

Voices From the Occupation



Name: Mohammad S.
Date of Incident: 25 August 2010
Age: 17
Location: The Gaza Strip, Occupied Palestinian Territory
Nature of Incident: Shot whilst collecting building material

On 25 August 2010, a 17-year-old boy is shot in his left leg whilst collecting building material in the Gaza Strip, about 800 metres from the border fence with Israel.

Seventeen-year-old Mohammad lives in Beit Lahiya, North Gaza, with his parents and six brothers and sisters. *'We've been living in harsh conditions since 2006,'* says Mohammad, *'when my father stopped working in Israel due to the closures.'* Mohammad dropped out of school early and was earning some money selling fruit and vegetables from the family donkey cart.

Towards the end of 2009, two of Mohammad's brothers, Adham (22) and Juma'a (15) started collecting gravel from the Israeli evacuated settlements close to the border with Israel. At the time, Mohammad was still selling vegetables for 30 shekels (US \$8) a day, but then around four months ago, the man who supplied him with stopped work, and Mohammad was left unemployed. That's when Mohammad decided to join his brothers collecting gravel.

The three brothers were able to earn around 40 shekels (US \$11) each a day collecting gravel and selling it to the cement factories. However, *'gravel collection was very dangerous,'* says Mohammad, *'as we had to work near the fence with Israel. We were a few hundred metres away from the border fence and soldiers would shoot in the air to intimidate us. Sometimes they shot at the carts used to carry the gravel. They killed our three horses and one donkey in four months, and we had to spend the money we earned on replacing them. One horse cost 800 Jordanian dinars (US \$1,130). Sometimes soldiers would fire tear gas cannisters at us. We were all in danger of being shot and injured,'* explains Mohammad.

On Wednesday, 25 August 2010, at around 5:00am, Mohammad left the house with his two brothers and headed off to the evacuated settlement of Eli Sinai, north of Beit Lahiya, North Gaza. Mohammad estimates that there were around

250 people collecting gravel when they arrived, ranging in age from nine to 50 years, most working near the fence. *'I saw five Israeli soldiers positioned on the sand hill north of the border fence,'* recalls Mohammad. *'They were down on their stomachs pointing their rifles towards us, but they didn't shoot. We got used to such things,'* he adds. *'I was about 800 metres away from the border fence and other workers were closer to the fence than me,'* says Mohammad, when *'suddenly, I heard one bullet being shot and I fell to the ground. I felt something hitting me in the left thigh. I shouted to Adham who helped me onto a cart. My trousers were soaked in blood.'*

Mohammad was rushed to Kamal Odwan Hospital and



treated before being discharged. 'I still feel pain in my left leg,' he says. 'I don't think of going to the dangerous places anymore, although Adham and Juma'a still go. I have nightmares about being shot by Israeli soldiers in the settlement. I wish I could find another job safer than gravel collection.'

In the week commencing Saturday, 19 September 2010, Israeli authorities allowed 844 trucks to enter Gaza, out of a required total of around 2,350. Or to put it another way, only 36 percent of the number of trucks required to supply Gaza are currently being allowed to enter.¹

Since 22 May 2010, DCI-Palestine has documented 10 cases of children being shot whilst collecting building gravel in Gaza, close to the border fence with Israel. The evidence suggests that the children were deliberately targeted by Israeli soldiers on the border, something that is absolutely prohibited under international law, regardless of circumstances. The children continue to do this dangerous work because of the desperate economic situation facing their families as a result of the blockade of Gaza.

Chronology – Children of the Gravel

- 25 August 2010 - Mohammad S. (17) is shot 800m from the border – [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 31 July 2010 - Khaled (16) is shot 600m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 14 July 2010 - Hameed (13) is shot 50m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 10 July 2010 - Nu'man (14) is shot 300m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 10 July 2010 - Arafat (16) is shot 50m from the border – [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 23 June 2010 - Mohammad M. (16) is shot 500m from the border – [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 22 June 2010 - Abdullah (16) is shot 60m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 16 June 2010 - Ibrahim (16) is shot 400m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 7 June 2010 - Awad (17) is shot 350m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)
- 22 May 2010 - Hasan (17) is shot 300m from the border - [Voices From The Occupation](#)

30 September 2010

¹ [Gaza Gateway – Facts and analysis about the crossings.](#)