



Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report

January – December 2020



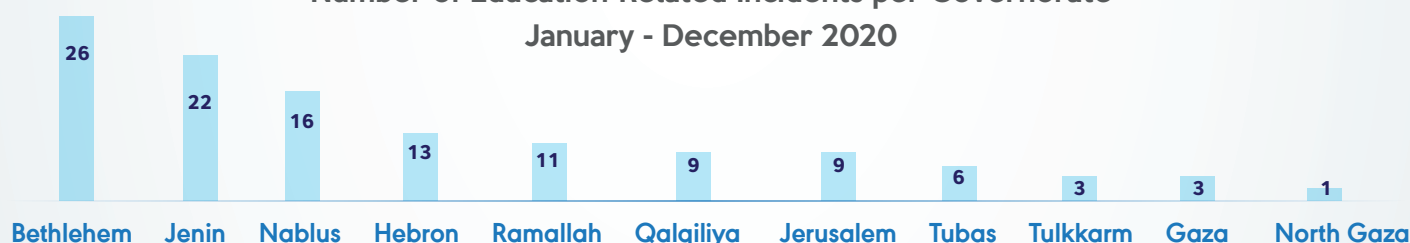
In 2020, the Education Cluster recorded **119** education-related incidents affecting **7,757 students and 615 teachers and school staff**.¹ This represents a sharp decrease (almost 63 percent less) in the incidents targeting schools and students compared to 2019². The decrease in the number of recorded incidents could be attributed to the full closure of schools in oPt between March and June 2020 due to COVID-19 outbreak after detecting community transmitted cases in the West Bank. Moreover, the sharp decline in the incidents could be linked to postponing the commencement of the 2020/2021 scholastic year, frequent school closures and the blended learning approaches to control the transmission of COVID-19, resulting in limited physical presence of students in/or around schools. In addition to the pandemic, teachers' strikes caused schools closure in some governorates between September and October 2020.

Types of education-related incidents in oPt include: attacks on schools, military use of schools, threats of attacks on students and school staff, lost school time due to delays at checkpoints, military presence in or around schools in addition to the use of live ammunition and tear gas against students and schools, schools search, detention in educational context, confiscation of educational items, intimidation of students and school staff while commuting to school, schools demolition and stop-work orders as well as settler related violence against students, staff and educational facilities.

In the West Bank, 115 cases were recorded in 2020 with the highest number of incidents taking place in Bethlehem Governorate, mainly in Tuqu' area (26 cases) affecting 859 students. Jenin Governorate comes in second with 22 reported incidents. Nablus and specifically south Nablus villages (Urif, Burin and As Sawiya, Al Lubban Ash- sharqiya) reported 16 incidents.

Figure1:

Number of Education-Related Incidents per Governorate
January - December 2020



Gaza Strip schools and children were also impacted by education-related incidents in 2020. The Education Cluster reported four incidents affecting 1,781 students in Gaza in the months of April, August and December 2020:

On April 21, a hand grenade and a military vest were discovered inside the perimeter wall of one of UNRWA schools in Gaza. The ordnance was removed without incident or injury. No students were impacted as schools were closed due to COVID19 outbreak.

Gaza had also two reported incidents that occurred both on August 13, impacting two UNRWA schools. One of the schools, located in Al Shati' Refugee Camp, was directly impacted by an Israeli air forces missile which hit the southern area of the school. The incident caused minor damages to the school building. As a result, UNRWA decided to close the school for three days with no injuries reported.

Number of education - related incidents and affected children in 2020



¹ Data Source: Education Cluster Database
² 326 education-related incidents were documented in 2019.

Another UNRWA school was also partially damaged in Beit Hanoun on the same date by pieces of shrapnel due to the Israeli Air Forces (IAF) shelling at a nearby location. Minor damage was noted with no injuries. The school did not record any loss in school days.

On December 26, one PA school and the teacher training center located in At-Tofah area in the Eastern Gaza Governorate sustained collateral damages due to the Israeli airstrike targeting a nearby site. Shuhada Gaza School operates on double shifts with the second shift serving as an UNRWA school. The school sustained minor damage including broken windows in a classroom, IT and science labs and a hole/crack in one of the walls. The teachers training center nearby also sustained minor damage including broken windows. No injuries or loss in school time were reported.

Types of Education-Related Incidents

Tear Gas and/or weapon firing at schools and students:

Around 18% of the reported education-related incidents in 2020 (21 incidents) involved firing tear gas canisters directly or indirectly at schools' premises and/or students while commuting to schools affecting a total of 2,850 students and 217 teachers and school staff. The total number of tear gas firing incidents shows a sharp decline compared to the same reporting period in 2019^{*}. Of the total number of affected students and school staff, 37 students and 5 adults required medical treatment in healthcare clinics or on the ground. The highest number of incidents (13 incidents) of firing tear gas and stun grenades took place in the first quarter of the year, between January and March 2020. Bethlehem – Tuqu' Secondary School for Boys had the highest number of incidents reported (6 incidents) affecting around 440 students.

Table 1: Number of reported tear gas incidents per school:

Gov.	School Name	No. of Incidents
Bethlehem	Tuqu Secondary School for Boys	6
Hebron	Hebron Basic School For Boys	2
Jenin	Jenin Secondary School for Girls	1
Jenin	Waleed Abu Mweis Basic School for Girls	1
Jenin	Montaha Al-Hurani Elementary School for Girls	1
Jenin	Aneen Secondary School for Boys	1
Jerusalem	Arab Institute School	2
Jerusalem	Abu Dies High Basic School for Boys	1
Jerusalem	Jawaher lal Nahro Secondary School for Boys	1
Nablus	Burin Secondary Co-Ed School	1
Ramallah	UNRWA Jalazon Basic School for Girls	1
Tulkarm	Faroun Basic School for Boys	2
Tulkarm	Faroun Secondary School for Boys	1
Total		21

^{*}109 out of 328 incidents of firing tear gas canisters on schools and students were reported in 2019.

In one incident, at approximately 7:40 a.m. on February 26, there were around 60 students from Tuqu' Secondary School for Boys on the street outside the school when they were targeted by four Israeli soldiers in a military jeep. The soldiers fired six tear gas canisters at the students, causing breathing difficulties to many students and their teachers. In addition, three students lost consciousness and were medically treated inside the school.

Hebron Basic School for Boys reported two incidents of firing tear gas. In one case, at approximately 7:20 a.m. on November 30, ten Israeli soldiers who were stationed near the school, at military checkpoint 160, approached the school's main entrance. The soldiers threatened the school principal that they will fire tear gas canisters at the students if the principal didn't control the students gathering near the checkpoint. The soldiers then fired four tear gas canisters, which caused breathing difficulty for four teachers and 50 students from tear gas inhalation.

Abu Dies schools in Jerusalem Governorate, recorded four cases of tear gas firing in 2020. In one incident in The Arab Institute School, at approximately 1:00 p.m. on February 10, Israeli forces stormed Al-Quds University adjacent to the school and fired dozens of tear gas canisters. Around 30 students and seven teachers had breathing difficulties because of the tear gas spreading inside the school.

One case of weapon firing at a student was recorded in 2020 in Isawiya, East Jerusalem. At approximately 11:00 a.m. on March 3, an Israeli military jeep stormed the village of Isawiya, specifically Obaid neighborhood. Clashes broke out when the soldiers reached the vicinity of Isawiya Secondary School for Boys. Four soldiers in grey uniforms got off the military jeep and fired rubber-coated metal bullets. A group of students were buying sandwiches from a booth at the school gate. One of the soldiers fired a rubber bullet towards the students, injuring the right hand of a 15-year-old student. The injured student was then transferred to hospital.

Military presence around schools:

14 percent of the total reported cases in 2020 (17 incident) were incidents of Israeli military presence around schools in the West Bank. Military presence around schools continues to be a constant threat to students and school staff. Most affected schools are the ones located in Area C, near settlements or main roads accessed by settlers. Israeli military presence around schools causes increased tension between soldiers and students, leading to clashes in some instances and firing tear gas at students, teachers and school staff.

Main schools affected by Israeli military presence in 2020 are mostly located in: Tuqu', H2- Hebron and south Nablus areas.

These schools are:

- **Tuqu Secondary School for Boys - Bethlehem**
- **Al Khansaa' Basic Co-Ed School - Bethlehem**
- **Al Jurmok Basic School for Girls- Bethlehem**
- **Al Khader Secondary School for Boys - Bethlehem**
- **Al Khudaira Basic School for Boys - Bethlehem**
- **Kisan Secondary Co-Ed School - Bethlehem**
- **Hebron Basic School for Boys - Hebron**
- **Khadijeh Bint Khuwailed Basic School for Boys - Hebron**
- **Al Lubban Secondary School for Girls - South Nablus**
- **As-Sawiya Al Lubban Secondary Co-Ed School - South Nablus**
- **As-Sawiya Secondary School for Girls - South Nablus**
- **Burin Secondary Co-Ed School - South Nablus**
- **Kobar Secondary School for Boys - Ramallah**



Military entry to schools:

Nine cases of Israeli soldiers entering or trying to enter schools in the West Bank were reported in 2020, affecting around 1,097 students and 146 teachers and school staff.



In one case at approximately 7:00 a.m. on October 7, six Israeli soldiers arrived at the gate of Al Jalamah Secondary Boys School in Jenin. The soldiers ordered the school janitor to open the administration office, as they wanted to inspect the surveillance camera. Three soldiers entered the office and three remained in the school yard. The soldiers' presence was during the arrival of the students to school in the morning, which caused fear and panic among them. The soldiers stayed inside the school for half an hour.

In another incident, at approximately 12:00 a.m. on November 22, the principal of Jeet Secondary Co-Ed School in Qalqilya saw an Israeli settler standing at the main entrance of the school yelling in Hebrew. He immediately approached the settler to understand what the issue was. As soon as the principal reached the settler, two security cars from the Israeli settlement of Kadomim arrived at the school gate, and they pointed their guns at the principal. The settler started talking to the principal in Hebrew, telling him that some students threw stones at his car. The principal denied the settler's accusations since all the students were still in their classrooms. The settler and the settlement security guards remained at the school gate, and 10 minutes after, a large force of Israeli military arrived at the place; around six military jeeps with 40 soldiers in them. The soldiers tried to break into the school, the teachers stood in their way and prevented them from entering the school. After a while, a force from Israeli patrolling police arrived at the scene with around ten soldiers, and they ordered the soldiers to break into the school. This time, the teachers couldn't stop them and around 20 soldiers entered the school. The soldiers searched the administration, secretary and activities rooms looking for the students that the settler claimed threw stones at his car. The soldiers tried to break into the 12 grade classroom, but the teachers locked the door before they could enter. An hour later, the commanding officer ordered his soldiers to withdraw from the school around 1:00 p.m. The students lost 60 minutes from their school time.

Detention of students:

In 2020, 8 students were either briefly detained or arrested from their schools or while commuting to schools. In one incident, at 1:00 pm, on March 3, two students were leaving Khadija Bint Khuwaileed Basic School for Boys in H2 - Hebron, when two Israeli soldiers detained them and took them to the military checkpoint 160. They also fired several tear gas canisters towards the street near the checkpoint. They held the two students for about two hours after taking them to a police station near the Ibrahimi Mosque.



In another case, at 12:30 p.m. on October 6, while students were leaving the school, a few students from the UNRWA Jalazon Basic Boys School went to the rear of the school. The ISF fired two stun grenades and temporarily detained a 5th grade student for about 40 minutes in the Israeli military vehicle. The student was released after the intervention of the school principal.

At approximately 1:15 p.m. on November 30, while the students of Tuqu' Secondary School for Boys were leaving the school, there was an Israeli military force stationed near the bypass road. The soldiers stopped one student and took random photos for him. When the student refused to stand still for the photos, the soldiers physically and verbally assaulted the student and briefly detained him for about 30 minutes before they eventually released him.

Settlers intimidation for students and school staff:

Five cases of settler-related incidents were reported in 2020 affecting 340 students and 21 teachers and school staff. Three cases were reported in Bethlehem and two in Nablus governorates. Settler related incidents include settler's intimidation to students while commuting to school, threats of violence to students and school staff, physical and/or verbal assault to students and school staff in addition to vandalizing school premises.

In one incident, on January 28, an unidentified number of settlers set on fire one of the classrooms of Einyabous School serving the 5th graders (29 students) which is located towards the northern side of the school. In addition, there were sprayed slogans in Hebrew on the external school walls stating: "We will demolish your houses". The school janitor was the first to witness the damage in the morning of that day. The school day nevertheless, proceeded with the 5th graders temporarily using the computer lab as a classroom.

In another case in Tuqu', at approximately 1:40 p.m. on January 20, five students from the 7 and 8 grades in Tuqu' Secondary School for Boys were heading back to their houses from school when they were stopped by a white car with red plates driven by two settlers (a man and a woman). One of the settlers pointed his gun at the students and was shouting in Hebrew at them. The settler was also chasing the students with his car, forcing the students to run away. The students managed to run away from the settlers and no injuries were reported.

Delays at checkpoints:

32 cases of delays at checkpoints and denial of access to schools were documented in 2020. 19 of the cases were reported in Jenin and Qalqilya Governorates on checkpoints: Um Al Rihan and Habla Gate.



Aramadain Basic Co-Ed School reported 7 cases of delays on checkpoints in 2020 affecting 133 students and school staff. In one incident, at approximately 7:00 a.m. on September 6, the school principal of Ar-Ramadain Basic Co-Ed School, located in Arab Ar-Ramadain al Janubi, contacted all of the teaching staff not to come to school because they didn't receive entry permits to pass the Israeli Habla Gate. Consequently, the teachers couldn't arrive to the school, and the students lost a full school day.

Two other cases of delays at checkpoints were reported by the teachers and school principal of Bardala Secondary Co-Ed School at Tayaseer checkpoint causing delays in arriving to their classes and loss in school time.

Thaher Al Maleh school staff also constantly face difficulties in accessing their school. For the first ten days of the academic year 2020/2021, no permits were issued for nine school staff by the Israeli side. Thus, students were not present in their school as none of the school staff including the school principal were able to access the school. As described by the school principal, nine out of the 12 faculty members were obliged to have specific coordination to access the village through Israeli Military Gate 300 as they are not residents of the Thaher Al Maleh village.

Intimidation while commuting to school:

Five cases of intimidation while commuting to school or at checkpoints were reported in 2020 affecting around 110 male students.

In one case, at approximately 1:00 p.m. on December 6, while the 6th graders from Asawiya Al Lubban Secondary Co-Ed school were heading home after school, two Israeli soldiers were standing near the school's eastern gate. The soldiers tried to stop the students, but the students didn't respond to the soldiers and ran back to the school. The soldiers chased the students towards the school. The students managed to escape as they ran out of the school through the western gate. The soldiers continued chasing them again. The incident lasted for about 30 minutes and the soldiers were not able to detain any students.

Schools demolition and stop-work orders:

According to the Education Cluster database for schools under threat of demolition⁴, there are currently 53 schools (45 schools located in Area C and 8 located in East Jerusalem) under partial or full demolition orders or have received stop-work orders. These schools serve around 5,250 students in the most vulnerable areas of the West Bank.

In 2020:

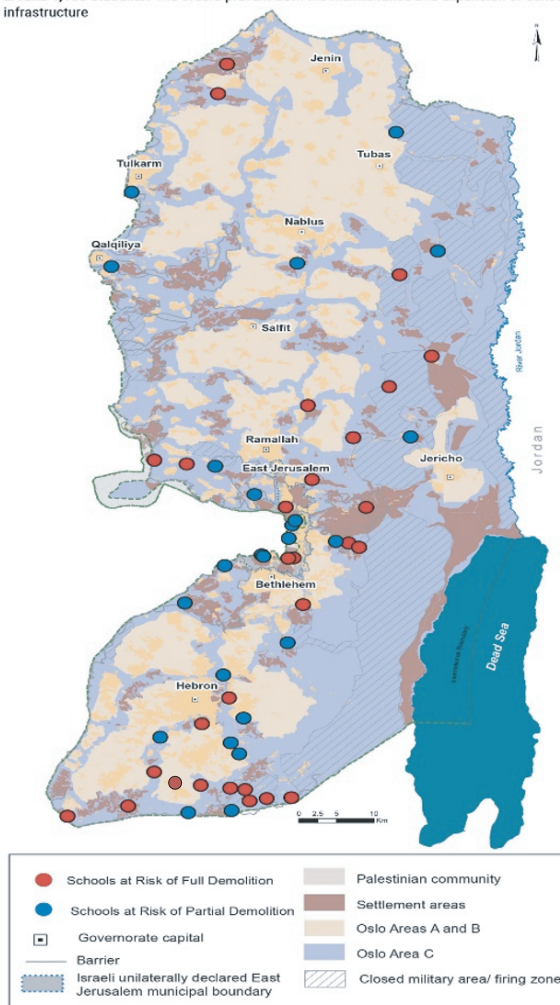
- Birin, Hebron - On January 16, the Israeli authorities demolished an under-construction school in Birin. The demolition took place based on Military Order 1797, delivered to the community. The L shape cement bases for the school were constructed on an area of 630 square meters. The purpose was to establish a school in order to help students who study in Bani Niem and have to walk for a long-distance, and take detours in order to reach the school passing by settlements. The incident affected 35 students from Birin and the Khallet Al Forun community, in addition to nine staff members.
- Susiya, Yatta - On January 13, the Israeli soldiers entered Susiya Basic Co-Ed School and confiscated equipment used for the school rehabilitation including several items such as powered digger, cement, powered cutting machine, ladder, cement bags and other tools. More construction equipment was confiscated on January 16 and 28. On February 5, the Israeli authorities handed a stop work order to an EU-funded school playground in Susiya for building without permit in Area C. The Israeli authorities also confiscated an EU-funded caravan used as a storage room in the school on February 19 for lacking a building permit affecting 49 students alongside 17 staff members.
- Kisan, Bethlehem - On February 3, four Israeli army jeeps arrived and stopped the work at the land designated for the construction of the new school building for Kisan School. On June 6, around 20 Israeli military soldiers and three military jeeps surrounded the construction site for the new building of Kisan School again. The soldiers ordered the Palestinian construction workers and the bulldozer driver to stop their work and they forcibly confiscated the bulldozer. In addition, on September 9, The Israeli soldiers handed the villagers in Kisan a notice to stop the school construction immediately and they informed them that there is a court hearing on September 23.

⁴ The Education Cluster collects data and monitors schools in West Bank that receive demolition or stop work orders. As a result, the cluster manages a database that includes relevant information on these schools classified as being under threat of demolition.

- Ras Al Tin, Ramallah - On September 1, the Israeli authorities handed a stop-work order to an EU-funded school in the Ras at Tin community for building without a permit in Area C, affecting 37 students. On both September 6 and 10, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) and Israeli army demolished and confiscated the ceiling of the under-construction school. In addition, other construction materials, chairs and tables were also confiscated. On September 8, the Israeli authorities handed a demolition order with three days' notice to Ras at Tin School.
- Hammamat Al Maleh, Tubas - On December 28, the ICA issued a demolition order under Military Order 1797 against a kindergarten being rehabilitated by the West Bank Protection Consortium. The demolition order included the external tent structure and internal concrete structure in Hammamat Al Maleh community. This incident followed the issuing on 7 December 2020 by the ICA/Staff Officer of Archaeology of a stop damage to archeological site warning against the same structure. The kindergarten was expected to serve 60 students and three teachers from Hammamat Al Maleh community (including Al Burj and Al Meiteh), Ein Al Hilwa and Um Al Jmal.

SCHOOLS UNDER THE RISK OF DEMOLITION IN THE WEST BANK DECEMBER 2020

A total of **53 Palestinian schools** across the West Bank have pending "stop work" or demolition orders, which place them at risk of being fully or partially demolished, due to lack of building permits which are near impossible to obtain. These include **45 schools in Area C, affecting around 4150 students**, and **8 schools in East Jerusalem, affecting around 1,100 students**. The orders prevent both the maintenance and expansion of school infrastructure



Data source: Education Cluster 2020

Implications of Education-Related Incidents on Students Wellbeing and Learning.



Students Stories

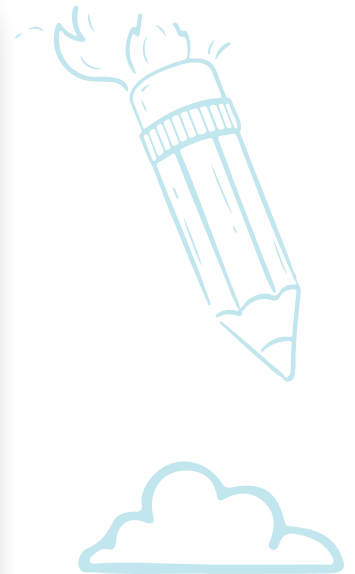
Education-related incidents might have harmful impact on students' wellbeing and academic achievements. Several Education Cluster partners prepared different reports to tackle the impact of these incidents on the students' psychological wellbeing and learning.



Shuruq, K, 13-year-old girl in Wadi As-Seeq

I will be entering the 7th grade this next school year. We are expecting them [the MoE] to open a 7th grade here. I asked the minister if he could do that and he promised he would. I hope it will happen, so I can continue my education here. If there is no 7th grade here, I will go to Deir Jarir school. Deir Jarir is 11 kilometres away from our community. It is better for us to be a school in the community. It is easier to get to school on time here. At Deir Jarir school, we are usually late because it is far. When I was in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade, I attended a school in Deir Jarir. This school [in Wadi As-Seeq] did not exist yet. In our community school, there are nine rooms: some classrooms, staff rooms, and a principal's office. There is a yard for the school, but no library. We need more classrooms and a library. I love maths. I like to understand things, not just to memorise them. They [ICA] gave the school a demolition order after it was built. There is a court case about it now. I hope it will not be demolished. This school is our only hope. If they demolish it, then all will be lost. This year, we did not complete the second semester because of the coronavirus. We did not have the possibility of distance learning. There is no internet here. In other schools, there was distance learning. We do not even have electricity.

Source: "Raised and Raded", Norwegian Refugee Council- Palestine, November 2020.



Haitham M, 12-year-old boy in Jabal Al-Baba

There is no school in Jabal Al-Baba, only a kindergarten. The occupation army does not allow us to have one. We built one, but it was demolished. We will build it again. Even if the army demolishes it, we will rebuild it. Since the 1st grade, I have been studying at a school in Al-Eizariya. It takes half an hour to walk to school, and half an hour to come back home. That is an hour every day. In general, all Jabal Al-Baba students go to schools on foot. There is no transportation. There is a dirt road to the school that we created, but it was bulldozed by the occupation. In the morning, the weather may be windy, which scatters dust in our eyes. On the way home, it might be so hot that it makes some children faint. Sometimes, it is very cold in the winter, which pushes students to miss school. In class, all the students wear regular shoes except for the students of Jabal Al-Baba, they wear boots for mud. When we go to school, we sometimes arrive late to the morning queue or even classes. The principal kicks us out and asks us to bring our parents because we were late. I love school. I like activities like sports, arts and crafts, and painting too. I like maths, Arabic, science and English. I love all of them. When I grow up, I will become a journalist because I want to convey our story to the world. I remember solidarity groups visiting us and taking interviews when I was a young child. I was watching them interview my father. I learnt from that and fell in love with that profession.

Source: "Danger is our Reality", Save the Children oPt, 2020.





RIMA, 13-year-old in Bethlehem

"School should have nothing to do with the conflicts happening in the country. Children here should have the right to education, just like all the children of the world. One day, we went to school and started playing. Suddenly, the settlers came and attacked our school. We got out of class and saw settlers coming. Some students started crying and others suffocated, because the soldiers fired tear gas. We couldn't breathe because of the tear gas and because of our fear and anxiety. There was a gas smell and it burned our eyes. We didn't have the necessary equipment at school to help ourselves. It was painful and scary. But I'm strong. I will defend children's rights. If I was in charge of my country, I would do everything I can to make every child happy. I would help reduce the occupation's dangers and the problems children face. I would support all children so they can build a society one day. I think that I'd be useful, I could save lives. When the soldiers fired tear gas, I could help teachers bring the first aid supplies to help children. I want the world to know that we, Palestinian children, are just like all children. We should have our rights and we shouldn't be under occupation. Our dream is to go to safe schools.

Source: "Danger is our Reality", Save the Children oPt, 2020.



Salem, 12-year-old in Hebron

Salem's dreams are simple - he just wants an end to the violence and fear. The threat of constant military presence, checkpoints, house raids and the loss of loved ones all hang over him, to the extent that he suffers from physical symptoms including seizures. "Usually I feel safe but when there are settlers, of course not. Sometimes people start throwing stones from rooftops and then soldiers come, and they start throwing tear gas bombs. Then I start having seizures and shivering. Soldiers question me on the way to school, 'where do you live?', 'where are you going?' I really get frightened, afraid they will take me away. They have stopped me before. My older brother, they detained him. I can't see anything that could be done. Wherever I move, I will be inspected, they check my ID, I might even be shot. I wish for the future, just to live without the army, without soldiers. I like learning. Education is important. I have made friends at school - to be with them makes me forget. For fun, I play with my little sister. I just dream to fly, just to get above the ground. Children have the right to live freely and not to be caged. If other people learn about what life is like for children here, maybe they'll come and help us."

Source: "Danger is our Reality", Save the Children oPt, 2020.



Sumoud, thirteen-year-old from the Al-Hadidiya community, narrates her daily struggles to reach the Ain Al-Bayda school:

To go to school, I wake up every day at four in the morning to get ready. Then I ride the tractor to the street and wait for the bus. The distance is not short to the street. It is almost four kilometers away. In the harsh winter conditions, the tractor cannot move, so I have to walk on foot to reach the street. This delays me from reaching the street. The bus would be gone, which forces me to miss school. Moreover, when the tractor breaks down even if the weather conditions are good, we often miss school. In few occasions, we were stopped and delayed by the Israeli soldiers which resulted in us missing the bus. Every week, I would be absent for one day and sometimes for two days due to the harsh conditions to get to the street. If there had been a well-functioning car (Jeep) we wouldn't have had all these difficulties to get to school.

"Education among Bedouin Communities in the Palestinian Jordan Valley", WeWorld-GVC, May 2020.

