem and other human rights organizations, the government announced its intention to **process some 3,500 family unification applications**, an exception to the freeze that has been in place for the past seven years. B'Tselem and the human rights community are continuing to work for a lifting of the blanket freeze on issuing family unification permits for applicants numbering in the tens of thousands.

Number of hits on B'Tselem's website

As noted above, the average number of visitors per day to B'Tselem's website stands at **2,500**. In addition, **80,000** people have viewed B'Tselem videos on our website, **70%** of whom are from within Israel, as well as over **300,000** viewers of B'Tselem videos on Internet websites that include *YouTube/Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Democracy Now* and *Flix*, among others

Use of B'Tselem's information and material by policymakers

The output data presented above demonstrates the extent to which B'Tselem's materials and information have reached policymakers both in Israel and internationally. The immediate feedback from presentations and briefings to policymakers indicate the extent to which policymakers find the material useful.

B'Tselem provided a briefing to the **Knesset Constitution and Law Committee** on the findings of B'Tselem's report on the treatment of detainees during interrogation by Israel's security services. B'Tselem conducted a tour of West Bank checkpoints for the **British Defence Attache**, who is in contact with the IDF on security matters. At a conference with the **EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid** where B'Tselem made a presentation on Europe's obligation to hold Israel accountable for protecting the welfare of those living under Israel's control, many diplomats and decision-makers sought additional information from B'Tselem on this issue. B'Tselem also provided a briefing for the **UN Special Rapporteur on Terrorism and Human Rights**.

In addition, B'Tselem regularly receives requests for briefings for information from foreign delegations for use in their own reports and briefings. B'Tselem is a regular stop for foreign policymakers and human rights officials visiting the region, including representatives from **the Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the Bundestag**, the **UK Parliamentary Council for Arab-British Understanding**, the **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, as well as **diplomats from the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, and Canada**, and government officials from **England**, and the **Netherlands**. In addition, B'Tselem provided briefings to the **Papal Nuncio of Jerusalem**, the human rights director of the **Carter Center**, the director of **CARE-USA**, and an international delegation from the **IL O**, among others.

Within Israel, B'Tselem has been contacted by Knesset members who make use of B'Tselem materials in parliamentary hearings, including hearings before the Constitution and Law Committee, and the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, in which B'Tselem also participated. B'Tselem also conducted individual meetings during this period with Hagai Alon, the then Advisor to the Minister of Defense, the Commander of the Border Patrol, the Judge Advocate General, and the head of the Civil Administration. In addition, in the course of B'Tselem's presentation of the report before the

Knesset Interior Committee of the ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian detainees by the Israel Security Agency (see above reference), Knesset members cited the videotaped testimony of a detainee who suffered ill-treatment as a refutation to challenges brought to the existence of the practices and policies documented by B'Tselem.

Building Organizational Capacity

B'Tselem staff members participated in a variety of training and enrichment sessions over the past year. Four two-day training sessions were organized for fieldworkers, focusing on, among other topics, further skill-building in testimony collection, a gender-sensitivity training workshop, the legal context for the field documentation, enhancing film and photo documentation skills. B'Tselem's Data Coordination director participated in a three-day gender mainstreaming workshop in Paris for representatives of NGO's throughout the Middle East. Several senior managers from B'Tselem participated in an external three-session management training workshop together with managers from other NGO's that involved presentations and discussions on practical management skills and techniques. In addition, B'Tselem's Data Coordination Director completed an on-line course in international human rights law.

B'Tselem's Video Department Director, Mr. Oren Yakobovich, was accepted from a large number of applicants from across the Mediterranean region to participate in a film workshop sponsored by the European Union, *Mediterranean Films Crossing Borders*, which was geared toward assisting filmmakers in the production and marketing aspects of film. The workshop was timed to coincide with the Berlin Film Festival, and afforded participants the opportunity to pitch their work to the hundreds of film and television professionals attending.

B'Tselem frequently assists other organizations in capacity building within B'Tselem's areas of expertise. As reported previously, B'Tselem is providing ongoing expert consultation to Al-Haq in the use of video cameras to document human rights abuses. In addition, we provided guided tours of the West Bank to staff from HaMoked-Center for Defence of the Individual to show them the existing human rights problems on the ground so that they develop the most effective legal strategies to address them. B'Tselem also provided field support and consultation to Physicians for Human Rights in their organization of a health day in the West Bank. B'Tselem has also been providing information on West Bank checkpoints on an ongoing basis to the Economic Cooperation Foundation.

Staff Changes

During this period, staff researcher Eitan Diamond left B'Tselem to assume the position of legal advisor to the International Committee of the Red Cross. In addition, B'Tselem welcomed the following people to our staff: Michelle Bubis (publications editor), Avi Berg (research staff), and Yoav Gross (film coordinator).

MAJOR SUCCESSES

Highlights of B'Tselem's successes across the range of program initiatives include the following:

- B'Tselem succeeded during this period bringing to light human rights abuses committed by IDF personnel and others, in some cases leading to the opening of investigations, among them the following: 1) B'Tselem was instrumental in calling attention to the shooting of a Palestinian civilian and auto theft perpetrated by IDF soldiers in the West Bank town of Dahariya, which led to the opening of an investigation and, as a preliminary step, the suspension of the IDF department commander from his position. B'Tselem immediately documented the incident, including film footage, and provided the information to print and broadcast media outlets that then publicized the story, specifically YNet and Israel's Channel 2; 2) B'Tselem's documentation of the routine humiliation of Palestinian women at the Bethlehem checkpoint by IDF soldiers led to a report on Israel's popular Galatz radio station; 3) B'Tselem played a central role in exposing the regular practice of the wholesale dumping of garbage by Israelis in Palestinian areas, which thereby appeared in a report on Israel Channel 2 prime time news; and 4) B'Tselem brought about a report on Israel's Channel 1 news about the Palestinian school a-Tira that is surrounded on three sides by the separation barrier and the hardship this imposes on the pupils and their families.
- B'Tselem's newest video initiative, "**Shooting Back**", the distribution of video cameras to Palestinian families living in high conflict areas, has burgeoned into not only a source of effective advocacy material but also a tool for both individual and community empowerment. The impact has been manifold: **women and children** we have trained in the use of video cameras have taken the most active role in documenting their own reality; as a result of meetings we have held, **community networks** have developed to coordinate the filming of incidents; the presence of cameras has acted as a **deterrent to violence** in many cases where Jewish settlers realize they are being filmed; and the individuals filming have captured incidents that would otherwise have gone undetected.

B'Tselem has distributed **34 cameras** in the following areas: South Hebron Hills; Hebron city center; Jerusalem (Beit Ikksa and Beit Safafa); Beit Ummar; and Tulkarm. Set forth following is a sample of some of the footage collected:

Hebron - the new settlement: Half a year ago, Jewish settlers started a new settlement. We gave cameras to the people living near it and asked them to film any incidents that occurred. The footage we received illustrates how a new settlement is established, what the Palestinians living next to a new settlement in Hebron have to learn to live with. The material shows the methods that the settlers are using to take over their surroundings, creating barriers to movement and driving the Palestinians away

Southern Hebron Hills: Like in the "Wild West", in the Southern Hebron Hills there is no law enforcement and the settlers are confronting and attacking the Palestinian shepherds on a daily basis. The population in the Southern Hebron Hills is unique; they are very poor and live in caves on the

mountain. Through their filming we see, their daily life, attacks on them and how the cameras are protecting them.

Qalqilya: One of our "photographers" managed to film from his home an IDF operation inside the city of Qalqilya. The methods that the army is using to catch Palestinians that are on Israel's wanted list are revealed in this footage. Bulldozers destroying houses, trained dogs tracking the Palestinian hiding in the house, soldiers searching for the suspect, and the humiliation that Palestinians suffer while the operation is taking place. These are all things that we had heard about from the many testimonies we collected, but it is the first time that it is captured live on video.

- B'Tselem is at the center of the burgeoning field of what is known internationally as "**citizen journalism**", as described in the above project "Shooting Back".

The exposure the project has gained has resulted in invitations to B'Tselem to speak at international meetings and conferences about the impact of this work. In this past year, B'Tselem was invited to present B'Tselem's video work in New York at the **Jacob Burns Film Center** event entitled **Combating Human Rights Abuses with Film**, which addressed the role of film in human rights work, and how the act of training the camera on real-life events can counter the official version of reality. In addition, Oren was invited to participate as a panel member at the international seminar **FORO 50 + 1**, held in Madrid. **FORO 50+1 is a seminar devoted to the analysis of the main trends in television all over the world.** International specialists and management staff from the most important broadcasters in several countries were in attendance.

In addition, as a result of the success of his presentation at the INPUT conference in Lugano, Switzerland, in May of last year, Oren was a guest presenter on the topic of citizen journalism at the **CBC annual conference "Best of INPUT"** segment. CBC is Canada's national public broadcaster and one of its largest cultural institutions with many platforms including radio, television, web and satellite radio. Once a year, CBC puts together a selection of the best from the INPUT conference to present to CBC employees. CBC also invites independent producers from other television networks and the National Film Board along with students from local journalism universities to attend the event. In the spirit of INPUT, a schedule is created to promote the exchange of television programs, ideas and production techniques from around the world. There are discussion sessions with three different filmmakers to debate production approaches and subject matter in relation to public television's mission.

- The results of the initiation of B'Tselem's new video advocacy strategy exceeded expectations in terms of the reaction and response of the audiences B'Tselem seeks to target and engage: policymakers, the media and the Israeli public. B'Tselem released the edited footage of an incident of settler violence in Hebron to the press, triggering unprecedented attention both to the specific incident and to the conditions of Palestinians generally in Hebron. The results included a deluge of media coverage both domestically and abroad (see above), government response in the form of public statements from both

Prime Minister Olmert and Minister of Defense Peretz condemning the behavior of the settler, an order by the Minister of Defense to the GOC Central Command to open an investigation into the incident, the establishment of a ministerial committee to address issues in Hebron, and in addition a hearing was scheduled before the **Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee** to address restrictions on Palestinian movement in Hebron. Ephraim Sneh, the Deputy Defense Minister, and several members of Knesset then toured Hebron to witness the conditions first-hand. As a ripple effect of all of the above attention to the issue, other civil society organizations were mobilized into action. Peace Now took advantage of the momentum created to hold a widely publicized demonstration near Hebron. Another organization, Yesh Din, took on the legal case of one young Palestinian boy assaulted in a separate incident by the same settler featured in the video. The widespread coverage, flood of public debate, and opening provided for advocacy in the Knesset to bring about real policy changes is a strong indicator of the potential inherent in the strategic use of film and video to complement and enhance B'Tselem's existing advocacy work, and engage policymakers and the public on an unprecedented level.

- B'Tselem's publication of the report ***Absolute Prohibition: The Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Detainees*** detailing the scope and defining the methods of ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees in the course of investigations by the Israel Security Agency (formerly the General Security Service) generated tremendous media attention and debate in the Knesset and other public forums. The research findings, the first documentation produced since the 1999 Israel High Court of Justice ruling prohibiting the use of torture in General Security Service Interrogations, revealed a much higher than anticipated rate of use of prohibited physical and psychological ill-treatment of interrogees than generally expected.
- B'Tselem published a unique study on the **infringement of the human rights of the tens of thousands of Palestinian workers staying in Israel without a permit** in a new report entitled ***Crossing the Line: Violation of the Rights of Palestinians in Israel without a Permit***. The report sets forth the economic context that forces Palestinians to seek work in Israel, as well as the increasing prohibitions on movement imposed by Israel that make this next to impossible. The report details the harsh routine of violence and abuse of Palestinians entering Israel without permits, including the use of illegal force, illegal damage to property, use of illegal force to extract information and recruit collaborators, and unlawful use of firearms. The report also documents how these forbidden acts occur upon the express instructions of commanding officers, and that the authorities, which officially condemn the actions, transmit a contradictory message to the soldiers and police officers by turning a blind eye and giving tacit consent.
- B'Tselem, together with other Israeli human rights organizations, held a public event in the heart of Tel Aviv to mark **40 years of Israel's occupation** with events ranging from short lectures to art exhibits and live performances, exploring the human rights violations in the Occupied Territories and also examining the negative impact of the occupation on Israeli society. The event

generated significant response in terms of a high level of attendance and engagement from a segment of the public – central Tel Aviv professionals – who do not form part of the traditional human rights constituency.



"Until She Opens Her Eyes": a line from a well-known Israeli song with the text inviting the public to an event marking the passage of 40 years since 1967, and a call from human rights organizations to take this opportunity "to stop, think and ask."

- One of B'Tselem's priority issues during this period has been the crisis situation in Gaza in all of its aspects: the arbitrary detention and abuse of Gaza fishermen and subsequent deterioration of their livelihood, the impact of the consistent closures of crossings for people and commercial goods moving in and out of Gaza, the high rate of fatalities at the hands of Israel's security forces and generally the responsibility Israel holds for the welfare of the Gaza population in light of the widespread control Israel still exercises. B'Tselem published and distributed a newspaper insert with the slogan **"With Control Comes Responsibility"** citing the aspects of life Israel controls and the consequent responsibility it bears. B'Tselem also launched a joint call with other human rights organizations to allow the return of the 6,000 Gazans stranded in Egypt due to the extended closure of the Rafah crossing. In addition, B'Tselem brought to the attention of the public the plight of Gaza fisherman in a B'Tselem investigation revealing **that Israel prohibits all boats off the Gaza coast, including fishing boats, and abuses fishermen who violate this prohibition.**
- B'Tselem, together with the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, published the report ***Ghost Town: Israel's Separation Policy and Forced Eviction of Palestinians from the Center of Hebron***, which documents the extent to which **Israel's policies designed to segregate Palestinians from the Jewish**

settlers in the city has led to the "quiet transfer" of the Palestinian population of Hebron's city center. As noted above, the Hebron campaign, which was launched by released video footage, and sustained by the publication of this research and intensive advocacy efforts, has resulted in ongoing governmental and military attention to the rights violations resulting from Israel's policies as well as to the failure of Israeli security personnel to intervene when necessary. B'Tselem will use the momentum generated by the campaign to continue efforts to bring about lasting change.

- B'Tselem documented the debilitating impact of the network of movement restrictions imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank in its report **Ground to a Halt: Denial of Palestinians' Movement in the West Bank**. The research shows the extent to which the fundamental right of West Bank Palestinians to freedom of movement, their exercise of which was limited in any event, has become a privilege that Israel extends to them as it deems fit. Based on the results of Israel's actions and taking into account that most of the restrictions have continued for seven years, the conclusion is inescapable that the restrictions constitute collective punishment, which is absolutely forbidden by international humanitarian law. B'Tselem will continue to advocate vigorously for the easing of the restrictions detailed in the report.
- For the first time in over a decade, B'Tselem published a report presenting a **broad survey of the spectrum of human rights issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip**, with an emphasis on those issues under direct Israeli control. The report focuses on the following: the right to life, freedom of movement, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, family life, dignity and bodily integrity, freedom from arbitrary detention, the right to an adequate quantity and quality of water and not to be used as a human shield. The extensive media coverage of the report is detailed above.
- B'Tselem's campaign, together with HaMoked – Center for Defence of the Individual and other human rights organizations, to lift the freeze on family unification played a role in the announcement of the government of its intention to process some 3,500 previously frozen family unification applications. The campaign, based on the findings of B'Tselem and HaMoked's 2006 report entitled **Perpetual Limbo: Israel's Freeze on Unification of Palestinian Families in the Occupied Territories**, included briefings for diplomats, a petition before the High Court of Justice, as well as a public advertisement in the form of a wedding anniversary greeting to the Minister of Defense Ehud Barak and his wife Nili to lift the freeze on the day of his own wedding anniversary. Although a welcome gesture, B'Tselem will continue to work to ensure that the freeze policy itself is overturned for the tens of thousands of families still unable to live together.

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 to advance human rights - documentation and

monitoring, media and video advocacy, and research and publication - to the greatest extent possible.