

בצלם - מרכז המידע הישראלי לזכויות האדם בשטחים (ע.ר.)
بتسيلم - مركز المعلومات الإسرائيلي لحقوق الإنسان في الأراضي المحتلة
B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

1 June 2015

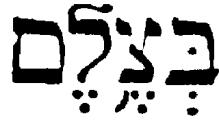
Second Lieut. Guy Ben Haim
Human Rights and Public Appeals Department
IDF Spokesperson's Unit

By fax: 03-5693971

Re: Security forces' accompanied settler tour in al-Karmil, Area A

According to testimonies gathered by B'Tselem and reports by tourist enterprises operating from settlements in the southern Hebron Hills, on 7 April 2015, during the Passover holidays, the Susiya Tour and Study Center held an event at Birkat al-Karmil – a park that lies in Area A of the West Bank, close to the Palestinian town of Yatta.

B'Tselem's investigation found that before the settlers arrived there, some 200 Palestinians were enjoying the park's lawns and pool. At about 2:00 P.M., approximately 1,000 settlers arrived at the pool together with dozens of soldiers, Border Police, and representatives of the Civil Administration. The security forces ordered the Palestinian bathers to leave the pool and remain only on the perimeter of the park. They allowed the settlers, however, free and exclusive use of the rest of the park. At about 5:30 P.M., the settlers and the security forces left the area. According to publications by the event organizers, this is not the first time such an incident has taken place at the site and previous tours of this kind were also coordinated with the Israeli security forces.



בצלם - מרכז המידע הישראלי לזכויות האדם בשטחים (ע.ר.)
بتسيلم - مركز المعلومات الإسرائيلي لحقوق الإنسان في الأراضي المحتلة
B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

We request your response to the following questions:

1. What were the orders given to the soldiers and Border Police officers who provided security for the settlers at the described event? Did they include a directive to prevent Palestinians from enjoying the park's facilities or restrict their presence there?
2. How many military and Border Police personnel were allotted for the mission?
3. In what other events do security forces accompany and secure settlers within Palestinian areas?
4. What are the legal grounds for sending security forces to secure settler tours in Area A?

A report of the incident will be published on B'Tselem's website on 4 June 2015. We would appreciate your response before that time.

I look forward to your early response.

Sincerely,

Niv Michaeli
Data coordinator
B'Tselem