

Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report

January - December 2021



Overview

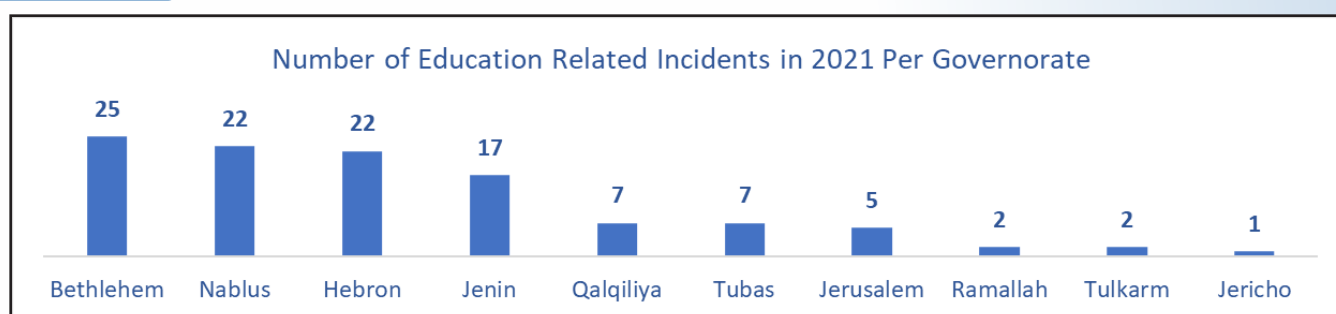
In 2021, in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the Education Cluster recorded **183** education-related incidents directly affecting **12,070** students and **501** teachers and school staff causing prolonged loss of learning for 601,914 students. This represents approximately a 50% increase in incidents targeting schools and students in comparison to the year prior¹. Both 2020 and 2021 reported less education incidents in comparison to 2019². This decrease is attributed to the partial closure of schools in oPt for the second semester of the 2021/2020 scholastic year due to COVID-19 closures and the adoption of a blended approach to learning, physical attendance was limited in schools and around schools. This was further exacerbated by the 2021 May escalation. The effects of which, caused severe electricity cuts leading to limited internet access due to the damage to infrastructure including schools. This led the Ministry of Education (MoE) to announce an early end to the academic year on 3 June with UNRWA following closures of its schools on 10 June.

Schools reopened fully in August 2021 and students and schools returned to 100 percent face-to-face learning while taking the necessary precautions in avoiding the spread of COVID19. Numbers shows that in the second half of 2021, significant increase in the number of education related incidents were reported in the West bank namely with the start of the academic year between September-December 2021. Furthermore, this year saw a sharp increase in the number of detained/arrested children with **23** students either briefly detained or arrested from their schools or while commuting to their schools. 14 of those students were detained in the second half of 2021.

Types of education-related incidents in oPt include the following: 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 searches and raids, 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, **114** cases were recorded in 2021 with the highest number of incidents taking place in the Bethlehem Governorate, mainly in Tuqu' area with 25 reported cases affecting 1,286 students. Nablus and mainly south Nablus villages (Urif, Burin and As Sawiya, Al Lubban) comes in second with 22 reported incidents as well as Hebron Governorate and Jenin comes in third with 17 recorded incidents.

Figure 1:



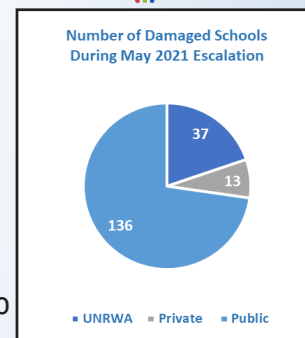
Gaza Strip schools and students were largely impacted during the 11- day escalation in May 2021. **149** public and private schools sustained damage during the escalation in **67** separate incidents. In addition, three MoE directorates reported minor damages. As for UNRWA run-facilities, 37 schools, Gaza Training Center (GTC) and a Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired (RCVI) were also collaterally impacted. Another 63 UNRWA schools were used as Designated Emergency Shelters (DES) during the escalation to host IDPs and were partially degraded and needed minor rehabilitation. In addition, 80 Kindergartens (KGs) were also assessed and reported damage due to the escalation.

Data Source: Education Cluster Database 2021.

1 119 education-related incidents were documented in 2020.

2 326 education-related incidents were documented in 2019.

The highest number of PA schools affected was reported in West Gaza directorate with 43 schools. Out of the 43 schools in West Gaza, four reported major damage including demolished classrooms, damaged school infrastructure, school fences, cracked walls, broken windows and solar panels. North Gaza directorate reported 32 schools that sustained damage. Out of the 32 schools, only one sustained major damage due to the shelling. East Gaza directorate had 19 schools that sustained damage of which four were majorly impacted. In one school, Jamal Abdunaser Secondary School for Boys, the school wall in the southern area was destroyed due to shelling occurring on land nearby to the school. In addition, around 50 windows in rooms on the southern side of the school, including labs and library windows, were broken.



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Due to COVID-19 and public health measures taken to slow the transmission of the virus, schools in the Gaza Strip had been closed since 8 April 2021 and education was resumed through distance learning. Schools remained closed during the 11 day escalation. The announcement to end the school semester earlier, as a result of the escalation and the ensuing ceasefire, for both public and UNRWA-run schools, caused a loss of learning for 601,914 students in the Gaza Strip.

Figure 2: Summary of Damaged Educational Facilities:

Type of Educational Facility	Lead Assessing Partner	Number of Damaged Facilities	Estimated Damage Cost in US\$
PA Schools	Education Cluster and MoE	136	2.24 M
Private Schools	UNDP	13	TBC
UNRWA Schools and Centers	UNRWA Assessment Team	102 (both collateral and DES)	1.17 M
KGs	SCI and UNDP	80	140,000
Total		331	\$ 3.55 M

In addition, explosive weapons stored near populated areas by armed groups affected at least three schools in Gaza. On 23 January 2021, an explosion of stored weapons in a residential area in Beit Hanoun caused minor damages to 3 UNRWA schools including broken windows and doors. The incident took place while schools were empty and no casualties in schools or loss of education time were reported.

¹ For more information regarding the damage in educational facilities in Gaza due to the escalation in May 2021, please refer to the:

Types of Education Related Incidents

Tear Gas, stun grenades and/or other weapon firing at schools and students:

Around 27 percent of education-related incidents reported in 2021 in West Bank (31 incidents) involved firing tear gas canisters, stun grenades and/or rubber coated bullets directly or indirectly at schools' premises and/or students while commuting to schools affected a total of **3,170** students and **178** teachers and school staff. The total number of these incidents shows a little increase in comparison to 2020, however it still shows a sharp decline in comparison to the same reporting period in 2019¹.

Of the total number of affected students and school staff, **165** students and **7** adults required medical treatment in health clinics or on the ground.

The highest number of tear gas incidents was reported in H2 in Hebron with 9 cases affecting 977 students.

Out of the 31 reported incidents, 9 of them also involved firing rubber-coated bullets at the students while coming or leaving the school premises causing severe injuries to 8 students.

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

Governorate	School Name	Number of Reported Tear Gas Incidents
Bethlehem		5
	AlKhader Basic School for Boys	2
	Tuqu Secondary School for Boys	3
Hebron		9
	AlHajerya Basic School for Boys	1
	Hebron Basic School for Boys	7
	Thu Alnooryn Basic School for Girls	1
Jenin		1
	Alshahid Abu Jihad Secondry School for Boys	1
Jerusalem		1
	Anata Basic School for Girls	1
Nablus		3
	Burin Secondary Co-Ed School	1
	Oureef Secondary School for Boys	1
	Rawhi Al-Hindi Basic School for Boys	1
Qalqilya		1
	Yousef-Odeh Basic Co-Ed School	1
Tubas		1
	Tayaseer Secondary School for Boys	1
Tulkarem		2
	Faroun Secondary School for Boys	2
Total	23	

¹ 109 out of 328 incidents of firing tear gas canisters on schools and students were reported in 2019 and 21 incidents in 2020.

Table 2: Number of incidents that involved firing rubber-coated bullets per school:

Governorate¹	School Name	Number of Incidents of firing rubber-coated bullets
Hebron	Al Hajerya Basic School for Boys	1
Jenin	Alshahid Abu Jihad Secondary School for Boys	1
Jenin	Masqat Secondary School for Boys	1
Bethlehem	Tuqu' Secondary School for Boys	3
Nablus	As Sawiya AlLubban Secondary Co-Ed School	1
Nablus	Rawhi Al-Hindi Basic School for Boys	1
Tubas	Tayaseer Secondary School for Boys	1

In one incident, at around 7:30 am, on Thursday, 4 November 2021, while the students of Tuqu' Secondary School for Boys were arriving to the school, four Israeli soldiers present in the street leading to the school building fired three live bullets in the air, then fired stun grenades. This caused fear among the students present in the area. The soldiers then started chasing the students in the street. The teachers intervened to help get students inside the school. After students went inside the school premises, Israeli soldiers fired a tear gas canister in the street near the school. No injuries or loss in school time were reported during this incident. In a separate incident around the same school, at around 7:40 am, on Thursday 16 September 2021, an Israeli military jeep was stationed near the street leading to the school. While there were around 100 students in the same street, an Israeli soldier fired a rubber-coated metal bullet. The bullet hit a student (17 years old) in the leg. The teachers and the students put the student in a car taking him to the town clinic. The rest of the students attended the school and resumed their classes.

In H2 – Hebron, at around 10:30 am, on Tuesday, 14 September 2021, eight Israeli soldiers gathered near Al Hajerya Basic School for Boys. The soldiers fired tear gas canisters, stun grenades, and rubber-coated metal bullets at the school premises. Due to the heavy firing of tear gas canisters, and the presence of the soldiers near the school, the school administration decided to evacuate the school. As a result of the incident, one student (15 years old) was hit in the head with a rubber-coated metal bullet, another student (14 years old) was hit in the shoulder with a tear gas canister, and the third student (14 years old) was hit with a tear gas canister in the foot. Nearly all the students and staff members suffered from teargas inhalation but didn't require any medical intervention.

Hebron Basic School for Boys reported nine incidents of firing tear gas. In one case, at around 12:00 pm, on Tuesday, 14 September 2021, 15 Israeli soldiers approached Hebron Basic Boys school, and fired tear gas canisters around the school premises. Four of the tear gas canisters fell in the schoolyard and around 300 suffered from tear gas inhalation but none required medical intervention. Due to the spread of teargas, the school administration had to evacuate the students and the last classes was cancelled.

In another case, at around 1:00 pm, on Monday, 4 October 2021, after the students left Hebron Basic School for Boys, 5 Israeli soldiers started chasing the students near the school. The soldiers fired stun grenades while

¹ Note that in some incidents the same case involved firing tear gas canisters as well as rubber-coated bullets at the students.

trying to arrest students. One stun grenade hit a student (10 years old) in his foot. The student, however, was not severely injured and did not require medical intervention or transfer to the hospital.

At around 7:15 am, on Thursday, May 20, 2021, a student (16 years old) at Masqat Secondary School for Boys, was heading to school from his house, which is located in Jabaa village in Jenin governorate. On his way, the student noticed two Israeli military jeeps with 10 Israeli soldiers moving behind him. He was scared and stopped walking. After a few seconds, the Israeli soldiers started firing live bullets randomly and when the soldiers were about 30 meters behind him, the student had no choice but to run, then he felt a bullet hit him in the back of his left hand. At the same time, he saw another man walking next to him being hit with a bullet in his thigh. The soldiers passed by the student without providing him with any medical aid. Immediately after his injury, a resident from the village took the student in his car to Jabaa emergency center, where he was provided with first aid treatment. After that, the student was transferred to Jenin central Hospital. The live bullet hit the back of his left hand mainly his two fingers causing serious injuries and several fractures to the bones.

On Thursday, November 25, 2021, while students were trying to reach As-Sawiya Al Lubban Secondary School, Israeli military forces composed of 30 soldiers and 5 military vehicles were stationed in the middle of the road leading up to the school. Clashes occurred between the soldiers and the students. As a result, a student (13 years old) was hit in his right eye by a rubber-metal coated metal bullet fragment. The student was taken to the hospital to receive the needed medical care.

In another incident in the south of Nablus, at around 2:00 am, on Thursday, May 10, 2021, a group of Israeli settlers, from the Yitzhar settlement located near Oureef Secondary School for Boys, threw stones, tear gas, and stun grenades at the school. Clashes then erupted between settlers and the residents of Oureef village, who were trying to protect the school from settler attacks. The attack resulted in the damage to 12 solar panels, located on the school rooftop.

Military presence around schools:

Around 15 percent of total reported cases in the West Bank in 2021 (16 incident) were incidents resulting from 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 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, their parents, and local residents, leading to clashes in some instances and the firing tear gas at students, teachers and school staff.

Main schools affected by Israeli military presence in 2021 are in: Nablus mainly in As Sawiya and Al Lubban villages, Bethlehem including areas of Tuqu', Al Minya and Hindaza, Hebron-H2 and Aroub Camp and Jenin in Westen Tura and Um Al-Rihan villages.

These schools are:

Governorate	School Name
Nablus	AL Luban Secondary School for Girls
Nablus	Assawya Alluban Secondary Co-Ed School
Bethlehem	Al Minya Basic Co-Ed School
Hebron	Hebron Basic School for Boys
Hebron	Aroub Basic Girls School- UNRWA

Bethlehem	Al Nukhba
Tubas	Ibzeq Basic Co-Edu School
Bethlehem	Tuqu Secondary School for Boys
Jenin	Western Tura Secondary School for Boys
Jenin	Umm Al-Rihan Secondary Co-Ed School

In November 2021, an increase in tensions was witnessed in the area of As Sawiya Al Lubban Secondary Co-Ed School and Al Luban Secondary School for Girls where five incidents were reported of military presence around the schools. Presence of military and settlers in the vicinity of the schools caused clashes to occur between the residents and Israeli soldiers who fired tear gas canisters in response. In some of the cases, a loss of an entire school day was reported as a result. In one of those incident, a 12 year – old female student was physically attacked by an Israeli soldier who hit her with the back of his rifle on her left shoulder. The student was transferred to the hospital to receive required medical treatment.

Military entry to schools:

Nine cases of Israeli soldiers entering or trying to enter schools in the West Bank were reported in 2021, affecting around 1,111 students as well as 45 school staff.

In one incident, at around 15:15, on Thursday, 20 May 2021, as the school janitor was cleaning Zbada Secondary School for Boys in Jenin he saw an Israeli Civil Administration car accompanied by two military jeeps arriving near the school. About 20 Israeli soldiers stepped out of the military jeeps. Eight soldiers entered the schoolyard. The soldiers asked the janitor for the school principal's number. They tried to contact him, but he didn't answer his phone. The Israeli soldiers checked the school's surveillance cameras' records and remained in the school for about an hour before leaving.

In another case, at around 10:30 am, on Wednesday, 1 September 2021, Israeli forces from the Israeli security agency and border police assembled and entered Al Shabat al Muslimat Secondary School for Girls in East Jerusalem. The soldiers accessed the schools' and confiscated several computers and cellphones that belonged to the directorate of education and arrested one of their staff members. The Israeli forces also arrested the school principal and they took her to the nearby Al Maskobieh interrogation center, where they detained her for about 4 hours before releasing her

At 12:00 pm, on Monday, 11 October 2021, an Israeli military force of seven soldiers, entered Al Jeet Secondary Co-Ed School in Qalqilya. The soldiers held the students and the teachers inside the school premises and prevented them from leaving until they spoke to the school principal. The soldiers told the school principal that the students were not allowed to leave the school alone, and they must leave the school accompanied by teachers to prevent any contact between the soldiers and the students. The Israeli soldiers also threatened the school principal that if he failed to comply with this order, the soldiers would close the school. The principal asked the teachers to spread around the school area and ensure the safe exit of students from the school. When the soldiers saw the teachers, they withdrew from the school entrance. The soldiers' presence around the school lasted for about an hour.

Detention/Arrest of students:

2021 witnessed an increase in the number of students detained/arrested in educational context in comparison to 2020¹. In 2021, 23 students were either briefly detained or arrested from their schools or while commuting to the schools.

¹ Eight students were detained in educational context in 2020.

In one incident, at around 12:00 pm, on Monday, 1 September 2021, a 15-year-old student from Asawiya Al Lubban Secondary Co-Ed School was going back home after he finished school classes. He arrived at Al Lubban crossroad where an Israeli forces were stationed. The soldiers arrested the student under the pretext of throwing stones at them. The soldiers took the student to Ofer military prison, and on the way to the prison, the soldiers physically assaulted the student and struck him on his face and body. The student spent the night in prison, and was released after his parents paid his bail.

In another case, at 12:45 pm, on Tuesday, 12 October 2021, while a student from Al Khader Secondary School for Boys was heading home after finishing classes, six Israeli soldiers stopped and detained the student 500 meters away from his home. The soldiers hit and handcuffed the student and forced him into a military jeep. While the student was detained inside the military jeep, the soldiers searched the student, and while the student was inside, one soldier sprayed gas and closed the door of the jeep for five minutes before re-opening the door and taking the student out. The soldiers held the student under the pretext of throwing stones at the soldiers. The student was detained for about six hours before the soldiers released him. The soldiers threatened the student that they would come back and arrest him again. They took the student's ID and his school bag and returned it later that day.

At around 10:15, on Sunday, 19 December 2021, three students from Al Shaheed Saeed Al As Basic Boys School finished their exams and were heading home, when three Israeli soldiers, stationed near the school, followed them. Two of the students jumped into a car driving by, by a schoolteacher. The soldiers stopped the car, dragged one of the students out of the car and struck him on the head and the neck. The soldier hand-tied the student with plastic cords and forced him inside a military jeep. The student's father came to the scene, and insisted to stay with his child. The soldiers then took them both to the military liaison office, and they stayed there for about three hours. From there, they took them to Etzion interrogation center. After 30 minutes, they released the father, but his son remained there. The father later that day, got a phone call from an intelligence officer and told him that his son's court hearing would occur the next day at Ofer military court.

Settlers' intimidation of students and school staff:

Four cases of settler-related incidents were reported in 2021 affecting three students. Settler related incidents include settler's intimidation of 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, at around 1:15 pm, on Sunday, 23 May 2021, after classes ended, a student (11 years old), left the school and headed towards her home, located nearby to the school. After two minutes of walking, the student noticed two settlers running after her. When they reached her, one of them pepper sprayed her face. As a result, the student was unable to open her eyes because of the pepper spray, and had to walk home struggling to keep her eyes open.

In another case, at around 12:00 pm, on Monday, 30 August 2021, an Israeli group of 50 people from different backgrounds, arrived at the entrance of Ras-Al Tin Basic School. The purpose of the visit was to encourage Knesset members (Israeli Parliament members) to approve the demolition of the school because it's located in Area C. The group did not approach any of the school students, and they did not enter any of the school premises or classrooms.

Delays at checkpoints and denial of access to education:

21 cases of delays at checkpoints and denial of access to schools were documented in 2021. Most the cases were reported either in Nablus due to an Israeli military area closure between 3 and 5 May and in Jenin and Qalqilya Governorates at checkpoints namely Um Al Rihan and Habla Gate.

Aramadain Basic Co-Ed School reported four cases of delays at checkpoints in 2021 affecting around 130 students and school staff. In one case, at around 7:30 am, on Tuesday, 13 April 2021, the teaching staff of Aramadain Basic Co-Ed school rode a bus headed to the school passing by Jaljulia gate. A teacher stepped

down from the bus and went to talk to a female soldier to allow them to cross the gate, the soldier refused to let them pass, and the soldiers left and kept the teachers waiting. The teachers contacted the Palestinian District Liaison Office, who told them to keep waiting until they could coordinate their passage. The teachers waited until 10:30 am when Israeli police arrived and allowed them to pass through the gate. Teachers arrived more than three hours late to their school.

Due to Israeli military operations and closures forced upon Aqraba village and neighboring villages including Yanun in Nablus, for three days in a row between 3 and 5 May 2021, seven schools were impacted with access restrictions due to the checkpoints set at the entrances of the village affecting a total of 1,652 students.

Jenin Governorate reported 10 incidents of delays at checkpoints impacting access to schools for students and their teachers especially on Yabad and Um Al Rihan checkpoints. In one incident, On Tuesday, 9 November 2021, two teachers of Abdulla Al Younis Basic Co-Ed School were delayed at the Israeli checkpoint of Um Al Rihan. The teachers had to wait for about 30 minutes at the checkpoint as the checkpoint gate was closed. As a result of this delay, 29 students lost one period that day.

Intimidation while commuting to school:

Six cases of intimidation while commuting to school or at checkpoints were reported in 2021 affecting around 20 students and 2 teachers.

In one case, at around 13:00, on Wednesday, 8 December 2021, while the students of Tuqu Secondary Boys School were headed home after finishing their classes, two Israeli soldiers were standing in their way. The soldiers stopped a student, they asked him to empty his school bag on the ground to search it. One of the Israeli soldiers disposed of his cigarette's ashed on the student's head. The school principal saw what happened, and intervened to release the student. The soldiers claimed that the student threw stones at them, but after 15 minutes, they agreed to let the student go.

In another incident, on Thursday, February 11, 2021, at around 8:45 am, 60 students of Tuqu Secondary School for Boys were headed back home after finishing their exams. On their way, there were two Israeli military jeeps with seven soldiers blocking the way. The soldiers prevented the students from going through as they closed the gate at the end of the road. The students turned around and used another route, but one student decided to use the road behind the school leading to Khirbet Ad Deir. The student was running because he was afraid of being seen by the soldiers. As he was running, a soldier appeared from between the trees, caught the student, dragged him to the area near the school, and forced him to the ground. About 12 soldiers gathered around the student, and started questioning him and accusing him of throwing stones at Israeli settlers. While the soldiers were questioning the student, the school principal arrived and talked to the soldiers. After about 15 minutes the soldiers agreed to release the student.

Schools' demolition and stop work orders:

According to the Education Cluster database for schools under threat of demolition , there are currently 54 schools (46 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 **6,436** students in the most vulnerable areas of the West Bank.

In 2021:

- **Al Maleh Basic Co-Ed School, Tubas:** the school received two demolition orders on Sunday, 12 September 2021. The orders issued from the ICA pertained specifically to the demolition of the school's extension: the wire fencing surrounding the school, the sunshades covering the main schoolyard, the solar system panels, as well as the school playground. On October 25, the ICA confiscated two school structures: one structure comprised of two rooms, one of which was used as a classroom and the other room used served as a medical facility to the school but also to surrounding Bedouin communities (the facility had not yet been equipped). The second structure were the sunshades used for the school's playground. The school staff is

is composed of eight people including the principal, a janitor, one male teacher, and five female teachers. Al Maleh Basic Mixed School serves 50 students (18 females, and 32 males) distributed across preschool to 4th grade.

- Imreiha Basic Co-education School, Jenin:** On 7 February 2021, the school principal of the Imreiha Basic Co-education School received a phone call from Yaʿbad Municipality informing her that the school received a stop working order issued by the Israeli Civil Administration for the new caravan installed at the school. The school received the stop working order due to the newly installed caravan in late November 2020. This was meant to be used as a classroom for pre-school students. The school serves 46 students (21 females and 25 males) and the pre-school caravan serves five students (4 males and 1 female).
- Shalalt Al Auja Basic Co-Ed School, Jericho:** On 12 September 2021, two vehicles from the Israeli liaison office arrived at the school gate. An Israeli liaison officer handed the school principal a stop working order for the school building. The school serves 131 students (63 females and 68 males). Since the school opening of the school in 2020, no structure was added or changed on the school premises.
- Um Qussa Basic Co-Ed School, Hebron:** On Sunday, 17 January 2021, two vehicles belonging to the Israeli Civil Administration entered Masafer Yatta area and handed a military demolition order (1797) for Um Qussa Basic Co-Ed School and the bases for the mosque built next to it within 96 hours under the pretext of building unlicensed structures in Area C. The following day, the lawyers filed a petition against the order with no response. The school received another Stop Work Order issued by ICA on 29 June 2021. The order applies to all structures within the school boundary, including the main school building, surrounding walls, bathrooms, a small clinic and the sunshade. The school was built in Um ad-Daraj Bedouin community East of Yatta, and it provides education to 50 students from Um Qussa, al-Abadiya, and as-Sarj communities.

